

# BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2009

### PRESENT

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Steven Ball, Mandy Berrisford (from min.08), Jo Cameron, Seb Daly (from min.05), David Hales (from min.04), Richard Head, Mark Morris, John Price, Frank Speed and Chris Watkin.

### IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillor Chapman  
Borough Councillor Becket  
PCSO Cartwright  
One member of the public  
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

01/09 Apologies for likely late arrival had been received from Cllrs Berrisford and Daly.

02/09 Cllr Watkin declared a personal interest in respect of planning application 08/00961 as his parents were residents of Betley Hall Gardens.

03/09 **RESOLVED** that subject to the correction of Martin to Morris in the list of apologies received (min.272/08) the minutes of the meeting of 27th November 2008 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

(Cllr Hales joined the meeting at this point)

04/09 **RESOLVED** that subject to the correction of Martin to Morris in the list of apologies received (min.295/08), and the correction of Head to Hales in the list of interests declared (min.296/08, with reference to planning application 08/00489), the minutes of the meeting of 11th December 2008 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

05/09 The Chairman invited PCSO Cartwright to update the Council on recent and current local policing issues.

(Cllr Daly joined the meeting at this point)

PCSO Cartwright reported on two recent incidents: an attempted break-in to steal car keys, which appeared to be a one-off incident, and instances of theft of gardening equipment and gathering of youths at a location within the village. Police had attended in both cases and no further incidents had been observed.

Reports had been received of a couple of strange phone calls, which may have been attempts to obtain information for possible criminal activity, and there had been one report of a suspicious vehicle. This appeared to be the sum total of criminal activity since the November meeting.

A street meeting had been organised at East Lawns, which had been well-attended and successful.

Members raised issues of concern. It was noted that there was a village perception of something of a crime wave, but this seemed to be a response to incidents in the autumn of 2008, rather than the current situation. Members thanked the police for their attendance.

06/09 County Councillor Chapman presented his report to the Council. He reported that a new access was proposed at the Leycett amenity site. This had been supported by Madeley Parish Council, but an objection from Keele Parish Council meant that the application would have to be referred to the County Planning Committee. The long-term aim was to relocate to a new site, but the access improvements were intended to improve and extend facilities in the interim. Members expressed their general support for the proposed improvements.

The STOP sign at the junction of Back Lane with the B5500 at Balterley had still not been reinstated despite repeated reporting through the Clarence system. Cllr Chapman undertook to press this matter, and reported that the highways department was to be significantly reorganised from April 2009.

07/09 The Clerk advised members that he had received a letter of resignation from Cllr Bellamy, who had indicated a wish to stand down owing to work commitments limiting his ability to fulfil the role of councillor.

**RESOLVED a) that the resignation be accepted;  
b) that the Clerk take the necessary steps to advertise the vacancy;  
c) that the Chairman write on the Council's behalf thanking former Councillor Bellamy for his contribution.**

(Cllr Berrisford joined the meeting at this point)

08/09 The Chairman presented a report on activities since the last meeting. The switching on of the Christmas Tree lights had gone well, but it was suggested that the date of switch-on should be brought forward to the first Friday (rather than second Friday) of December in 2009. There had also been a suggestion that, for environmental reasons, the lights should decorate the cedar tree on the Memorial Garden rather than on an imported Christmas Tree. It was agreed to review the arrangements at the April meeting. The Chairman also reported that he had acted as starter for the Betley Mile.

09/09 The Clerk reported that two late planning applications had been received, and sought the Council's advice on how they should be dealt with.

**RESOLVED a) that in view of the minor change being sought the application in respect of Chamberlain House be considered at this meeting;  
b) that in view of it being an application for a new structure which may be contentious the application in respect of the summer house at Beech Cottage be deferred to a special meeting of the Council.**

10/09 Members considered the following planning application:

**09/00002/FUL Amendment to planning application 08/00884/FUL to incorporate a new dormer in place of a rooflight at front of extension, Chamberlain House, Chamberlain Court, Betley.**

**RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection to the proposal.**

11/09 Borough Councillor Becket presented his report to the Council. He reported that the Council Tax increase for 2009-10 was likely to be 2.9%, a lower figure than that probably to be set by the County and Police authorities. The Council's financial position was not bad compared to other authorities, but next year was likely to be difficult especially if the economy continues to be in difficulties. From spring 2009 a new tender for dry recyclables

would incorporate plastics and cardboard, with a weekly food waste and garden waste collection from the autumn.

Cllr Becket also raised two issues which he felt it would be worthwhile for the Parish Council to further consider: the Locality Action Groups initiative under which Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill would be linked with Madeley, and the possibility of being involved in the Rural Runabout scheme. It was agreed to consider both issues at a future meeting.

12/09 The Council considered the following planning application.

**08/00954/FUL Change of use from farm building to provide residential office accommodation, Pear Tree Farm, Balterley Green Road, Balterley.**

**RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection subject to the window recesses remaining defined by the use of appropriate materials, and that any replacement features using appropriate traditional materials.**

13/09 The Council considered the following planning application.

