

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2017

1/17 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Seb Daly, Dave Hales, Richard Head, Frank Speed, Terry Townsend and Ian Walton.

2/17 IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the public.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

3/17 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Berrisford (family), Ecclestone (holiday), Thomas (holiday) and Watkin (family). An apology for absence had also been received from County Cllr Loades.

4/17 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.
No declarations were made at this point.

5/17 **RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of Cllrs Berrisford and Daly to the list of those in attendance and the correction of “Si=unday” to read “Sunday” in Min.345/16, the minutes of the meeting of 24th November 2016 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

6/17 There were no members of the public wishing to engage in public participation. A representative of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) was however present and at the suggestion of the Chairman it was **RESOLVED that consideration of Item 8 (Churchyard extension) be brought forward to this point in the meeting.**

7/17 The representative of the PCC provided an update to members. A contract had been awarded and some works had been carried out. However further work would be delayed to April/May for reasons of ground conditions. The contract price remained unchanged at £3,480 and the PCC was pleased with the Parish Council's offer of a contribution of 50% of total cost to a maximum of £1,750.

8/17 The Chairman had nothing to report on any actions since the last meeting. The Vice-Chairman indicated that he was still waiting for Cllr Loades to offer a date for a site meeting to discuss traffic issues in Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane.

9/17 The Clerk advised members that the County Council had now given formal notice that the Parish Lengthman agreement would cease from April and that the provision of around £1,000 for local highways work would cease.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the County Council indicating the Parish Council's disappointment at the cessation of funding, pointing out that rather than being used for amenity purposes the funding had been used recently to secure basic highway safety work and that the County Council be formally put on notice that the Parish Council was very concerned at the unsafe condition of certain highways in the parish.

The Clerk advised members that a VAT reclaim had been submitted but that he had experienced difficulty with two invoices (involving a reclaim of £36.01) as the suppliers'

registration numbers had not been recognised. He had enclosed the original invoices with the claim and hoped that HMRC would be able to identify the suppliers.

Works to install two kissing gates off Common Lane were now underway, as previously agreed, and within budgetary provision. However a third gate was required in order to allow for a circular walk to be completed.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to extend the contract to allow for the purchase and installation of a third gate on the footpath off Common Lane within existing budgetary provision.

[Cllrs Hales and Speed each declared a personal interest in the above item as landowners in the area]

10/17 The Clerk read out an e-mail received from County Cllr Loades which covered the following points:

The results of the speed surveys carried out in the village would be presented to the next meeting;

Support for a term-time “Twenty is Plenty” scheme had been secured;

He would be meeting the headteacher of the school in February to discuss traffic and pedestrian issues in the area;

He was “annoyed and embarrassed by the total lack of action by our Highways department” over the “unacceptable situation over local pavements” and had involved the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder in the hope of a positive outcome.

A member expressed disappointment that no progress had been made with Cllr Loades’s undertaking to arrange a site meeting involving the school headteacher, the joint Chairs of Governors and Parish Council representatives to discuss traffic issues near the school despite the fact that he had offered to arrange such a meeting in October 2016.

A member pointed out that the centre of the village had been visited twice by persons - presumably on behalf of the Highways Authority - marking out various sections of pavement in Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane and on Main Road on the 12th and 24th January, presumably with a view to repairs being carried out. The markings seemed irregular with bad areas unmarked and better areas marked for attention. The Clerk would investigate what work was planned.

11/17 There was no report from the Borough Councillors. Members expressed disappointment that the Borough Councillors were again unable to attend.

12/17 Cllr Daly advised members that the Joint Chairs of the School Governing Body had expressed disappointment that no meeting had been arranged by County Cllr Loades to discuss the highway safety issues around the school.

13/17 Cllr Head advised members that Phase 6 of the Village Hall improvements had been completed and the Committee was now looking at Phase 7, which would include improvements to the play area.

14/17 Cllr Daly informed members that the next meeting of the Betley Trust was scheduled for 6th April.

15/17 The Clerk advised members of Urgent Business dealt with since the last meeting.

In consultation with the Chairman he had authorised the purchase of a number of planning documents from the Borough Council which would be placed on loan to the Neighbourhood Plan Group to facilitate their work and would then pass to the Parish Council.

He had also arranged payment of the invoice for a Christmas lighting loom.

16/17 The Clerk presented a paper setting out the position regarding the setting of a Budget and Precept for 2017-2018 which had been complicated by uncertainty regarding grant provision from both the Borough and County Councils. It was now clear that grant funding from the Borough would be reduced and that the grant funding from the County would cease. However the Parish Council's financial position remained sound and it was practicable to maintain the Parish element of the Council Tax at an unchanged level.

RESOLVED a) that the Budget as outlined by the Clerk be approved to include the use of £3,673 from balances;

b) that the Precept be set at a level equal to that set in 2016-2017 (I.e. the equivalent of £17.26 per Band D property);

c) that the Clerk be authorised to make any further necessary changes to reflect any further adjustments to grant provision;

d) that the Clerk be thanked for his work in preparing the necessary briefings for members.

17/17 There were no planning applications, decision notices or other planning matters to hand. However it was noted that the following applications, considered at the last meeting of the Council, had all been approved:

16/00875/FUL Erection of a metal clad agricultural building, land north west of Pigeon House Farm, Deans Lane, Balterley.

