

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th July 2018

197/18 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Mandy Berrisford, Neil Bullock, Seb Daly, Dave Hales, Richard Head, Tony Reah, Terry Townsend and Chris Watkin.

198/18 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Northcott
Borough Cllr G White.
Seven members of the public.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

199/18 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ecclestone (work), Speed (unwell) and Walton (away). Cllr Daly indicated that he might need to leave during the meeting for work reasons.

200/18 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllr Daly declared a prejudicial interest in Item 10 (other planning matters) insofar as it might relate to any substantive discussion of the Doddlespool issue as the landowner was a business client.

No personal interests were declared at this point.

201/18 **RESOLVED** that, subject to the corrections listed below, the minutes of the meetings of 28th June be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

- 1. by correcting the reference to “W White” in Min.167 to read “S White”;**
- 2. by adding Tony Reah (work) to the list of those who presented apologies to the meeting in Min.168;**
- 3. by inserting a space in “locatedtoward” in Min.185;**
- 4. by correcting Min.189 to read Cllr Hales in lieu of Cllr Bettley-Smith;**
- 5. by correcting “suignificant” to “significant” in Min.191.**

202/18 The Chairman outlined the procedure for public participation, and the meeting was adjourned to allow the public to speak.

The first member of the public was interested in the letter from the MP regarding the Doddlespool issue which had been mentioned on the Agenda. However as he had not seen the letter, and was unaware of its contents, he felt it was inappropriate to comment.

The second member of the public reported that he had been unable to find the Agenda on the Council’s website. The Clerk indicated that he believed it had been added to the website but a member was able to report that it was not present. The Clerk indicated he would check what had happened.

A third member of the public outlined the current position with regard to the Betley Court planning application (for which he was the applicant).

He began by outlining the background and reported that he had met on site with a planning officer who he believed now had an understanding of the proposal. Lottery Funding was

available for works to Betley Court but was dependent on being able to demonstrate public benefit, which they would seek to achieve through six weekend openings, community links and other activities such as heritage walks. Concerns had been raised regarding potential congestion which they would seek to address by building new garages for the cars of tenants.

The intention was to submit a new planning application by the end of August.

The second member of the public (a close neighbour to Betley Court) outlined the concerns of residents, in particular that residents might not in practice use the garages provided. He would await sight of the plans when submitted and thanked the applicant for keeping residents informed.

On the specific point the applicant stated that tenants were required to use the garages provided within their tenancy agreements.

203/18 The Chairman reported on matters dealt with since the previous meeting. Two issues had arisen regarding signage placed on the Memorial Garden. Firstly a "For Sale" sign for an adjacent property had been placed on the grassed area. Both the vendor and their agent had been horrified and the sign was quickly relocated. Secondly a sign related to Betley Show had been placed without permission (and not in accordance with previously agreed arrangements). This had been amicably removed.

He had met with Aspire regarding landscaping at East Lawns/Main Road and was impressed by the speed of their response in planting the borders which now looked most attractive. He had also met with a representative of the PCC to discuss the Memorial Garden.

204/18 The Vice-Chairman had nothing to report that had not already been covered.

205/18 The Clerk advised members that the audit process for 2017-18 had been completed and was a clean audit.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be thanked for his excellent work in completing the audit process.

The Clerk advised members of a consultation regarding the powers of Natural England to introduce bye-laws on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

RESOLVED that the Parish Council notes the consultation, which it supports, and that any specific point raised by members be circulated for the Clerk to respond as necessary.

206/18 County Cllr Northcott presented his report to the meeting.

The Councils had now moved into Castle House along with other partner organisations and it was hoped this would make partnership working easier to achieve. Outstanding penalty payments by the contractor for the late handover would be clawed back by the authorities.

The claimant count at 1.3% was the second lowest in the West Midlands.

The A531 had been resurfaced and although there had been some concerns expressed regarding the quality of work he had been assured this was "within rural standards".

His Staffordshire Community Fund was now open for applications.

Responsibility for the Fire & Rescue Service had now passed to the Police & Crime Commissioner and would in future be scrutinised by the PCC Panel.

He was lobbying for a stronger rural police presence and was concerned by poor police response to traveller incursions.

He had received a letter from a local resident expressing concern re safety at the A531/Den Lane junction. He had put this to the County Council who were not keen to support any works.