**08/00961/FUL Construction of a one and a half storey, two-bedroomed lakeside guest annexe, The Old Wood, Betley Hall Gardens, Betley.**

**RESOLVED that the Parish Council strongly opposes the application on the following grounds:**

a) that it contravenes Policy S.3 as new development within the Green Belt, and that there are no very special circumstances to justify development;

b) that the Council believes that the application is not consistent with Policies B.10 and B.11 (in that there is an intent to demolish an existing structure), and B.13 and B.15 (in that the application requires the removal of semi-mature trees);

c) that it is not consistent with Policy N.18, in that its siting, form and materials fail to reflect the character or protect the appearance of the area.

14/09 The Council received Decision Notices in respect of the following planning applications:

08/00844/FUL Smoking Shelter, Hand and Trumpet, Wrinehill – PERMITTED

08/00884/FUL Two storey side extension, Chamberlain House, Chamberlain Court, Betley – PERMITTED

15/09 The Clerk presented members with a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the financial statement to 22nd January 2009.

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

DT Askey	Meml Garden maintenance	£100.00	820
G Griffiths	Salary	£465.41	821
Inland Revenue	Income Tax on above	£116.35	822
G Griffiths	Expenses	£ 32.52	823

b) that in future cheque signatories should also initial the invoices presented;

c) that the Financial Statement be received, but that the coding of payment 819 be amended from Admin to Grants.

16/09 Members considered the salary scale fixed for the Clerk's remuneration. The Chairman introduced the item and invited the Clerk to set out the background to the setting of Clerk's salaries as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils.

(The Clerk withdrew from the meeting during discussion of this item)

**RESOLVED that the Clerk's remuneration be based on Salary Scale 4, Spinal Point 21 (currently SP 20) from 1st April 2009.**

**[Note. This will result in the Clerk's hourly rate being increased from £9.09ph to £9.42ph (2008 settlement pending)]**

(The Clerk rejoined the meeting)

17/09 Members considered a report prepared by the Clerk setting out recent expenditure patterns, a draft budget for 2009-10, and options for a precept for the coming year. After considering the information provided it was:

**RESOLVED a) that the precept to be levied by Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Council for the year 2009-2010 be fixed at £10,130, and that the Clerk take all necessary steps to notify Newcastle Borough Council of this decision;**

**b) that the Budget for 2009-2010 be as set out in the Clerk's report subject to the provision for Memorial Garden maintenance being increased to £1,200 and an additional £870 being provided for website development;**

**c) that the Clerk be asked to investigate other investment options for the Council, subject to no increase in the level of risk.**

18/09 Members considered whether the Parish Council should apply for grant aid from the Bonfire Committee.

(Councillors Daly and Head withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item, declaring personal interests owing to their involvement with the Bonfire Committee)

Three schemes were considered: assistance toward the development of a community website; repaving of the pathway on the Memorial Garden; and enhancement of Christmas lights.

**RESOLVED a) that a grant of £3,000 be sought toward the cost of developing a community website to link village organisations;**

**b) that the other schemes be considered further at the next meeting, and that additional information be obtained.**

(Cllrs Daly and Head rejoined the meeting)

19/09 Councillors Berrisford and Cameron advised members of progress on the Every Action Counts initiative. The first "taster" session was scheduled for the Reading Room on 24th January, with other sessions likely.

20/09 Members considered a draft questionnaire for the East Lawns area, drawn up following the successful street meeting.

**RESOLVED that the questionnaire be approved for distribution.**

21/09 Members considered a letter which had been received from Betley Football Club asking the Parish Council to consider the possibility of their acquiring the Council's land at Laudy Croft. The Clerk outlined the background to the current position regarding the site, in particular the restrictions placed on the site by the Borough Council in terms of both the Parish Council's rights to dispose of it, and the restrictions on usage imposed by the

Environmental Health Department because of potential hazard. Following discussion by members it was:

**RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Betley Football Club indicating that the Council must decline the request on the following grounds:**

a) as the condition of the site is unknown, and is on the Borough Council's list for inspection of contaminated sites, the Council is not in a position to consider disposal of the site;

b) Newcastle Borough Council has a first option on any disposal of the site by the Parish Council, and the contractual relationship is such that the Parish Council would have to offer the site to the Borough Council before considering any other disposal.

22/09 Members noted that no maintenance work was currently necessary at Laudy Croft.

23/09 The Chairman reported that discussions with Ordnance Survey had suggested a possible way forward in obtaining detailed mapping of the parish, but that further information was required. It was agreed to consider the matter further at the February meeting.

24/09 Members considered issues relating to communication. Content for the next issue of the Parish Magazine was agreed, and material for the next issue of Parish Council News would be approved at a special meeting in early February.

25/09 Members considered the process for awarding a contract for the maintenance of the Memorial Garden in 2009.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk issue an invitation to tender for the work in accordance with the procedure used in 2008.**

26/09 Members expressed concern at the failure of the highways department to adequately clean local road signs.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk collate information as provided by members.**

27/09 The Chairman and Clerk submitted details of correspondence received since the last meeting.

28/09 Members considered the need for an additional meeting prior to the next scheduled meeting.

**RESOLVED a) that an additional meeting be held on Thursday 5th February to consider items requiring early despatch;**

**b) that the next ordinary meeting be held on Thursday 26th February.**