

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 20 May 2015 at the Friends' Meeting House, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green

The Meeting was chaired by Mr Robert Cholmondeley, Vice-Chair of the Parish Council, and was attended by Cllrs Gumbley and Whitehand together with 69 members of the public.

In attendance: Craig Gee, Area Contracts Manager, Cala Homes
Richard Dugdale, Senior Sponsor, Network Rail
Paul MacLachlan, Executive Officer, Barnt Green Parish Council

Robert Cholmondeley, Vice-Chair of Barnt Green Parish Council, chaired the meeting due to the illness of Parish Council Chair, John Jagger.

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Graig Gee and Richard Dugdale and thanked all present for their attendance.

The Chairman thanked former councillors Alun Davies and Kaye Elderton who had served on the Parish Council during the last year. Kaye had stood down during the year and Alun had not sought re-election.

The Chairman explained that the current Parish Council has two vacancies and that current serving councillors are:

Cllr Rosemary Briggs	Cllr Robert Cholmondeley	Cllr Edwin Gumbley
Cllr Charles Hotham	Cllr John Jagger	Cllr Susan Whitehand

Any interested in serving on the Council should contact a councillor or the Executive Officer.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Peter McDonald, District and Parish Councillor Charles Hotham, Parish Councillors Rosemary Briggs and John Jagger and residents Janice Haywood and Allan Venables.

3. Progress Report from Cala Homes on the residential development of Fiery Hill Road

Craig Gee confirmed that the residential development on Fiery Hill Road would be known as *Foxhills* and would comprise 18 Housing Association, 17 discount market value and 53 private dwellings. The development will be a mixture of houses, bungalows and apartments.

Craig indicated that the show home will be built by December 2015 and that the first sales made in January 2016. It is intended that Cala will be off site with all dwellings sold by December 2017.

Craig invited questions and responded as follows:

- (i) the diversion to Fiery Hill Road has not yet been scheduled but, with guidance from the County Council Highways Department, will be completed before December 2017;
- (ii) the current parking arrangements on Fiery Hill Road are under the control of the County Highways Department. However, Cala employees will not add to the difficulties as they are directed to park within the site where room has been created to facilitate this;
- (iii) Craig noted the concerns of Barnt Green Cricket Club regarding the need for protective nets and undertook to pass on the Cricket Club's concerns that their correspondence had not been responded to;
- (iv) Craig noted residents' concerns about:
 - the drainage capacity of the site and the impact on residents on Bittell Road if the measures are inadequate;
 - the height of the advertising sale board on Fiery Hill Road;

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- the position of the site entrance and its impact on pedestrians' ability to cross the road safely.
- (v) The working hours on site are 8.00am to 6.00pm on Monday to Friday and 8.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday. There is no Sunday working. Cala is a member of the Considerate Contractor Scheme;
- (vi) Construction will start with properties fronting Fiery Hill Road. The two apartment blocks nearest Kendal End Road will be last to be built. Landscaping has yet to be approved.

Residents commented that local businesses will benefit from additional trade generated by residents on this development.

4. Progress Report from Network Rail on the electrification of the line between Barnt Green and Bromsgrove

Richard Dugdale commented that Barnt Green is a major beneficiary of the electrification works as, in December 2016, the village will be served by 4 trains per hour.

Richard invited questions and responded as follows:

- (i) Bromsgrove Station must be completed before new signalling can be installed. Both must precede the electrification of the line;
- (ii) Hewell Lane road bridge is behind schedule because unmapped utilities have had to be redirected. Hewell Lane bridge was due for demolition the weekend following the meeting. Hewell Road should be re-opened by the end of July 2015;
- (iii) the current Barnt Green station footbridge has a new home with a railway conservation society;
- (iv) the new station footbridge requires piling 10m deep. Fortunately, this work will not require percussion piling techniques;
- (v) lifts have been approved for the new station footbridge and funding has been approved. Installation will be within 12 months of bridge commissioning.

Residents raised concerns about the persistent rail squeal on the Barnt Green to Redditch branch line. Richard explained that the issue did not fall within his electrification brief, but outlined the various infrastructure fixes attempted over the years: track renewal, re-railing, waterspray system, flange greasing and 'Keltrack' friction modifier. He also suggested that as part of the 'whole-railway' system, it may be helpful to consider whether modifications to rolling stock might also bring resolution. Richard advised that Porterbrook Leasing own the trains, and are embarking on a 're-tractioning' of the Class 323 fleet, which could be an opportunity to make changes to the suspension characteristics of the trains. However this type of modification is to the best of his knowledge, not specified or designed as part of the plan.

