

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2019

1/19 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Mandy Berrisford, Neil Bullock, Seb Daly, Dave Hales, Tony Reah, Frank Speed, Terry Townsend, Ian Walton and Chris Watkin.

2/19 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Northcott.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

3/19 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ecclestone (holiday) and Head (other commitment).

4/19 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in any matters relating to planning and environmental issues at Doddlespool as the landowner was a former client of his practice. In the event of any substantive discussions relating to activities on the land he would regard it as a prejudicial interest.

5/19 **RESOLVED** that subject to the correction of Minutes 340 (by amending 'Waybutts' to 'Waybutt' and 'roor' to 'rear') and 346 (by adding the words 'Cllr Bullock indicated that ...' prior to 'Cllr Hales wished to record ...' etc.) the minutes of the meeting of 22nd November be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

6/19 **RESOLVED** that subjection to the correction of Minute 361 (by amending 'rto' to 'to') the minutes of the meetings of 20th December be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

7/19 There were no members of the public present to engage in public participation.

8/19 The Chairman advised members of a number of issues with which he had dealt since the last meeting.

Issues relating to Doddlespool would be dealt with at the appropriate point later in the meeting.

The applicant in respect of the Betley Court planning application had expressed disappointment that he had not been aware that the Council had dealt with the application at its December special meeting. The Chairman had responded by pointing out that the special meeting had been appropriately publicised and its timing had been necessary because of the date at which the application had been lodged.

He had received an e-mail that day relating to dates for the police surgeries. It was agreed that the dates would be publicised via the parish magazine.

9/19 The Vice-Chairman advised members that in view of the difficulties experienced by members in the absence of printed copies of planning applications he had investigated the potential use of a laptop and projector to allow details of applications to be displayed on the wall of the meeting room. A brief demonstration suggested that this would be practical and members indicated that they would wish to use the technology on future occasions.

10/19 The Clerk advised members that Cllr Townsend had prepared a further grant application for speed monitoring equipment dependent on formal approval by the Council.

RESOLVED that a grant application to fund a further speed monitoring device be approved and that Cllr Townsend and the Clerk be authorised to progress the matter.

11/19 County Councillor Northcott presented his report to members which included the following matters:

Borough Councillors White had other commitments that evening and had asked him to offer their apologies to the meeting.

The County Council continued to face a significant financial gap for 2019-20. The original budget proposal had been “called in” in response to the potential withdrawal of school crossing patrols. These had now been safeguarded following additional government funding.

There was good news on jobs and the local economy with near full employment, and an unemployment rate in Newcastle of just 1.3%.

Safer Neighbourhood Panels, which had been established to scrutinise local police performance, were carrying out a recruitment drive for members. Cllr Northcott indicated that he had joined the Panel in order to represent the rural area but that further representation would be welcomed. Cllr Bullock indicated a willingness to serve on the Panel.

RESOLVED that Cllr Bullock be formally nominated to represent the Parish Council on the local Safer Neighbourhoods Panel.

Cllr Northcott indicated that he would arrange for the nomination to be forwarded.

Staffing resources within Highways had now been diverted from potholes work to gritting as necessary. The County Council had secured £20million in extra government funding of which £9million was to be allocated as a one-off for highways works. Cllr Northcott intended to target drainage works within this budget or his Divisional Highways Budget.

The 2019-20 Budget would be formally approved by Cabinet on 30th January and by Council in February.

A new Pan-Staffordshire approach to mental health services for young people had been drawn up by the County Council, Stoke Unitary, Clinical Commissioning Groups and 60 providers within the sector. This was considered to offer a new and better strategy.

Allied Healthcare, a significant provider of social care services, had entered administration. An alternative provider, Archangel, had taken up the role in what seemed an effective manner.

A member, referring to earlier remarks regarding school crossing patrol, asked whether a patrol in the village was a viable option. A patrol had been provided in the past and there was some uncertainty whether it had been withdrawn by the County Council or because it had proved difficult to recruit staff. Cllr Northcott indicated that any request should be submitted in writing. Cllr Daly undertook to raise the issue with the school.

12/19 In the unavoidable absence of the Borough Councillors Cllr Northcott offered to provide an update on borough issues which was welcomed.

A new Chief Executive had been appointed and would take up the role from 4th February.

Cabinet had met on 16th January and had approved a Budget (which would be considered by Council), a Capital Strategy, Capital and Revenue Budgets. A £300,000 growth fund had been provided to be used in three main areas:

Town centre issues, including parking, the market and the Ryecroft site. It was hoped this could be used as leverage for further grant funding.

Borough Council “Transformation” to secure future economies by changing the way the Council operated (e.g. by switching to much more economical on-line technologies rather than written or person to person transactions).

“Building for the Future” - looking to reduce the Council’s liabilities for redundant assets, and to develop opportunities for residential or commercial development to create a future revenue streams.

An Enforcement Protocol was to be adopted to set out the member role and access to enforcement issues.

13/19 The Council’s representatives on outside bodies presented their reports.

Cllr Reah advised that the January LAP meeting had been postponed to 5th February.

Cllr Bullock had attended the Parish Councils Association training event, which he had found very useful. He had received an informative set of slides which he would be happy to share with all members.

14/19 The Clerk advised that no items had been dealt with as urgent business since the last meeting of the Council.

