

Notes of Committee Meeting 29th January 2020 at the Bear Inn

Present			Apologies
John Thomas (in Chair) Andrew Burrow (minutes)	Jane Edwards (JED) Ken Shaw (Treasurer) Graham Lock Alan Hanbury	Jim Ellis (JE) Kay Howles	Wendy Gault
Item No	Action	By whom	
01/20	The minutes of the meeting of 2 nd October 2019 were approved		
02/20	Matters Arising		
	Berkswell village telephone box		
	It was note that the PC had cut back some overhanging vegetation and agreed that a volunteer should cut more back	AB	
	It was noted that Paul Tyler had volunteered to set up and maintain a little library in the phone box. (from GL). On that basis AB agreed to take away an action to ask the PC to paint the phone box if a suitable person could be found. James Hickin was suggested	AB	
	With the closure of Craddocks it was agreed that the Treasurer could seek to do a deal with Rosebourne nursery to supply plants or any other local nursery.	KS	
03/20	Treasurer's report – 2019 Accounts		
	Bank balance £2577 with the investment being £10147. Full accounts awaiting audit to be done shortly.		
	Income in 2019 was £1625 and plant expenditure £802.16		
	No work undertaken on planters except minor repairs and no new planters installed at a cost to the Society (although the PC paid for one handed over to the Society for maintenance)		
	It was agreed that the Treasurer could reimburse planter "stewards" for the cost of plants and compost subject to either the Chairman (JT) or Secretary (AB) giving email consent. Direct payments could be made to bank accounts following the submission of receipts or paying the selected supplier's invoice for plants etc for the "stewards" specific planters.	KS	
04/20	Grant applications		
	It was agreed that we should budget on replacing 4 to 5 planters per year and where possible to build them from the newly available boards made from recycled plastics, It was noted that some planters in critical location in the conservation area might need to be of a higher visual quality and made from wood. Grant applications could be made on that basis	AB	
05/20	HS2		
	The Society response to the HS2 Ltd consultation was agreed and the Secretary approved to submit it with the final wording modified to maximise impact on the online system used by HS2 Ltd	AB	
	It was agreed that Andrew Burrow should meet with HS2 Ltd with a view to establishing better local consultation mechanisms. A date during February was possible	AB	
	A report on the presentation to the SMBC advisor committee on HS2 was		

	noted which covered significant Old Waste Lane and Berkswell village traffic infringements by HS2	
06/20	Membership Drive It was noted that little progress has been made although JT has leaflet dropped Back Lane and a new member recruited.	All
07/2020	Traffic Calming in Berkswell village It was note that the West Midlands Combined Authority had approved a grant for the project. However, it was in the hands of the Highway Authority to agree the “contact” which was a slow process. The grant might not cover the full cost of the project	
08/20	Balsall Common infrastructure project 1. Society members had leant considerable support to the residents’ survey including providing the online survey. 2. Responses were good and the Society via GL would again appeal to its members to contribute 3. GL and JE were thanked for their help	GL
09/20	Key Dates The key dates for 2020 were noted Berkswell rural area litter pick –21 st May Balsall Common Litter pick – every 2 nd Saturday VE Day in Balsall Common – 8 th May AGM and parish assembly - 21 st May Velo - 21 st June BBQ - 27 th June Open Gardens - 28 th June	
	Date of next meetings Next meeting Wednesday 8th April 2020 at 7.30 in the Bear.	

Proposed response to design elements consultation by HS2 Ltd

Councillors to note that it is proposed that the PC answer only the first 3 questions because they are the ones that apply to rural areas. Berkswell Parish and hence the Balsall Common/& Berkswell Community are defined by HS2 Ltd as rural in this consultation. The remaining 6 questions are merely the same three questions asked again but for urban areas and near transport corridors.

Respondents are asked to rate the importance of the item on a scale of 1 to 5 and then give a commentary.

1. **The appearance of structures, including opportunities to add patterns and textures to create a sense of local identity** -Importance to us 5

- a. The Berkswell Society is aware that glass noise barriers are widely used on motorways in continental Europe and by the German railways and consider that for special locations, such in Balsall Common, they would significantly improve the visual appeal of bridges/viaducts by reducing “apparent bulk”. The common design elements should allow for this possibility at sensitive locations listed in Information paper - design policy D1. This desire is partly addressed in the Design case studies (Number 1) requested by the national design panel.
 - b. The Berkswell Society has recommended before that HS2 Ltd should seek advice from experts in this field. We have suggested that HS2 Ltd contact one of the leading experts in architectural glass Darren Kearns on 077107 39147. At that time he was employed by Europe’s premier glass company Saint-Gobain www.glassolutions.co.uk Recently he moved to Hansen a specialist installer of glass systems. His phone number has not changed and it is disappointing that HS2 Ltd have not sought his specialist advice. His phone number is unchanged (as above) and he stands ready and able to provide advice. The company’s web site is www.aluminumrailing.com
 - c. The maximum opportunity for the use of surface treatments (patterns, textures etc) should be incorporated into the design elements to adapt the surface to the local context. Design should minimise the likelihood of staining of the concrete which so often happens on concrete structures. Designs should enable pebble surfaces, colour, brick, metals such as bronze or stainless steel (not rusting steel) and other things that break the boredom of concrete when seen close up.
2. **Ways of discouraging vandalism and graffiti, including fencing, security measures and an arts and culture strategy to create a sense of ownership** – importance to us 5
- a. **Comment** – Concrete structures and not seen as attractive and encourage vandalism such as spray painting. They are less likely to damage the surfaces if those surfaces are both attractive and built in a way that resists things such as paint. The station building in Berkswell has never been vandalised despite being unmanned in the evening/night. Various surfaces and treatments reduce the risk of vandalism from spray paint. We also think that planting shrubs and small trees could play a part underneath the tall structures that will exist in Balsall Common. Similarly, water features can deter easy access whilst meeting an environmental purpose. Please also see the Berkswell Society’s thoughts on the next question relating to the use of soft features which will help avoid vandalism but also create safe spaces
3. **Creating safe spaces and/or a sense of space under viaducts – for example, through lighting, art and culture or community projects** – importance to us 5
- a. **Comment** – Soft features should be added to the areas underneath viaducts particularly where they are high as in Balsall Common. Vegetation and ponds should be added to this list for rural areas and blend those ecological features back into the surrounding countryside. Vegetation could include native shrubs and bushes typical of the area and in some instances, trees could be used subject to their placement relative to the structure.