

BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS 2021



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Speed Indication Devices

Over the summer we have installed two Speed Indication Devices on Main Road and they seem to have been successful in bringing down the average speed of drivers. Records from the devices show that 99.48% of vehicles that travel along the road are travelling at less than 40 mph which is good to see.



Hollybush Playing Fields

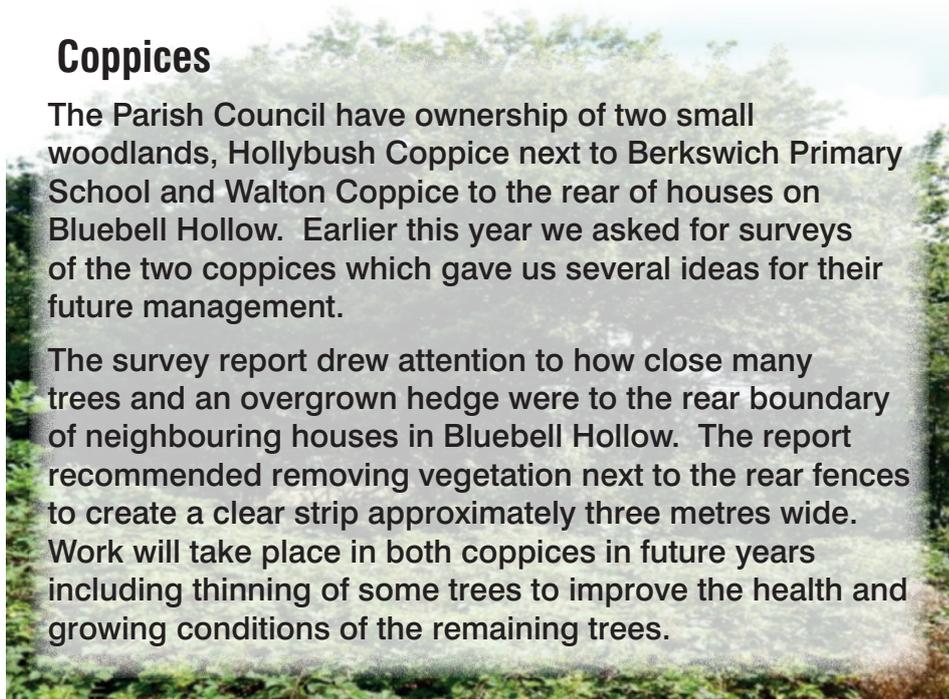
We have been monitoring the play equipment at Hollybush Playing Fields and after a summer of relatively low damage, unfortunately there has been further vandalism recently. As a Parish Council we are keen to improve some of the equipment and potentially purchase some

additional inclusive play equipment but are reluctant to do this while equipment is being damaged in this way. We do want to keep the play area open and are considering the best way to protect the area for residents.

Coppices

The Parish Council have ownership of two small woodlands, Hollybush Coppice next to Berkswich Primary School and Walton Coppice to the rear of houses on Bluebell Hollow. Earlier this year we asked for surveys of the two coppices which gave us several ideas for their future management.

The survey report drew attention to how close many trees and an overgrown hedge were to the rear boundary of neighbouring houses in Bluebell Hollow. The report recommended removing vegetation next to the rear fences to create a clear strip approximately three metres wide. Work will take place in both coppices in future years including thinning of some trees to improve the health and growing conditions of the remaining trees.



Parishes

Some residents may be unaware that there is a difference between civil parishes (of which Berkswich is one) and ecclesiastical parishes.

Parish councils like Berkswich are the most local level of government in England. We are independent of other levels of local government, i.e. Stafford Borough and Staffordshire County Council, however we maintain a close working relationship with both. Parish councils do not have links to any religion. Berkswich Parish Council covers the villages of Milford and Walton on the Hill.

Ecclesiastical parishes relate to geographical areas within Christian religions. Berkswich Parish within the Church of England have their parish office based at Holy Trinity Church on Baswich Lane, the parish also includes St Thomas' Church at Walton on the Hill and All Saints Church at Brocton. The parish of St Anne's Roman Catholic Church covers the areas of Baswich, Weeping Cross, Walton on the Hill, Milford and Brocton. Berkswich Methodist Church serves the communities of Walton on the Hill, Weeping Cross and Wildwood.

The History of the Parish of Berkswich - Part One

The Parish of Berkswich lies in the County of Stafford and in the Hundred of Cuttlestone.

We are told that two great Kings introduced the formation of Shires in England; Alfred the Great (845 to 899 AD) or his grandson Athelstan (895 to 939 AD). We know more about Alfred thanks to the Welsh monk Asser, who wrote The Life of Alfred at the King's instruction, but less about Athelstan, who is barely mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Historians look to the works of the monk William of Malmesbury (1095 -1143 AD) for more information on Athelstan, but the monk wrote some 170 years after the King's death. Asser wrote what the King wanted, whereas William had to forage for information and make a few assumptions along the way. Consequently, hard facts are difficult to come by.

What we do know is that both Kings were administrators and realised the benefit of organising the land into distinct areas for better control and management. Shires were based upon main towns, but we have our Shire based upon Stafford and not Tamworth, which is unusual as

Tamworth had been a major town in Mercia since King Offa (ruled 757 to 797 AD).

Within the Shire, groups of households were brought together to form Hundreds with a hundredman in charge. In Staffordshire there were five hundreds of which Cuttlestone was one. There were 71 towns listed in Cuttlestone Hundred, including Walton.

To be continued.

Weeping Cross War Memorial

Many people will now be aware that the War Memorial at Weeping Cross has suffered damage and is in need of repair and maintenance. The memorial is owned by Berkswich Parish Council so the task falls to the Council to arrange repairs.

Considerable research has been carried out by Mr. Kevin Kelly of Milford, into the monument and he has collected a large amount of information on the service personnel who are listed on the monument.

In the course of his investigations, he has identified a number of ex-service people whose names

Parish Meetings

Berkswich Parish Council meetings usually take place on the first Tuesday of the month (apart from August). They are held in Walton Village Hall and normally start at 7.30 pm with a period for members of the public to ask questions. Members of the public are able to observe the full meeting apart from items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information. Agendas and minutes are published on our website (berkswich-pc.gov.uk) at least 3 clear days before meetings.



Merry Christmas

Berkswich Parish Councillors and Clerk would like to wish residents a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2022. Children are welcome to decorate the telephone box on Main Road for Christmas if they would like to.



should be included on the monument and consequently, the Council has agreed to have a third bronze plate made, to record the missing names. The personnel concerned are as follows:

**Temp. Sub-Lieutenant
Aubrey Lancelot William Norman RNR**

**Lieutenant
Basil Chamberlin
Qu'Appelle Norman**

**Sergeant
Ralph Rogers RA**

Pvt. F. Southam RE

Pvt. Leonard Tilstone

**Captain
Francis William
Trigg**

