

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2018

62/18 PRESENT:

Cllrs Seb Daly, Mandy Berrisford, Graham Ecclestone, Richard Head, Terry Townsend, Ian Walton and Chris Watkin. In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman (Cllr Daly) took the chair.

63/18 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Northcott (from min.78).

One member of the public (representing Betley Cricket Club).

Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

64/18 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bettley-Smith (holiday), Hales (work) and Speed (another engagement).

65/18 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items. Cllr Berrisford declared a personal interest in matters relating to Item 7 (Cricket Club).

66/18 Members noted the two vacancies on the council but, in view of the fact that the whole Council would be subject to re-election in May, no further action would be taken.

67/18 **RESOLVED that subject to the correction of min.56 (to read “Mental Health Challenge. A councillor had been appointed as the lead member in this area” in place of “He had been appointed ...”) the minutes of the meetings of 22nd February be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

68/18 There were no members of the public present to exercise public participation.

69/18 The Chairman had indicated that no matters had been dealt with since the previous meeting requiring consideration at this point. The Vice-Chairman had nothing to report.

70/18 The Clerk presented his report to members which covered the following areas.

Community Chest. As requested he had investigated the current position regarding the Borough Council's Community Chest grant scheme. He could confirm that the scheme had now been wound up, being replaced - to a degree - by the Lyme Lottery. This was managed entirely by the Borough Council and the Parish Council would have no role in the consideration or allocation of funding.

CPRE. He invited members to consider whether continued membership of the Council for the Protection of Rural England was appropriate. Given the potential issues facing the parish it was **RESOLVED that membership be continued.**

Bus Provision. The Clerk confirmed that the County Council had now withdrawn its funding for evening and Sunday services on the 85 Crewe - Betley - Newcastle bus service. However funding from Keele University had secured a two-hourly Sunday service and a number of early evening services had been registered commercially by the operator. Late evening services had however been withdrawn.

71/18 Again, no report had been received from the Borough Councillors.

72/18 The Council's representatives on outside bodies reported as follows.

The Village Hall Committee had arranged for the doorway between the committee room and the main hall to be bricked up during the Easter holidays which would reduce the impact of noisy events on other users.

The school governors had met the previous week. Letters had been prepared by pupils regarding the proposed loss of the mobile library service.

73/18 The Chairman of Betley Cricket Club was invited to outline plans for the development of activities at the Club.

The Club was the oldest continuously functioning club in the area. Having taken over as Chairman last Autumn he wanted to re-invigorate the club and to put it at the heart of the community as a cricket club for Betley rather than a cricket club which happened to be located in the village. Unlike some other local clubs which had large budgets and employed professionals Betley needed to adopt a different approach.

The club wanted a particular emphasis on youth development and, to this end, was participating in the ECB Allstars Cricket programme for 5-8 year olds.

Activities at the Club would be diversified and grant support had already been secured e.g. for covers from the ECB and for nets from the Bonfire Committee.

Members indicated their appreciation of being updated and their broad support for the Cricket Club and its ambitions for the future, particularly in promoting it as a community resource and its youth development work.

74/18 The Clerk advised that no urgent business had been conducted since the last meeting of the Council.

75/18 Members considered the following planning application.

18/00110/FUL Silage Pit, land at Fields Farm, Church Lane, Betley.

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

[Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in the above application as the applicant was a client]

76/18 There were no other planning matters to hand.

77/18 Members considered the provision of a war memorial feature on the Memorial Garden linked to highlighting the Window within the Church and also possibly to act as a secular memorial.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Council reaffirm its support in principle;**
- b) that the Council commit to providing an appropriate memorial on the Memorial Garden;**
- c) that the Clerk be asked to investigate whether such features (acting as both a memorial and as a “gateway” to an existing memorial) had been successfully used elsewhere and what form they might take.**

[County Cllr Northcott joined the meeting at this point.]

78/18 Cllr Daly submitted a draft Parish Council response, objecting to the withdrawal of the mobile library service from Betley and it was also noted that children from the Primary School had also written letters.

RESOLVED that the representation as submitted be approved as the Parish Council’s response to the consultation and that the Council objects strongly to the withdrawal of the mobile library service from Betley.

79/18 The Chairman welcomed County Cllr Northcott and invited him to present his report, which covered the following areas.

In the absence of both Borough Councillors Cllr Northcott provided an update on Borough Council business.

Borough Council.

