

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2012

PRESENT

Cllrs Seb Daly, Steven Ball (from min.178), Karen Burton, Richard Head, Frank Speed (from min.181), Jo Thomas and Chris Watkin.

IN ATTENDANCE

Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

170/12 Apologies for absence were received and accepted as valid reasons for absence under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 from Cllrs Berrisford (family), Bettley-Smith (holiday), Hales (work), Harrison (work) and Kerr (family).

Apologies for absence had also been received from Borough Cllrs Becket (civic engagement) and Wemyss (work).

An apology for likely late arrival had been received from Cllr Ball, and also from County Cllr Chapman (who was attending another meeting).

171/12 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllr Head declared an interest in matters relating to the Village Hall, as he had been elected Chairman at the recent AGM of the Village Hall Committee. This interest might be prejudicial or personal depending on the nature of the discussion. Cllr Watkin declared a personal interest in relation to Item 8 (planning appeal re 21 Ladygates) as he was a resident of Ladygates, but not directly affected.

172/12 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of 24th May 2012 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

[County Cllr Chapman joined the meeting at this point]

Members noted that the list of appointments made at the last meeting had been subject to any further observations made by members who were absent from that meeting. The Clerk had advised that he had been contacted by one member indicating difficulty in participating in the meetings of one organisation.

RESOLVED that Cllr Thomas replace Cllr Berrisford as the Council's appointment to the Madeley Locality Action Partnership.

173/12 There were no members of the public present to participate in public participation.

174/12 The Vice-Chairman presented the Chairman's report on activities since the last meeting. Tilloy Football Club had visited, and had presented a small plate to mark the visit. Discussions were under way with the Clerk to prepare a formal contract of employment, and to ensure that the appropriate salary was being paid. The current workload had also been reviewed. The Jubilee celebrations had been a great success, and the Chairman wished to thank all who had been involved in the arrangements. The supply of grit obtained by the Parish Council had not been required, but would still be available for future use.

RESOLVED that the matter of the Clerk's hours of work be considered as a confidential item later in the meeting.

175/12 The Vice-Chairman advised members that he had also met with Borough Cllr Wemyss and a representative of Aspire Housing to discuss issues relating to the East Lawns area.

It had been a very productive meeting, and progress had been made on identifying pavement and roadway problems, and resolving questions of land ownership. It appeared that the grassed triangles were the responsibility of the Borough Council, but that Aspire were responsible for the trees and shrubbed areas. The possibility of a transfer of responsibility to the Parish Council had been discussed.

Visibility issues at the bus stop had been discussed. The litter bin was to be removed, and would be available for redeployment. It was suggested that siting at an exit from the playing field might be appropriate (at either the Roger Avenue or Ladygates exits).

176/12 The Clerk advised members that a request had been received from the Show Committee to erect an advertising banner on the Memorial Garden.

[Cllr Daly declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as Vice-Chairman of the Show Committee, and withdrew from the meeting. All members declared personal interests through their various connections to the Show activities]

The Clerk invited members to elect one of their number to chair the meeting in Cllr Daly's absence.

RESOLVED that Cllr Head take the Chair during consideration of this item.

The Clerk advised that the request was in line with previous permissions, insurance cover was in place, and a risk assessment had been carried out.

RESOLVED that permission be granted.

[Cllr Daly rejoined the meeting]

177/12 The Clerk advised members that, following the abolition of the Standards Board for England and the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, the Council would need to adopt a new Code of Conduct to reflect the provisions of the Act. Unfortunately although the Government had set a deadline of 1st July for introduction of the revised Code the detailed guidance had only been published in mid-June and there was therefore no practical Model Code in place. He outlined the major changes arising out of the 2011 Act, and suggested that members might pass an appropriate resolution which would regularise the Council's position whilst further guidance was provided.

RESOLVED that with effect from the date of coming into force of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council's existing Code of Conduct shall be retained, amended by the duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as defined in Chapter 7 of the Act.

178/12 County Cllr Chapman reported to members on the following matters.

Speeding. He reminded members of the facility to report incidents of speeding through the Safer Roads Partnership website, and that the level of reporting would influence the degree of support through the Partnership.

Police & Crime Commissioners. Members were advised that a directly-elected Commissioner would take over from the Police Committee in mid-November. Although there would also be a Police & Crime Panel (comprised of representatives from the County and District Councils) which was intended to hold the Commissioner to account, its powers were strictly limited.

[Cllr Ball joined the meeting at this point]

Cllr Thomas thanked County Cllr Chapman for the donation of £450 which had funded the extremely enjoyable and successful children's event to mark the Golden Jubilee.

179/12 The Clerk presented a report on behalf of Cllr Becket, referring to progress on enforcement action regarding the catering van at Balterley, the meeting with Aspire (as reported on by the Vice-Chairman), and various civic events.

180/12 Cllr Head, as the Council's representative on the Village Hall Committee, advised members that the VHC was seeking the views of local organisations, including the Parish Council, on proposed improvements to the kitchen and toilet areas. Cllr Head then declared a prejudicial interest in the matter and withdrew from the meeting.

Members considered that they would be better able to assess the impact of the proposals on-site.

RESOLVED that the meeting stand adjourned to allow members to consider the proposed works on-site.

[Cllr Speed joined the meeting during the adjournment]

181/12 The meeting having reconvened members considered their response to the questionnaire provided by the VHC.

