

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2009

PRESENT

Councillors Robert Bettley-Smith, Steven Ball, Mandy Berrisford, Jo Cameron, Seb Daly (from min.48), David Hales (from min.43), Richard Head, Mark Morris, John Price, and Chris Watkin (from min.41).

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Councillor Becket
Borough Councillor Maskery (from min.42)
Four members of the public
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

37/09 An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr Speed. An apology for late arrival had been received from Cllr Daly. An apology for absence had been received from County Councillor Chapman.

38/09 All members declared a personal interest in respect of planning application 09/00043 (The Butts). Cllr Berrisford and Morris declared prejudicial interest in respect of the same application. Cllr Price declared a personal interest in respect of planning application 09/00054 (Cracow Moss) as a resident of the area.

39/09 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 22nd January 2009 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

40/09 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 5th February 2009 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

41/09 The Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow public participation.

A member of the public queried whether members who had declared prejudicial interests should withdraw during public participation, where that referred to the agenda items in which they had declared an interest. The Clerk advised that withdrawal would not seem necessary unless there was some substantive discussion of the issue, but that the members affected should clearly not comment on any remarks made during public participation.

The member of the public thanked the Parish Council for its work in replacing the bench at Wrinehill, but asked whether any further consideration had been given to his past suggestion of flagging and/or landscaping the area. The Chairman replied that the Council was intending to draw up an enhancement scheme for the area in co-operation with a horticultural student.

The member of the public submitted detailed comments on planning application 09/00054 (Cracow Moss), drawing attention to the proposal's failure in his view to meet the requirements of PPG2 and PPG 7 (Green Belt and Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)
(Cllr Watkin joined the meeting at this point)

The member of the public also pointed out that past development on the site had involved the grubbing out of hedgerows, which had not been replaced, and that landscaping work required under previous consents had not been carried out.

A second member of the public agreed on the policy issues outlined, and raised a number of concerns regarding the particulars of the plan: the possibility of landslip, encroachment onto a neighbouring property, the ability of ground conditions to cope with soakaway drainage, and the need for reinstatement of hedgerows and the completion of landscaping required under previous permissions. She felt that the poor condition of the existing premises were a protection against over-intensification of use, and was not convinced by the argument of very special circumstances.

A third member of the public (the applicant in respect of application 09/00054) responded to the comments made. He disputed that the hedges referred to had been hedges, and expressed the view that the application site was in fact helping to physically support the neighbouring property.

A fourth member of the public (the applicant in respect of application 09/00043) sought an assurance that members understood that the application was for an amendment to an existing permission, and was not a new scheme. The changes were the amendment from brick to stone in the materials used for sills and lintels, and a small extension on the chapel side of the site.

(Borough Councillor Maskery joined the meeting at this point)

42/09 Borough Councillor Maskery made a presentation to members on the subject of Locality Action Groups. These had developed, largely at the instigation of the police, out of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership which brought together local authorities, fire, police and probation services etc. Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill had been placed within an LAG based on Madeley, but it was clear that BBW had not been given an opportunity to participate. Cllr Maskery would now ensure that BBW was invited to meetings, which took place every six weeks.

Members asked for examples of successes achieved through the LAG process. Cllr Maskery cited examples from Madeley where the LAG had “bought in” extra policing, and the town centre where the LAG had funded additional late-night marshalling. Other examples of LAG initiatives were schemes to supply doorstep and handbag alarms for older people.

RESOLVED that the question of participation in the Locality Action Group be considered further at the March meeting, and that the Chairman or another member be authorised to attend any LAG meeting which might take place in the meantime.

(Cllr Hales joined the meeting at this point)

43/09 Borough Councillor Maskery made a presentation to members on the Rural Runabout scheme for accessible transport in rural areas. He outlined the history of the scheme by which five local parishes had combined to obtain Department for Transport funding to provide a minibus which was very widely used by the community for shopping trips, visits to medical facilities and social outings by individuals, small groups and voluntary organisations. Cllr Maskery expressed the view that it was a shame that BBW did not participate, and invited the Council to consider joining the scheme.

RESOLVED that participation in the scheme be considered at the March meeting.

44/09 The Chairman thanked Cllr Maskery for giving up his time in order to provide members with the information supplied.

45/09 The Clerk presented a brief update on recent activities supplied by the County Councillor.

46/09 The Borough Councillor presented his report to members. The Borough Council Tax was to increase by 2.5%, with no service reductions and some improvements. His attention had been drawn to No Trespassing signs which had been erected on the playing field, which he felt inappropriate in light of the public right of way across the land. He had raised the issue with the County Council, and had discussed it with County Councillor Chapman. He had also asked Cllr Chapman to follow up the suggestion that the A531 through Betley might be reclassified as a B road, but indicated that any such request would require broad support e.g. from the relevant Parish Councils.

RESOLVED to consider the matter further on receipt of further advice from the County Councillor.

47/09 Members considered the following planning application:

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

(Cllrs Berrisford & Morris withdrew during consideration of this item)

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection to the application.

48/09 Members considered the following planning application:

09/00054/FUL Replacement joinery workshop, Cracow Moss, Wrinehill.

