

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2018

93/18 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Mandy Berrisford, Seb Daly, Graham Ecclestone, Dave Hales, Terry Townsend, Ian Walton and Chris Watkin.

94/18 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Northcott.

Six members of the public.

Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

95/18 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Head (family) and Speed (another engagement).

96/18 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllr Walton declared a prejudicial interest in planning application 18/00268 as he was a close neighbour to the application site. Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in planning application 18/00260 as a friend of the applicant; Cllr Hales declared a personal interest in the same application as a friend and neighbour of the applicant.

97/18 The Clerk advised that at the close of nominations there had been six nominations for the six seats in the Betley Ward, two nominations for three places in the Balterley Ward and two nominations for three places in the Wrinehill Ward. There would therefore be two vacancies on the council from May 3rd which could be filled by co-option. To date he was aware of three expressions of interest in being co-opted.

98/18 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of 22nd March be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

99/18 The Chairman outlined the procedure for public participation, and the meeting was adjourned to allow the public to speak.

One member of the public indicated that he simply wished to observe the meeting.

A second member of the public wished to comment on planning application 18/00268 (Betley Court).

He spoke for himself and a number of other residents who had concerns regarding the application. They appreciated the applicant's efforts in keeping them apprised of the plans but still had concerns regarding the potential for noise and disruption, congestion at the entrance to Court Walk, that the proposed access would take vehicles past residential properties, and noted that a majority of the access road was private with no rights of access. Proposed visitor parking was to the rear of residential properties with the potential for noise and disruption. An adjacent wall had been restored at significant cost but would be at potential risk of damage from the cars of visitors. The proposed visitor building was within the Green Belt and three times the size of the existing building.

A third member of the public expressed concern regarding the impact on an archway feature within the property.

A fourth member of the public explained that they had a right of access via the site of the existing building which abutted their property. They were concerned that the proposal would affect their privacy and create noise issues. They were also concerned about access for emergency vehicles and the impact on the Green Belt and the Conservation Area.

100/18 The Chairman presented his report on matters dealt with since the previous meeting. He had received an invitation to the Borough Council's Civic Reception, rather bizarrely addressed to a previous Clerk, who had left office over a decade ago! He had prepared a Report to the Annual Electors' Meeting which he had been unable to attend due to the meeting date having to be rearranged, which had been presented by the Vice-Chairman. Along with other members he had attended the recent Bonfire Awards Presentation where a cheque of £3,207.06 toward the cost of a speed indicator device had been received. He commended the committee for its work in fundraising to the benefit of the community.

101/18 The Vice-Chairman reported that he had taken the Chair at the Annual Electors' Meeting at which there had been appreciative and appreciated feedback from a member of the public. From the Borough Council's website it appeared that the mobile library service to the parish had been secured until at least March 2019.

102/18 The Clerk advised members that in preparing the year-end accounts he had found a £50 discrepancy which had arisen because a cheque issued for £40.00 had been processed as a payment of £90.00, presumably because of a transcription error at the bank. Having spoken to the payee it had been suggested that the easiest way to deal with the matter would be by applying the £50 as a credit toward further invoices with the same payee.

RESOLVED that the bank error be noted and that the situation be resolved by applying the overpayment as a credit against future invoices.

103/18 County Cllr Northcott presented his report and, in the absence of both Borough Councillors he also provided an update on Borough Council business. Given the proximity of the Borough Council elections and the "purdah" rules he would be circumspect in his remarks.

Borough Council.

HS2 The Select Committee had begun its work on considering petitions tabled in respect of the relevant Act. Their response to date seemed to be favourable in respect of the cemetery issue at Madeley but unfavourable on lobbying for a longer tunnel to relieve the environmental impact which seemed likely to be determined on financial grounds. Lobbying by groups which wanted an even deeper tunnel had been rapidly closed down. A response by the Committee was expected by 3rd May.

New Offices. There was still no date for the move into the new building. The contractor would be facing significant penalties for the continuing delays.

