

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2009

PRESENT

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Mandy Berrisford, Sebastian Daly, Richard Head, Mark Morris, John Price, and Chris Watkin.

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Councillor Becket
Three members of the public
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

91/09 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Ball, Cameron and Speed. An apology for absence had also been received from County Councillor Chapman.

92/09 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Councillors Bettley-Smith, Daly, Head and Morris each declared a personal interest in the co-option of a member to fill the vacancy on the Council as one or both of the candidates were known to them. Councillors Bettley-Smith, Daly, Head and Morris each declared a personal interest in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme as they were participants.

93/09 Members considered the position regarding co-option of a member to fill the vacancy in the Betley Ward. The Clerk reported that there had been two expressions of interest in the position and that both applicants were present. Details supplied by the candidates had been supplied to members. The Chairman outlined the procedure which was suggested. Each candidate would be offered five minutes to introduce themselves to members; there would be an opportunity for members to ask any questions relevant to the work of the Council; there would be no discussion of the relative merits of the candidates; there would then be a secret ballot, as requested by members. The count of the ballot would be conducted by the Clerk, and observed by two members. The outcome would be announced by the Clerk, but the precise figures would not be declared as this might compromise the secrecy of the ballot.
RESOLVED that the procedure as outlined be adopted.

Messrs Prickett and Harrison then made their presentations, and were questioned by members, and the ballot was taken. The Clerk announced that a majority of the ballot had been secured by Mr Harrison.

RESOLVED a) that Mr Simon Harrison of Twemlow Lodge, Betley Court, Betley be elected to the serve as councillor for the Betley Ward until the next normal round of elections;

b) that Mr Harrison and Mr Prickett be thanked for the interest shown in the work of the Council.

The Chairman congratulated Mr Harrison, and thanked Mr Prickett, commenting that the Council was fortunate to have received expressions of such a calibre.

Mr Harrison signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took up his position as a member of the Council.

94/09 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 26th March 2009 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

95/09 The Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow public participation. No member of the public wished to participate.

96/09 The Chairman indicated that his principal activities since the last meeting would be covered under later agenda items.

97/09 The Clerk reported on the following matters:

Minutes. In correcting the minutes of the 26th February meeting by inserting the personal declaration of interest from Cllr Head on planning application 09/00054 he had allowed an error to be made by listing the nature of the interest as Cllr Head being a resident of the area. In fact Cllr Head's declaration had related to his being an acquaintance of the applicant. The Clerk apologised for the error.

East Lawns. The Clerk reported that he had received a message of thanks from Aspire Housing for having drawn to their attention the need to ensure the reinstatement of the grassed area at the junction with Main Road, damaged by contractors' vehicles during work on the Ivydene development.

98/09 The Clerk submitted a brief report tabled by County Councillor Chapman.

99/09 Councillor Becket presented his report to members.

Cllr Wemyss. Cllr Becket indicated a 'standing apology' from his colleague Cllr Wemyss, who served on Audley Parish Council which normally met on the same evening as Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill PC.

Blue Bell tollboard. The sign now appeared to be safe in that the owners of the property were now aware of the local and Borough Council interest in its preservation.

Annual Meeting. Jane Philimore, the Borough's Recycling Officer, was intending to be in attendance.

Old Hall Barns. English Heritage had suggested a need for some limited works, primarily related to security, to avoid further deterioration. The property owners were preparing an amended scheme for the site which would be the subject of a fresh planning application.

Leycett Site. Officers were still seeking an alternative site (or sites).

Dry Recycling. Preparatory work was still continuing; there might be some slight delay but Cllr Becket felt that it was more important to ensure that the scheme worked effectively was more important than striving to meet a specific deadline.

100/09 The Clerk reported that there had been no planning applications to hand at the time the Agenda was published. However an application for works at Stone House, New Road, Wrinehill had been received that morning. Members considered the appropriate way of dealing with this application.

RESOLVED that a special meeting be arranged for Thursday 14th May to deal with the application.

101/09 The Council received Decision Notices in respect of the following planning applications:

09/00043/FUL Erection of detached dwelling (amended scheme) adj 1 Church Villas, The Butts, Betley – PERMITTED

09/00054/FUL Replacement joinery workshop, Cracow Moss, Wrinehill – REFUSED

In response to questions from members the Clerk indicated that the main ground for refusal of 09/00054 was that no special circumstances had been established to allow such development in the Green Belt. Members noted that this decision could be of strategic significance in establishing the principle that the test to allow development under Policy S.3 set a high standard.

102/09 The Clerk confirmed the report given earlier by the Borough Councillor, that English Heritage had asked for certain security works to be carried out at Old Hall Barns, and that a fresh application as expected. The Clerk also advised members of a change in the treatment of planning appeals in future in that householder application appeals would be dealt with without the opportunity for consultees to make further observations beyond those made at the initial consultation stage.