(During consideration of this item, when it became apparent that the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group had commented on the application, Cllr Bettley-Smith declared a personal interest as a former Chief Executive of that organisation)

(Cllr Daly joined the meeting during consideration of this item, but left again prior to the passing of the resolution. He declared a personal interest in the application as the applicant was both a client, and also served with him on a local committee)

RESOLVED that (subject to the issues below being resolved) the Parish Council has no objection to the scheme as submitted as it feels it would enhance the appearance of the area.

However the Borough Council as planning authority will need to satisfy itself that:

a) the development meets all requirements of Local Plan policies, specifically Policies S.3 and N.18;

b) the increased height of the workshop and any associated works in connection with the application will not impact adversely on the residential amenity of nearby properties;

c) any landscaping requirements of this application or any previous permissions are adequate for their purpose and can be adequately enforced.

The Parish Council has also received submissions indicating engineering concerns that the scheme proposed could have an adverse impact on the stability of the site's eastern boundary (with the adjoining doctor's surgery). The Borough Council will need to assure itself that the stability of the slope can be maintained in view of possible effects on the neighbouring property and, potentially, the highway.

49/09 The Council received Decision Notices in respect of the following planning applications:

08/00954/COU Change of use from farm building to residential/ office accommodation, Pear Tree Farm, Balterley – REFUSED

08/00961/FUL Two storey two bedroomed guest annexe, The Okd Wood, Betley Hall Gardens, Betley – REFUSED

50/09 The Clerk reported that there were no accounts for payment.

51/09 **RESOLVED** a) that the Financial Statement be received;
b) that the Clerk be asked to provide the Financial Statement to be despatched with the agenda papers in future to allow more time for their consideration by members.

52/09 Cllrs Hales and Morris reported that the new bench had now been installed at Wrinehill. They were thanked for their efforts by members.

(Cllr Daly rejoined the meeting at this point)

53/09 Members considered arrangements for the Annual (Electors') Parish Meeting, and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Meeting be held on Thursday 21st May, and the Annual Meeting of the Council be held on Thursday 28th May;
b) that arrangements for providing refreshments follow the pattern of 2008;
c) that the following items be incorporated on the 21st May :-
Every Action Counts presentation
Presentation on Recycling (NULBC)
Locality Action Groups
Neighbourhood Watch
An overview on current policing issues
Stalls for community groups.

(Cllr Bettley-Smith left the meeting briefly during consideration of this item; Cllr Head took the Chair and retained it to the end of the item)

54/09 Cllr Daly advised members that a representative of the Crewe & Nantwich Dial a Ride had visited the area suggesting that the scheme was interested in extending its activities to the Betley area.

RESOLVED that, in view of the possibility of overlap and/or conflict between this initiative and the Rural Runabout scheme discussed earlier in the meeting, the Clerk be asked to obtain further information, and the issue be discussed at the next meeting.

55/09 Cllr Daly reported to members on the outcome of the survey carried out in the East Lawns area. There was some disappointment that only 16 responses had been received, but it was felt that this may have been because some residents did not feel they were directly affected by the issues addressed.

RESOLVED that Cllr Daly be delegated to report the survey results to Aspire Housing for their attention.

56/09 Members considered whether any maintenance work was necessary at Laudy Croft. It was noted that some of the warning signs were damaged and would need replacement.

57/09 The Chairman reported to members on an apparent opportunity to obtain appropriate large-scale mapping by use of the licence held by the Borough Council.

RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate this with the Borough Council and report back to the next meeting.

58/09 Members considered issues relating to communication. It was agreed that the main subjects in the next Parish Magazine should be the Annual Meetings and the outcome of the East Lawns consultation. Parish Council News had been at least part-delivered. It was agreed that a substantive discussion of the rejuvenation of the web presence should take place at the April meeting.

59/09 The Clerk reported that two tenders had been received for maintenance work at the Memorial Garden. There was only a small variance between the prices quoted, and this depended on the degree to which the contractor was asked to carry out additional works.
RESOLVED that the maintenance contract at the Memorial Garden for 2009 be awarded to DT Askey of Wrinehill in the sum of £1,050 + £10ph for any additional work beyond that identified in the contract.

60/09 A member expressed concern that the Police speed monitoring van was being parked inappropriately on the pavement on occasion.
RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the police asking them to ensure that the vehicle parks appropriately.

61/09 Concerns had been raised with a member regarding the erection of No Trespassing signs on the playing field (see min. 46), which seemed to imply that the long-standing footpath across the field could not be used legitimately. It was agreed that, if asked, the Council's position should be that the Parish Council has no information to suggest that the path cannot be used.

62/09 The Chairman noted the receipt of a complaint from a member of the public that the Clerk had failed to respond to two e-mails sent in September and December 2008. The Clerk reported that he had already apologised for failing to respond to the September e-mail; the December e-mail had been sent during the period when he had been having serious problems with his internet service provider and he had no recollection of receiving the message. Nonetheless he was happy to apologise for any failing. The Chairman also apologised on behalf of the Council.

63/09 The Clerk submitted details of other correspondence received since the last meeting.
RESOLVED a) that the Clerk seek written confirmation from the Ministry of Justice that no liability would fall on the Parish Council following closure of Betley Old Churchyard;
b) that in respect of the High Hedges Notice at Betley Hall Gardens the Parish Council has no comment, but supports the Borough Council in taking appropriate action at law;
c) that the representation of the Parish Council at the Public Inquiry into the Core Strategy (planning) be considered further at the March meeting.