16/00791/FUL Garage loft conversion with dormer, The Old Wood, Betley Hall Gardens, Betley.

16/00939/FUL Rear conservatory with atrium roof, Lake View, 21 Betley Hall Gardens, Betley.

It was also understood that several detailed applications had been submitted in respect of the refurbishment of The Broughton Arms, Balterley which suggested that the scheme was progressing.

18/17 Members considered issues relating to the Laudy Croft site, in particular the options for furnishing the site with benches and picnic tables as previously agreed. The Clerk advised members that, in accordance with the Council's previous decision, he had negotiated a 7.5% discount on the supply of furniture as agreed. Members would need to consider the detail finish of the recycled picnic bench and whether the bases for the furniture should be on concrete slabs or flagstones.

RESOLVED a) that the all-black finish be selected for the recycled table;

b) that Cllrs Bettley-Smith and Daly be authorised to meet on-site to consider the best approach to the siting of the furniture and the need for bases.

19/17 The Clerk advised members of correspondence received regarding roadstone on Common Lane.

RESOLVED that the Council reaffirms its previous decision (Minute 290/16) to offer to arrange supply of replacement materials to a location to be identified by local residents.

20/17 Cllr Head reported on progress on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Members were asked to determine which format (referred to as A or B) should be used, and any final corrections or alterations which needed to be made to the Questionnaire.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council

a) expresses its appreciation of all the work done by the Steering Group to date, and also agrees to further expenditure as needed to revise the document at the printer;

b) prefers the use of Option B as the format;

c) approves the following final amendments to the draft

Questionnaire:

1. Page 3 was felt to be too wordy. Suggested that it should be restricted to points of instruction, with points of process covered in Richard Head's letter. To be worked up by Cllr Head and the Clerk. Division roughly as follows:

Instruction - Bullet Points 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Process - Bullet Points 2, 3, 4, 7, 8

2. Page 1. "Additional questionnaires can be obtained from the village shop/post office or Pool Farm Veterinary Surgery" (Bullet point 12 should also read village shop/post office)

3. Return details should be in Bold Blue on page 3; also on front; also below final question (Q25).

4. Q21. Add Vet's Surgery to list of local services.

5. Q22. Wording needs to be the "might be appropriate" wording, as previously agreed.

6. Q24. "Is" should be "Are" as subject is plural.

7. Q25. Extensively redrafted as follows:

Facilities in the Parish, such as the maintenance of the Memorial Garden (the village green), the Christmas lights, the reopening of Laudy Croft for public use, the administration and other work of the Parish Council is funded by the Parish Precept, which forms part of the Council Tax. Since 2007 the Parish Precept has remained the same, at the equivalent of £17.34 per annum for a Band D property.

The County and Borough Councils are now removing grant funding to services in our area. As a result, to maintain these services the Parish Council would need to increase its share of the Council Tax.

Which of the following options would you support:

Maintaining the current Parish Precept, meaning services would have to be cut []

An average increase of £5 per household, per year to maintain current service levels []

An average increase of £10 per household, per year allowing services to be enhanced []

8. Q4/5. The 3Bed+ option should be divided into 3/4Bed and 5Bed+

9. The rear cover should feature a box and an invitation "Please use this space for any further thoughts or comments".

21/17 There was nothing further to note regarding the condition of local pavements and the traffic safety issues around the school though members looked forward to a long-awaited report at the next meeting.

22/17 Cllr Townsend advised members of the current situation regarding the purchase of portable speed monitoring equipment. At the next meeting he would bring forward the options available from the preferred supplier.

23/17 Area issues raised by members were considered.

RESOLVED that the flagpole be removed from the Memorial Garden until it was again required.

24/17 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting relating to a request to name a local lane, a proposed antiques event in the Parish, Christmas Cards received from the Borough Council and a schedule of police surgeries.

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Council would have no objection to the lane between Deans Lane and the B5500, already known locally as Pigeon House Lane, gaining that name officially;

**b) that the letter regarding a proposed antiques event was noted;
c) that the Council does not believe it appropriate that at a time of budget cuts both the Mayor and Leader of the Borough Council sent cards to the Parish Council Chairman;**

d) that the schedule of police surgeries be welcomed, but that more could be done to accommodate working residents by alternating the weekday surgeries between daytime and evening.

25/17 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

26/17 **RESOLVED a) that the Council notes the following payment, authorised under the Urgent Business procedure:**

Lampholder 2000 Ltd	Christmas Lighting Loom	£ 330.60	1264
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L Rimmer	Memorial Garden maint	£ 100.00	1265
Newcastle under Lyme BC	Planning documents	£ 57.94	1266
G Griffiths	Salary/ Expenses	£ 803.18	1267
S Daly (reimbursement)	Christmas Lighting	£ 243.00	1268

**b) that the Council authorises payment of the following:
b) that the Financial Statement be received;
c) that the Bank Statements be noted, and the reconciliation verified and be signed by the Chairman.**

27/17 Members considered any necessary works at the Memorial Garden.

RESOLVED a) that the Working Group arrange the removal of the flagpole and the lighting looms from the tree;

b) that the Clerk take any necessary steps to consider trimming the tree to make it more suitable for use as a Christmas Tree at Christmas 2017.

28/17 Members considered matters relating to council communication.

29/17 Date of next meeting: Thursday 23rd February 2017.