A member expressed concern regarding access to the police, having recently been put on hold for 25 minutes when attempting to use the 101 service. There seemed to be a lack of clarity about how local issues should be raised with the police.

207/18 Cllr White presented his report.

As already reported Castle House was now in use. The former civic buildings were being vacated for redevelopment though press reports indicated that the development might be “on hold”.

A Friends Organisation was being set up to try to secure a workable solution for the long-term preservation and use of the Guild Hall.

The HS2 Select Committee had made no substantial changes with respect to the area. Two local MPs were being contacted regarding what was seen as a “raw deal” for the area.

He had arranged a site meeting of interested parties regarding the landscaping at East Lawns/Main Road which had led to a satisfactory outcome. He had also been contacted by a resident regarding an access issue. Unfortunately he had been unable to make any progress as Aspire now had a blanket ban on such issues unless required for wheelchair access.

[Cllrs Berrisford, Bettley-Smith and Bullock each declared a personal interest in this matter as they were each acquainted with the resident concerned.]

208/18 On behalf of the Council, the Chairman placed on record his thanks to the Borough Councillors who had already made quite an impact by their commitment to the area.

209/18 On the matter of landscaping at East Lawns/Main Road the Chairman made reference to the e-mail he had supplied to members setting out the agreement with Aspire, which had already led to improvements. Further planting was also planned.

210/18 Members reviewed current information regarding the County Council’s review of library services.

[Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in this matter as a school governor; the school being a regular user of the mobile library service.]

The response to the consultation had now been published and indicated a huge reduction in the service in North Staffordshire including withdrawal from the parish. In other areas the service appeared to be maintained despite proximity to library buildings. One site in Burton was retaining a mobile service despite only being nine minutes’ walk from Burton Library! The response also stated that there had been only 209 comments from “young people” indicating “little interest”. However it was known that 40 responses had been submitted from Betley School, emphasising that the service had an important role and that its loss would have a massive impact.

Borough Cllr White indicated that he would be willing to support a reduction in the time allocated at Madeley in order to allow the Betley call to be retained.

211/18 The Council’s representatives on outside bodies indicated that they had nothing to report.

212/18 The Clerk advised members of urgent business conducted since the last meeting of the Council. He had arranged for the Chairman to sign the Certificate of Exemption for external audit thus permitting the Council’s audit for 2017-18 to be concluded.

213/18 Members had been anticipating a presentation by Aspire Housing on their proposals for the East Lawns garages/parking area. Unfortunately, at short notice, Aspire had withdrawn from attending and the matter would have to be deferred to the September meeting. The Clerk undertook to seek guidance from Aspire on the nature of their proposals in advance of that meeting.

214/18 Members considered the following planning application.

18/00457/FUL Replacement of rear door and window with bifold doors, 3 Ravenshall Barns, Main Road, Betley

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

215/18 Members considered the following planning application.

18/00490/FUL New domestic garage to house and maintain the applicant's collection of vintage motorcycles, Rosebank, New Road, Wrinehill

RESOLVED the Council objects to this application as it is clearly inappropriate development within the Green Belt for which no very special circumstances have been demonstrated. It is therefore not in accord with approved planning policy, including Newcastle Green Belt Policy S.3.

216/18 Members noted the following planning decision notices:

18/00310 Integral garage in place of car port, Ravens Crest, Main Road -
PERMITTED

18/00313 Fence Orchard House/ The Gables, Orchard House, Chamberlain Court -
PERMITTED

217/18 Members noted that the current position regarding the planning application in respect of Betley Court (as recorded in Min.202).

[Cllr Head declared a personal interest in this matter as a former tenant.]

218/18 Members noted two copy letters received from Paul Farrelly MP of letters regarding planning issues at Doddlespool.

RESOLVED that the receipt of the copy letters be noted and any further consideration be deferred to the September meeting.

[Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this matter Cllr Daly withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion.]

219/18 Members considered the provision of a war memorial feature on the Memorial Garden.