Doddlespool. He was able to report that an enforcement notice had been served in respect to the waste on site. It was also noted that there had been a recent fire at the site.

County Council.

Staffordshire Day. May 1st had been designated as Staffordshire Day and there was an intention to make this an annual event.

Community Fund. Funding would be available from 4th May under his allocation for local funding.

Highways. The Divisional Highways Programme offered a potential funding source for improvement/ safety work in the area. The Highways Team would be carrying out three days of work locally during the current week.

104/18 The Council's representatives on outside bodies had nothing significant to report though it was noted that the doorway between the committee room and the main hall had been bricked up as planned during the Easter holidays.

105/18 The Clerk advised that no urgent business had been conducted since the last meeting of the Council.

106/18 Members considered the following planning application.

[Cllr Hales declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as a close neighbour to the application site and a friend of the applicant. He withdrew from the meeting during its consideration.]

18/00260/OUT Outline application for construction of 3-bedroom Dormer bungalow and associated works, Briarwood, Common Lane, Betley.

RESOLVED That the principle of residential development on Common Lane has been established by precedent. However, given the application's location within the Conservation Area, any development would be required to meet the requirements of Planning Policies B9 and B10 of the Borough Local Plan, specifically that it must not harm the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and that "the form, scale, bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailing respect the characteristics of the buildings in the area" and that "the plot coverage characteristics respect those of the area".

Given that this is an outline application and therefore contains none of the details necessary to assess against these policies (other than to specify a 3 bedroomed dormer bungalow, which may or may not be in accordance with planning policy) the Council has no alternative but to object to the application.

107/18 Members considered the following planning application.

[Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this matter Cllr Walton withdrew from the meeting during its consideration]

18/00268/FUL Proposed opening of gardens as a visitor attraction; conversion and extension of potting shed to form toilets/office and facilities for light refreshments; demolition of garages with partial replacement and the construction of car parking, Betley Court, Main Road, Betley.

RESOLVED The Parish Council objects to the application.

The Council is strongly of the view that the preservation of the Listed Building is to be encouraged, however the application submitted cannot be supported for the following reasons:

a) The Council does not consider that very special circumstances exist to justify the development;

b) The very special circumstances claimed by the applicant, that the development would "increase the income generated by the property" in order to secure the future of the Listed Building are not supported by any evidence (see footnote 1);

c) **The Council is concerned that the size of the conversion of the potting shed into accommodation to service the visitor attraction is excessive, increasing the footprint from 29m² to 109m², an increase of 276%;**

d) **The Council is concerned that there could be a significant adverse impact on neighbouring properties and has received objections from several members of the public;**

e) **The Council is concerned that the application as submitted seems to feature out of date mapping, in particular not showing its close proximity to nearby properties.**

Footnote 1. The applicant's planning statement recognises that the proposed works would be outside normal planning policy but could be justified by "very special circumstances" primarily "the need to provide income for the upkeep of the Listed Building". In effect it is suggested that this is "enabling development" which will secure the future of the Listed Building. However no business plan appears to have been presented. Under these circumstances there is no reason to believe that the limited opening proposed - with relatively small numbers of visitors on just six weekends per annum - will meet the running costs (staffing and maintenance) and the costs of the significant works proposed (in creating car parking, access and the visitor building) let alone making any contribution to works on the Listed Building. The Local Planning Authority should not consider approving such works unless and until it has received a convincing business plan which illustrates that there is a realistic prospect of the proposed works securing the future of the Listed Building.

108/18 The Clerk advised members of the following planning decisions.

17/00968 Erection of nine dwellings etc. Site of former Wrinehill Garage, Main Road, Wrinehill - PERMITTED

18/00069 Single storey side extension, The Dingle, Old Road, Wrinehill - PERMITTED

109/18 There were no other planning matters to hand.