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk be instructed to prepare a response on behalf of the Parish Council, to include the following points:

1) that the Parish Council found the floor plan of the toilets very useful, but did not receive a copy of a floor plan for the proposed kitchen layout which would have been very useful;

2) that the Parish Council strongly supports the principle of the improvements, but feels that there needs to be a robust business plan to justify the financial investment;

3) that the toilet improvements – particularly the provision of disabled access and baby-change facilities – are of the utmost priority;

4) that a serviced hot and cold drinks machine would be both useful and a potential income generator;

5) that a benchmarking against other successful local facilities would be useful;

b) that the Clerk, in consultation with Cllr Thomas, draw up a detailed response in respect of the proposed kitchen layout, noting the various comments made by members.

[Cllr Head rejoined the meeting]

182/12 Members considered the following planning application:

12/00251/FUL Detached garage for residential unit, 1 Ravenshall Barns, Main Road, Betley

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

183/12 Members considered the following planning application:

12/00345/FUL Replacement of boundary fence with wall, Daisy House, New Road, Wrinehill

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

184/12 The Clerk advised that no Planning Decision Notices had been received.

185/12 The Clerk advised that an appeal had been lodged in respect of decking at the rear of 21 Ladygates, Betley.

RESOLVED that the Council's previous observations of January 2012 be reiterated.

186/12 Members considered issues arising from the Annual Electors' Meeting.

RESOLVED that the main issues raised (condition of pavements in Balterley, and the need for dropped kerbs) be prioritised for action by the Parish Council.

187/12 Members received a document from Staffordshire County Council granting formal permission under Section 115E of the Highways Act for the provision of the bench at Post Office Lane/ Main Road, Balterley.

RESOLVED that the document be formally received and approved.

188/12 Members considered progress on initiatives undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken, by the Parish Council.

189/12 Balterley pavements. The continued failure of the County Council to advise why the promised work on the A531 pavement to the north of Back Lane had not been carried out was noted.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact the County Council seeking progress on this work, and that in the absence of any commitment on their part, the Parish Council would consider commissioning the work itself at the July meeting.

190/12 Other pavement works. Members considered whether they wished to carry out works to clear epicormal growth on highways trees at The Wilderness.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to commission work from the Council's usual contractors.

It was noted that hedgecutting works at Wrinehill had now been carried out.

191/12 Members reviewed the events held to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Cllr Thomas reported that expenditure had been within budget, though some invoices were still outstanding.

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Council expresses its formal thanks to the Working Group, and those who took leading roles within the Group, for the tremendous job they had done in organising the events;

b) that the Parish Council thanks the Betley Trust, Bonfire Committee and County Cllr Chapman for their generous financial support.

192/12 Cllr Burton reported on progress regarding the application under the Community Paths Initiative. The bid required some further refinement, by the inclusion of maintenance costs and clarification of one outstanding issue. Some costs would initially fall on the Parish Council, but would then be reclaimable from the County Council through the Initiative.

193/12 Members considered participation in the Community Speed Watch Scheme had been submitted, and the local police notified. Responses were awaited in the light of further information obtained by the Clerk regarding permitted equipment.

RESOLVED a) that the Council formally commits itself to participation;

b) that volunteers be actively sought, and invited to complete the necessary documentation;

c) that the Clerk be granted delegated authority to carry out any necessary actions within a budgetary provision of no more than £1,200.

194/12 Members considered options for displaying the plate donated to the community by Tilloy FC.

RESOLVED that, subject to approval from the Village Hall Committee, the plate be mounted on a frame for display at the Village Hall, subject to a maximum financial provision of £100, and that the Clerk be granted delegated authority to authorise payment.

195/12 Members considered area issues raised by members. The Clerk was asked to progress tidying works at the Church Lane bench, and to report the missing fingerpost sign at Old Road, Wrinehuill to the Public Rights of Way unit.

196/12 The Clerk advised members of a forthcoming road closure at Waybutt Lane, Balterley.

197/12 Members considered a letter from Newcastle Borough Council regarding potential dog control measures.

RESOLVED that although the Parish Council does not consider it a major issue a representative be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

198/12 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting of the Council. There were no matters requiring decision.

199/12 The Clerk reported that there were no applications for financial assistance nor under the Community Chest Scheme.

200/12 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

201/12 **RESOLVED** a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

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|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| DT Askey | memorial garden maintenance | £135.00 | 961 |
| Mh-p | website | £ 91.18 | 962 |
| T Dunlop | audit | £ 30.00 | 963 |
| G Griffiths | salary & expenses | £327.04 | 964 |
| F Speed | memorial garden plants | £483.60 | 965 |

b) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

202/12 Members of the Laudy Croft Working Group advised that no maintenance work was currently required.

203/12 Members considered maintenance of the Memorial Garden. The Working Group advised that no work was currently required. The Vice-Chairman and the Clerk reported on a site meeting with a representative of the Borough Council to discuss possible works to the conifer. The meeting had gone well, and it was felt that permission to remove the two lowest branches could well be forthcoming.

204/12 Date of next meeting: Thursday 26th July 2012.

205/12 **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100A (Schedule 12A Part I 1, 8, 9 & 12) of the Local Government Act 1972, in that it relates to potential contractual arrangements for the supply of goods and services, and/or potential legal proceedings by or against the authority (Min.206) and information relating to a particular employee (Min.207).

206/12 The Clerk advised members that no further communication had been received from the Borough Council in respect of possible contamination and planning conditions at Laudy Croft.

207/12 The Vice-Chairman reported that together with the Chairman he had considered the Clerk's workload and considered that the current provision of 8 hours per week was inadequate, and should be increased to 9.5 hours per week to more accurately reflect the current commitment.

RESOLVED that the Clerk's hours be increased to 9.5 hours per week from 1 July 2012.