RESOLVED: a) that the proposal proceed on the basis of a Portland stone memorial, of a size to be agreed in conjunction with the mason, mounted on the sandstone plinth already sourced;

b) that a budget of £2,160 (inclusive of VAT) be fixed, to be funded by the HLF grant, subject to an additional contingency of 10% if required to be funded by the Parish Council;

c) that the wording on the memorial be "at the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them" from the Binyon poem together with the date 11 November 1918; the "signposting" wording to be determined by the PCC;

d) that the Chairman, Clerk and such other members are available attend a meeting with the mason to discuss detailed arrangements.

220/18 The Clerk advised members of a Character Assessment Consultation which formed part of the preparation for the Joint Local Plan. This now identified three “Character Areas” within the parish rather than the previous single classification.

RESOLVED that the proposals be noted and welcomed.

221/18 The Clerk advised members of two matters to hand related to HS2. The first was advice of the outcome of the Select Committee consideration of the Bill to allow construction. This had resulted in no significant changes in respect of the parish area. The second was advice of a fund which would be made available for any appropriate highways improvement works arising out of the HS2 project.

RESOLVED that the Council register a preliminary interest in funding but be ready to step back if it subsequently proved to be not required.

222/18 Members considered the future of the website. It was agreed that the current website was difficult to use and rather outdated. It was agreed that members would review the websites of other Parish Councils.

223/18 Cllr Head reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was determined to drive the project forward and to build a Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Despite the expertise within the Group it was felt that external consultants were needed both to build the Draft Plan and to ensure that it met all legal and procedural requirements. The Parish Council was required to endorse this course of action though the consultants would be engaged only if full grant funding was secured. However, there could be funding requirements later in the process which would require local funding.

RESOLVED a) that the engagement of consultants be approved, subject to grant funding being secured;

b) that the potential funding shortfall before completion of the programme be recognised.

224/18 The Chairman advised that a group of 8 Agny residents were now expected to attend the Betley Show.

225/18 Members considered issues related to the Council’s property and assets. It was noted that there was a shortage of willow for the proposed willow screening, and that supplies would not be available before November. Councillors Speed and Hales were thanked for their efforts in arranging watering to keep the community orchard alive! It was noted that in view of recent weather conditions watering of the grassed areas at the Memorial Garden had been suspended in the interests of water conservation. The flowerbeds were still being watered and it was important to note that the water supply was not the subject of any proposed restrictions.

226/18 It was noted that an offer of one-off training for Speedwatch volunteers had been made, and that this could facilitate the recommencement of the scheme. The speed monitoring devices remained operational and were proving effective and popular. Funding for a further device had been secured subject to clearance of Cllr Townsend and the Clerk as suitable to receive the funding.

227/18 Area issues raised by members were considered.

Balterley. The lay-by area had missed its programmed weedspraying earlier in the year and treatment would now be ineffective. Cllr Townsend was thanked for having strimmed the area. Potholes on the parking area had been filled.

Betley. A member of the public had expressed concern that the siting of the speed monitoring device at the Memorial Garden was a hazard by obstructing views when emerging from Church Lane. It was felt that this was not the case, and the siting had been approved by the County Highways Officer. Concern had also been expressed at agricultural vehicles passing through the village with young drivers who often seemed to drive at excessive speed and without due attention to the road conditions. It was agreed this should be taken up with the police, but it was unclear what the appropriate point of contact was currently. It was agreed that this should be established.

[Cllr Bettley-Smith left the meeting at this point. Cllr Daly took the chair.]

Noise from events at Buddleigh had been noticed as far away as Betley, including by Parish Councillors on 21st July.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the Borough Council asking what monitoring and/or action had been taken in response to residents' complaints.

Wrinehill. It was reported that the footway along the main road toward Madeley was now down to as little as six inches in some places which made walking very hazardous, especially given that it is subject to the 60mph national speed limit.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the County Council drawing the matter to their attention and pointing out their obligation to maintain the footway in a proper condition for pedestrian use.

228/18 The Clerk tabled correspondence received. There were no matters requiring decision.

229/18 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	£ 140.00	1404
G Griffiths	Salary/exps	£ 415.24	1405
Zurich Municipal	Insurance premium	£ 527.16	1406
Reading room	Hall hire	£ 8.63	1407

c) that the Financial Statement be received;

d) that the Bank Statements be noted, and the reconciliation verified and be signed by the Chairman.

230/18 Members considered issues relating to council communication.

231/18 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 27th September 2018.