The Borough Council was currently reviewing leisure provision in Kidsgrove.

Draft Economic Development Strategy had been approved. The Rycroft Car Park site had been sold; the Lyme Valley car park was to be metered to prevent abuse by hospital parking.

Affordable Housing. A Borough Policy on the use of Section 106 developer contributions in lieu of direct provision had been adopted and was currently out to tender. (Members noted that this was likely to mean that contributions raised in the rural areas were likely to be spent in the urban areas.)

It was noted that the Council's write-off of irrecoverable items was much lower than in neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent.

The Borough had launched its initiative on Child Sexual Exploitation which could be accessed via knowaboutcse.org.uk .

County Council.

Overall Performance. The County Council's report on its activities in 2017-18 showed good outcomes in such areas as crime, anti-social behaviour and looked after children. The County's childcare provision was having a positive impact on many families and 92.5% of applicants had achieved their first preference for school places (and 97% had achieved within their top three).

Highways. The gritting teams were hard at work, so potholes work had been scaled back. Despite this more potholes had been filled than reported during the most recent reporting period (267 reports, 281 repairs). More preventative work was planned.

Housing. Cllr Northcott felt that infrastructure was key and there needed to be closer co-operation between the County Council and Boroughs, with failings on both sides.

HS2. The County Council had formally petitioned on the current parliamentary act. The Select Committee would be screening petitioners from 24th April.

A member expressed concern at the continuing failure to tackle the appalling condition of the pavement between Church Lane and the Village Hall, which was a key pedestrian route in the village. Cllr Northcott suggested that the most effective way of reporting the problem was via the MyStaffs app.

Another member raised concerns regarding staffing within the Borough planning department where it was understood that several key members of staff had either left or would shortly be leaving at the very time when leadership was needed to assist with Neighbourhood Plans and the Joint Local Plan. Cllr Northcott indicated that if his group still formed the administration after the elections in May they would be looking in detail at the structure, staffing and funding of the planning department.

80/18 The Clerk reported that the Council's response to the Joint Local Plan Consultation had been submitted. No further action was required while the Borough Council's reviewed all submissions received.

81/18 Cllr Head reported on progress with the Neighbourhood Plan. Following discussion at the Steering Group there was a general view that the engagement of consultants might now be appropriate in order to ensure that the Plan produced was robust. A small group of members

had been delegated to meet with a potential consultancy; funding for such advice was available.

82/18 There had been a further exchange of e-mails between the Chairman and Claude Bailly in Agny and it was likely that a small delegation would visit in August and attend the Betley Show.

83/18 Members considered the Council's property and assets. The latest version of potential signage for Sandy Croft was tabled and considered by members.

RESOLVED a) that, subject to the minor changes agreed (remove the word wrap and making the wildlife elements more prominent if possible, together with refining the text to emphasise the site's recent history of being brought back into public use), Cllr Head and Cllr Daly be delegated to approve a final version.

84/18 Members considered potential fencing works on Sandy Croft. The Clerk advised members of a tender price for such works provided by the Council's usual contractor.

RESOLVED that fencing be approved on the terms outlined between the brook bridge and the main access gate, and between the main access gate and the upper gate.

85/18 The Clerk advised members that he had contacted the Council's usual tree surgeon regarding the conifer on the Memorial Garden but had yet to be able to arrange a meeting to discuss whether it could be reduced or whether removal would be appropriate.

86/18 Members considered the possibility of improving "gateway" signage within the parish. In the past the Council had received contrary advice regarding what signage would, or would not, be permitted and the Clerk would seek to clarify the matter.

87/18 Cllr Townsend advised members that the requested pole on Old Road had now been erected and was available as a further location for the speed monitoring equipment. The Bonfire Committee had very kindly provided funding for a second Parish Council monitoring unit.

RESOLVED that the Council express its appreciation to the Bonfire Committee for its support.

88/18 Members considered area issues raised by members. There were no matters requiring decision. It was noted that a member of the public had commended the Parish Council for its submission in relation to the planning application on the Wrinehill Garage site.

89/18 The Clerk tabled correspondence received. There were no matters requiring decision.

90/18 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:

SPCA	Membership	£ 323.00	1338
G Griffiths	Salary & Expenses	£1,220.27	1339
L Rimmer	Meml Garden & Bulbs	£ 245.00	1340

c) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

91/18 Members considered issues relating to council communication.

92/18 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 26th April 2018.