103/09 Members considered possible options for the development of a community website. Particular concern was expressed that the existence of the previous website, and the out of date information it contained was causing distress as correspondence was being sent to the late former Clerk. The Council had attempted to secure the removal of the out of date information, and the closure of the old website but had been unable to secure access to do this. A member suggested that the organisation Nominet might be able to help with the deletion of the old site.

RESOLVED that the possible deletion of the old website be pursued through Nominet.

Cllr Daly submitted a paper to members containing an outline specification for a new website. It was agreed that this should form the basis for further development work, and that a more detailed specification should be presented to the May meeting.

RESOLVED that a Working Group of Cllrs Berrisford, Bettley-Smith, Daly, Harrison and Head be asked to develop a specification for the May meeting.

104/09 Members considered the concern felt following the erection of trespass signs on the playing field. The earlier comments of Borough Councillor Becket, and the correspondence from County Councillor Chapman were noted, and it was agreed to take no further immediate action but to keep the matter under review.

105/09 Members noted that following a discussion between the Chairman and a Church Warden it was clear that the Church authorities understood the need to co-ordinate their actions re the closure of the Betley Old Churchyard with the Parish Council.

106/09 Members considered the next steps in relation to the grants offered to the Parish Council by the Horticultural Society.

Christmas Lights. Members considered that the use of this funding depended on any decision regarding the possible use of the natural conifer on the Memorial Garden as the 'Christmas Tree' and on the Village Hall Committee's view of reinstating the lights at the Village Hall.

Website. The grant offered would provide a modest contribution to the likely total cost of this project.

Memorial Garden. The estimated cost of materials was £1,500, and £842 had been offered toward this cost. There was a possibility of making up the difference from the Council's own resources, but there was concern that this might be unwise in view of other potential commitments and loss of investment income.

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk seek to clarify the Village Hall Committee's view on reinstating Christmas lighting at the Hall, and its possible cost;

b) that the Clerk investigate possible alternative sources of funding toward the works at the Memorial Garden.

107/09 The Clerk had submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due and the financial statement to 22nd April 2009.

RESOLVED a) that the Council authorises payment of the following invoices and payments due:

G Griffiths	clerk's salary	£145.44	831
Inland Revenue	tax on above	£ 29.09	832
G Griffiths	expenses	£ 19.10	833
F A Speed	plants (Meml Gdn)	£ 99.00	834
The Swan Inn	room hire	£ 45.00	835

b) that the Financial Statement be received;

c) that the Council notes the Clerk's report that the Council's investment income had fallen significantly owing to the sequence of reductions in bank interest rates.

(Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in respect of the invoice paid by cheque 835 as the payee had a close family connection)

108/09 The Clerk submitted a report to members on the Code of Conduct's requirements in the declaration of interests, and the requirements to declare the nature of any such interests.

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk be thanked for the document;

b) that the Council notes that the Clerk had investigated the matter in detail, including consultation with other local authorities and the Standards Board, and in the light of the advice given the Council collectively and individually had no grounds to report the matter to the Standards Committee.

109/09 Members considered the recent meeting held to launch a Neighbourhood Watch initiative. Although there had been a good attendance by members of the Council the public attendance had been less encouraging. Nonetheless ten residents had signed up to the scheme and the Chairman would continue to progress the project with the police.

RESOLVED a) that the Council would continue to progress the initiative;

b) that the next two phases would be: i. Ladygates, The Butts and Church Lane area; ii. Common Lane, rear of the Black Horse and Betley Court area.

110/09 The Clerk reported that the Core Strategy Inquiry had started and that the Rural Issues hearing would be on 28th April, and that he would be representing the Council as requested.

111/09 Members considered further necessary arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting.

RESOLVED that Cllr Head arrange refreshments, within a budget maximum of £100.

112/09 The Clerk had now provided the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with copies of the agreement for the use of Ordnance Survey mapping under the Borough Council's licence.
RESOLVED that the Clerk be mandated to enter into agreement on the terms set out.

113/09 Members considered issues relating to communication. Material for the June Parish Magazine was agreed; Cllr Berrisford indicated that she would like to step down from her role in submitting material after the May meeting.

114/09 The Clerk reported that following the reclassification of Bowhill Lane as a Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) the County Council was consulting on a proposal to prohibit motor traffic from the central section of the road.

RESOLVED that the Council totally and unreservedly supports the introduction of the prohibition of motor vehicles.

115/09 Members considered area issues raised by members.

Balterley. Members expressed continuing concern that a Give Way sign (and markings) had been placed at the Back Lane/ B5500 junction. The Clerk would seek clarification on the criteria used to determine the status of junctions.

Betley. Members noted recent incidents of vandalism and damage to cars along Main Road, which underlined the value of maintaining vigilance.

Wrinehill. Members noted that a vehicle in Wrinehill had also been subject to a break-in.

116/09 The Clerk submitted details of correspondence received since the last meeting.

117/09 Members noted the following planned meetings:

Thursday 14th May	Special Meeting of the Parish Council
Thursday 21st May	Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday 28th May	Annual Meeting of the Parish Council