Resident, Tom Gray, invited residents affected by the rail squeal to contact him so that he could raise the rail squeal issue with Centro.

5. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 7 May 2014

The minutes were approved a true record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Introduce Members of the Parish Council

The Chairman had nothing to add to his welcome and opening remarks.

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7. Chairman's report

The Chairman gave a report, the content of which is given in full at Appendix 1.

Arising from the report, residents raised the following concerns:

- (i) parking on Fiery Hill Road continued to be a problem;
- (ii) parking on Sandhills Road was unreasonable with cars obstructing entrances and blocking free passage for those with disabilities or with responsibility for young children;
- (iii) several bollards are now missing from Hewell Road and ought to be replaced.

The Chairman explained that individual parking blackspots will need to be tackled as part of a wider picture that needs to take account of the, sometimes conflicting, interests of a variety of village stakeholders. The Parish Council will continue to work with County Councillor, Peter McDonald and the County Highways Department to find appropriate solutions.

The report was

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8. Parish Council accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015

The Chairman referred to the accounts at Appendix 2.

The report was

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9. Reports from County and District Councillors

The Chairman explained that Cllr McDonald and Hotham were absent due to attendance at the first meeting of the new District Council.

The Chairman referred to Cllr Hotham's written report which is given in full at Appendix 3.

The report was

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10. Open session

Residents commented as following:

- (i) that children over 11 years of age were playing football in the children's play area at Millennium Park. As a result, the fence belonging to the Friends' Meeting House had been damaged and residents neighbouring the park were being disturbed. Would the Parish Council consider closing the park at 8.30pm?
- (ii) that owners were not picking up their dog's faeces. As a result, those using both Parker's Piece and Millennium Park were at risk of infection. Would the Parish Council consider erecting signage in Parker's Piece requiring dogs to be kept on a lead and excluding dogs altogether from Millennium Park?
- (iii) that Laurel bushes were obscuring the avenue of Beech trees on Cherry Hill Drive. Could the Parish Council remind the Lickey Hills Rangers that this work is still outstanding? Would it be possible to organise a working party to clear the Laurel?
- (iv) that the cricket club saw no easy way to protect persons and property within the new development from damage or harm and asked the Parish Council to consider what it can do to assist.

The Chairman indicated that he would arrange for these items to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Chairman
May 2016

2015 Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman's report

The period since the last Annual Parish Meeting has been a busy one for the Parish Council. Among the highlights were:

- (i) **The Community Walk Day and Pig Roast** when nearly 200 local residents took part in one of four local walks in and around the parish. The walk day celebrated the completion of walk signage along the Barnt Green Circular footpath and the creation of walk maps to encourage and assist those visiting the area. Particular thanks to Simon Richards, our footpaths officer, and Amanda Hill from Worcestershire Countryside who worked so hard to facilitate this event and to Warwick Butcher and Vinalia who provided the refreshments.
- (ii) **The Parish Council Carol Service** which, this year, was organised in conjunction with St Andrew's School's Christmas Fair. Again, over 200 residents, children and parents attended the service which was led by Rev Rob Fieldson.

The Parish Council has engaged with a number of important community issues including:

- (i) Bromsgrove District Council receives central government grant called the **new homes bonus** for each new house built within the Bromsgrove Area. It is the Government's intention that a significant part of the grant should be shared with the communities bearing the impact of the new developments. Although the parish council has lobbied the District Council hard on this issue it is clear that Barnt Green will see little financial investment to help mitigate the impact of the 88 dwellings currently being built on Fiery Hill Road.
- (ii) The Parish Council is indebted to local Resident, Les Bailey, who together with MP, Sajid Javid, the parish council and other local residents has secured assurances from Network Rail that the line will be properly maintained and the infamous '**Barnt Green rail squeal**' kept within reasonable limits.
- (iii) On the subject of local rail infrastructure the parish council has, and will continue to lobby for the **installation of lifts within the station footbridge**.