15/19 The Clerk reported that he had received notice of a planning application relating to the notification of a proposed change of use (reference 18/00998/NOTCOU). The substance was that permission had previously

been granted for the conversion of redundant farm buildings at Ravenshall Top Farm to a farmworker's dwelling. The applicant now wished instead to convert the buildings to two dwellings, without any agricultural restriction. It was the applicant's case that the proposed conversion comprised permitted development under Class Q of Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order and that no further planning consent would be required. The implication for the Parish Council was that if the Borough Council accepted the applicant's contention then such a conversion could proceed without any further consultation or consideration. However if the Borough Council concluded that the proposal did not fall within permitted development it was unclear whether a further planning application would be required or if 18/00998 would be considered to suffice, which raised issues for the Parish Council in relation to commenting on the application.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to clarify the situation and to stress to the Borough Council would expect to be consulted on any application.

16/19 No planning decision notices had been received. However it was understood that the application at Green Valley Farm had been withdrawn, and the appeal in respect of the proposed garage at Rosebank, Wrinehill had been dismissed.

17/19 The Chairman reported that following the special meeting held in December to consider five applications a letter of complaint had been received from the applicants for the three applications relating to development at Old Hall Farm. In consultation with the Chairman the Clerk had drawn up a response setting out the background to the Council's decision and comments. Both the Chairman and the Clerk were content that the Council had dealt with the matter appropriately, and that the Council's observations on the applications were both valid and appropriate. If the applicants felt there were any errors or misunderstandings then these could be addressed by submitting comments to the Borough Council as the planning authority.

18/19 The Chairman provided an update on issues relating to developments and activities at Doddlespool. The local MP had reported that he had met with representatives from the Environment Agency (EA) and with local residents. Staffordshire County Council had declined to respond as they considered that the EA was acting.

[Cllrs Daly & Speed withdrew from the meeting at this point as it appeared there would be substantive discussion and they considered that their connections constituted prejudicial interests]

Members expressed concern that activities in the area by Mr Oulton was resulting in the deposit of mud on the road in a manner which constituted a significant highway safety hazard. The parking of vehicles on the main road was also creating a hazard. There was evidence of significant activity on site which could be in breach of the conditions of any relevant planning consent.

RESOLVED that the Clerk, as a matter of urgency, place both the Borough and County Councils on notice that the situation constituted a serious hazard to road users and was also damaging the integrity of the road surface and that each authority should exercise their powers to address the issues.

[Cllrs Daly and Speed rejoined the meeting]

19/19 Members considered the Budget and Precept for 2019-20.

RESOLVED a) that the Budget for 2019-20 be as set out in the Clerk's report subject to the addition of a Budget line for Administration - Contingency in the sum of £500, resulting in the projected increase in balances being amended to a sum of £144;

b) that the Precept be set in the sum of £16,035.

20/19 At the request of the Clerk members considered the balance on the speed monitoring budget line which had accrued due to the ability to reclaim VAT, and economies on the planned budget for purchase of equipment. It was pointed out that the first signs to be acquired would shortly be out of warranty and that a maintenance contract could be appropriate. In addition some further signage might be required.

RESOLVED that the balance be used to fund the maintenance contract as necessary, and any appropriate further signage.

21/19 There were no issues relating to HS2 to be considered.

22/19 There had been no Neighbourhood Plan meeting in January, but the Sub-Group was still working on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. There was nothing further to report in relation to the Joint Local Plan.

23/19 Members considered the maintenance contract for the Memorial Garden. The Clerk advised that a tendering exercise had been carried out in 2018 and members were invited to consider whether a retendering exercise was necessary or whether they wished to roll forward the existing contract.

RESOLVED a) that in view of the satisfactory performance of the existing contractor and the fact that the market had been tested in 2018 the maintenance contract be rolled forward for 2019.

b) that the Clerk arrange an on-site meeting with the contractor to discuss arrangements at Main Road/East Lawns.

24/19 Members considered arrangements for the replacement of the bench and noticeboard recently destroyed in a road traffic collision at Balterley, the replacement of the damaged bench at Sandy Croft, the provision of a further bench at Sandy Croft, and the provision of two new benches at Main Road/ East Lawns. The Clerk provided details of various products which were available.

RESOLVED a) that a Greenbarnes DA64 noticeboard in oak be selected;

b) that five Broxap benches be selected;

c) that the Clerk be authorised to place the necessary orders in conjunction with the appropriate insurance claim.

25/19 Area issues raised by members were considered. There were no matters requiring decision.

26/19 Members considered highways issues. It was agreed that the clearance of overgrowth obstructing the pavements on Main Road (A531) was a priority and that the Council should use a contribution from Reserves and the budgetary provision made for 2019-20 to engage its previous contractors (who had carried out satisfactory works in the past) to carry out such work.

RESOLVED that the Clerk engage J Harrison & Son to carry out the following works:

Pavement clearing from the village centre to the Hand and Trumpet (as 2018-19 works);

Pavement clearing between Old Hall and Balterley (as 2019-20 works).

Noting the overgrown condition of the pavement between Wrinehill and Madeley it was noted that this lay outside the parish, and it was therefore inappropriate to fund such works. However it was agreed that Cllr Reah would write to Madeley PC and the County Council highlighting the issue.

27/19 The Clerk tabled correspondence received. There were no matters requiring decision.

28/19 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 :

G Griffiths	Salary & Expenses	£ 816.47	1438
-------------	-------------------	----------	------

Staffs Parish Councils

Association	Training Event fee	£ 20.00	1439
-------------	--------------------	---------	------

c) that the Financial Statement be received;

d) that the Bank Statement, having been inspected by the Chairman and Cllr Bullock, be noted, and the reconciliation verified and be signed by the Chairman.

29/19 Members considered issues relating to council communication.

30/19 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 28th February 2019.