110/18 Members considered the provision of a war memorial feature on the Memorial Garden linked to highlighting the Window within the Church and also possibly to act as a secular memorial. The latest position, as advised by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) was noted.

RESOLVED: a) that the Council reaffirm its support of a feature which would acknowledge the fallen and also "signpost" to the memorial in the Church;

b) that the Clerk be asked to investigate with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission whether a memorial using the design of the CWGC gravestones would be permissible.

111/18 The Clerk submitted a draft Parish Council response to the Government's consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework for consideration.

RESOLVED a) that the response be endorsed and submitted;

b) that the Clerk be thanked for his work in drawing up the response.

[Note. A copy of the response may be obtained from the Clerk.]

112/18 The Clerk advised that there was nothing further to report on the Joint Local Plan at this point.

113/18 Cllr Daly reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had formally agreed that consultants should be engaged to develop the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular to provide expertise and support in areas such as the writing of the Plan, the drawing up of Planning Policies, and in steering work to a successful conclusion. However as the Parish Council was the fundholder for the Plan, and the statutory body under which the Working Group was constituted a formal resolution of the Parish Council was necessary. The Clerk explained that the consultancy fees would be the subject of a grant application and that there was little or no financial risk to the Council.

RESOLVED a) that the request by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to engage consultants be endorsed;
b) that the Clerk be authorised to commission the identified consultancy to make a grant application for such support as is deemed appropriate by the Working Group;
c) that the Working Group and the Clerk continue to keep the Council informed of progress.

114/18 The Chairman advised that a group of 12-20 Agny residents were expected to attend the Betley Show and that an informal reciprocal visit might be undertaken in the autumn.

115/18 Members considered the Council's property and assets. It was noted that an offer of a day's free work on Sandy Croft had been made by a local tree surgeon (Cllr Hales and Bettley-Smith to meet him on site to discuss what works were required) and that the Memorial Garden was looking well.

The Clerk advised members that advice from a reputable tree surgeon was that it would not be practical to carry out reduction work on the large conifer on the grassed area of the Memorial Garden and that the only alternative to retention would be removal.

RESOLVED a) that - in principle - the Council feels that the tree should be removed, having outgrown the site and having an adverse impact on the grassed area;
b) that the Clerk approach the Borough Council to determine their attitude to removal of the tree, as their permission was required to fell a tree within the Conservation Area.

116/18 Members considered feedback from the recent Annual Electors' Meeting. There had been specific positive feedback for the work on speed monitoring/ control work and, in particular, Cllr Townsend's efforts in this area.

117/18 Cllr Townsend advised members that the second Parish Council monitoring unit had been received and put to use. With two of the County units also being in temporary use within the Parish this had led to no fewer than four such units being deployed recently! It was noted that their use was having a significant effect on excessive speed.

118/18 The Clerk tabled a paper setting out a policy on the General Data Protection Regulations, which would come into force from 25th May, which he felt would be appropriate for the Parish Council. There was still some doubt about whether Parish Councils would be required to appoint a Data Protection Officer, and who could occupy such a role with different information and advice appearing on almost a daily basis. Given the current position it was suggested that a policy be adopted but that the issue of a Data Protection Officer be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED a) that the Policy as tabled be adopted with immediate effect;
b) that the appointment of a Data Protection Officer be deferred to the May meeting.

[Note. A copy of the policy may be obtained from the Clerk.]

119/18 Members considered area issues raised by members. There were no matters requiring decision.

120/18 The Clerk tabled correspondence received. There were no matters requiring decision.

121/18 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

RESOLVED a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

L Rimmer	Meml Garden & Bulbs	£ 80.00	1341
Cheque not issued			1342
Swarco Traffic Ltd	Speed monitoring unit	£3,207.06	1343
CPRE	Subscription	£ 36.00	1344

c) that the Financial Statement be received;

d) that the Bank Statements be noted, and the reconciliation verified

and be signed by the Chairman.

122/18 Members considered issues relating to council communication.

123/18 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 24th May 2018.