Much of the work of the parish council goes unnoticed. However during the year the parish council has:

- painted 40 of the 70 street light columns in the parish. The remainder will be painted in this coming year;
- distributed over 20 hanging baskets to shops along Hewell Road;

- filled village centre planters with seasonal flowers;
- arranged Christmas decorations and lighting in the village centre;
- repaired and maintained play surfaces in Millennium Park and Parker's Piece;
- installed new planters on Hewell Road;
- coppiced the trees at Parker's Piece and under-planted the remainder with snow drops and bluebells;
- published 4 copies of *The Bulletin*.

There are inevitably some areas of frustration for the parish council as some problems fall outside of its powers to act. Notably, progress with the Barnt Green Neighbourhood Plan has stalled pending determination of the Bromsgrove District Plan. Other issues lacking satisfactory resolution include:

- the canopy outside Tesco continues to drip on shoppers during periods of wet weather despite requests that the landlord remedy the problem;
- parking arrangements along the bottom of Fiery Hill Road are unaltered despite requests that the County Council review the matter. Clearly, the recent commencement of building can only add to these difficulties. Cllr McDonald has asked that residents adversely affected by the current arrangements should contact him;
- some drains remain blocked despite the best efforts of the Parish Council to notify the County Council and request remedial action. Residents noticing blocked drains can either notify the parish council or contact the County Council direct using their online, *Report It*, facility.

More positively, I would like to express the Parish Council's thanks to Wendy Tricklebank who quietly ensures that the village centre remains free of litter. Wendy also undertakes weekly checks of the play equipment in Millennium Park and Parker's Piece thus ensuring that our young people can play in safety.

During the year we said good-bye to our long serving Lengthsman, Ron Rand. Although Ron is missed, the Parish Council has been delighted with the work of Leon Hill and his team of co-workers from Bromsgrove District Council who have undertaken our Lengthsman duties both efficiently and effectively.

We have also said good-bye to Cllr Alun Davies who did not seek re-election this year and to Cllr Kaye Elderton who stood down during the last year. This means that there are two vacancies on the Parish Council. If you feel you would be interested in serving the community as a parish Councillor please speak to me or contact the Executive Officer at the office on Hewell Road.

Finally, you may be interested to know that the Parish Council are planning two village entertainments in the coming year. The events are due to take place in October 2015 and April 2016 and will hopefully include theatre and non-classical music. Bookings are due to be confirmed soon so look out for more details over the summer.

Report of 2014/15 Barnt Green Parish Council payments and receipts

Presented to Annual Parish Meeting dated 20 May 2015

		2013/14		2014/15	
Receipts	Precept received	84,107.88		28,107.88	
	Interest	867.37		972.25	
	Lengthsman Refund	2,458.05		1,453.65	
	VAT Refund	5,420.37		5,133.88	
	Miscellaneous	1,975.00		257.50	
	Total Receipts		94,828.67		35,925.16
Administration	Staff Costs	15,245.87		15,665.15	
	Chairman's Allowance	412.70		382.20	
	Office Running costs	6,075.65		5,471.05	
	Training/Publications	116.25		210.00	
	Meetings/Refreshments	25.00		0.00	
	Subscriptions	795.13		817.27	
	Insurance	1,796.37		947.82	
	Auditor Fees	410.00		435.00	
	Legal Fees	0.00		842.50	
	Loan repayments	707.49		583.28	
	Election costs	0.00		0.00	
	Donations	0.00		250.00	
	Administration Costs	270.76		218.77	
	VAT	5,705.72	31,560.94	5,725.38	31,548.42
Communication	Newsletters	1,225.00		980.00	
	Website	696.00	1,921.00	696.00	1,676.00
Millennium Park	Park Mowing	780.00		810.00	
	Park Maintenance	803.42		4,851.44	
	Park Safety Inspections	175.00	1,758.42	215.00	5,876.44
Parker's Piece	Field Mowing	2,734.32		2,734.32	
	Field Maintenance	1,708.53		1,955.85	
	Field Safety Inspections	175.00	4,617.85	215.00	4,905.17
Environment	Hanging baskets	429.11		389.58	
	Planters	454.25		287.50	
	Environment maintenance	810.00	1,693.36	1,813.75	2,490.83
Street lighting	Street light maintenance	3,426.75		5,750.60	
	Street light electricity	2,483.32		2,482.16	
	Christmas lights	6,763.37	12,673.44	5,825.86	14,058.62
Highways	Lengthsman charges	2,191.56		1,025.60	
	Highways	0.00	2,191.56	0.00	1,025.60
Miscellaneous	Events	323.10		349.40	
	Section 137	0.00		0.00	
	Exceptional Items	255.00		0.00	
	Fixed Assets	1,279.00	1,857.10	0.00	349.40
	Total Payments		58,273.67		61,930.48
	Cashflow	Surplus	36,555.00	Deficit	-26,005.32

Report of 2014/15 Barnt Green Parish Council payments and receipts

Presented to Annual Parish Meeting dated 20 May 2015

Notes to the report of 2014/15 payments and receipts

1. These draft accounts are presented on a payments and receipts basis.
2. The precepts for 2013/14 and 2014/15 should be £56,000 and £56,215.76 respectively. However Bromsgrove District Council, once again, paid the first instalment (£28,107.88) of the 2014/15 precept in the wrong financial year. When adjusted to take account of this the 2013/14 surplus is £8,447.12 and the 2014/15 surplus is £2,102.56.
3. Other variances of note include:

Misc income	2013/14 income includes a parish support grant of £1,840.00. The District Council withheld this grant in 204/15 despite the intention of Central Government that it be passed on to parishes.
Insurance	The Parish Council went out to tender in 2014/15 and, based on its good claims record, secured very competitive terms.
Legal fees	The Parish Council spent £217.50 on legal advice and a further £625.00 on the renewal of its office lease.
Loan repayment	The Public Works Loan Board loans were paid off in full during 2014/15.
Donation	A donation was made to Worcestershire Countryside in recognition of the significant work they had undertaken in the parish during 2014.
Park maintenance	The Parish Council undertook repairs to the playing surfaces in Millennium Park at a cost of £3,763.00.
Street light maint	Street light structural and electrical surveys cost £1,183.00. In addition, £1,000.00 was spent painting 40 of its 70 street light columns. The remainder will be completed later in 2015.
Christmas lights	The Parish Council has been able to reduce costs while maintaining the standard of festive decoration by extending the life of the decorations beyond their normal 3-year hire cycle.
Lengthsman	Costs fell in 2014/15 because of the transition between the retiring lengthsman and the new team. Costs for 2015/16 are fixed at £2,000.00.
Fixed Assets	Although no costs were incurred in 2014/15, an order was placed for 6 cast iron planters for Hewell Road costing £4,490.00. These have been installed and await planting later this month.

4. Bank reconciliation and cashbook

	31 March 2014	31 March 2015
Unity Bank current account	3,920.20	3,491.10
Unity Bank deposit account	34,153.17	7,292.02
Lloyds TSB current account	7,763.16	28,685.90
Lloyds TSB Bond	45,000.00	0.00
Cambridge Building Society	0.00	25,013.70
ALTO account	0.00	348.49
	90,836.53	
Receipts in the year to 31 March 2015	35,925.16	
Payments in the year to 31 March 2015	-61,930.48	
cashbook balance at 31 March 2015	64,831.21	64,831.21

5. However, at the Parish Council meeting in January 2015, the Parish Council retained a reserve of £2,500.00 for forthcoming Neighbourhood Development Plan costs and ring-fenced a further reserve of £1,500.00 for the cost of purchasing and installing a defibrillator in Hewell Road. The adjusted, unallocated reserves at 31 March 2015 stand at £60,831.21.
6. Payments and Receipts can be inspected by appointment at the Parish Council office.

District Councillor report to Annual Parish Meeting

Cllr Charles Hotham

I am sorry not to be able to attend the annual parish meeting. Tonight is the inaugural Bromsgrove District Council meeting where committee positions are discussed and I am informed it is important to attend.

I would like to thank all who voted for me and also for the many messages of congratulations.

In the last week I have decided to join forces with the 5 other independent councillors at Bromsgrove and we have formed the Independent Alliance Group. This group has no whip, so I am free to vote as I see fit. The joining of the group does give several advantages including more committee places and control over which committee I sit on. Should things go to plan, I will be on the planning committee.

On Monday evening I attended the Alvechurch Parish Council meeting where I met with our new local police sergeant and we discussed parking issues in Barnt Green. Whilst he is sympathetic to the commuter "fly-parking" problem there is little he can do if the cars are legally parked. However, he is concerned about cars parked on pavements and obstruction of drive entrances. I have been in e-mail contact with him and will report back any progress in due course.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to encourage you to engage with the Parish Council, come and see what we do and even think about joining us.