

# BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2012

### PRESENT

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Steven Ball, Seb Daly, Dave Hales, Simon Harrison, Richard Head, Frank Speed, Jo Thomas and Chris Watkin.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

135/12 **Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2012-13.** Cllr Bettley-Smith was nominated to serve as Chairman (proposed by Cllr Head, seconded by Cllr Thomas).

**RESOLVED that Cllr Bettley-Smith be elected to serve as Chairman for 2012-13.**

Cllr Daly was nominated to serve as Vice-Chairman (proposed by Cllr Bettley-Smith, seconded by Cllr Thomas).

**RESOLVED that Cllr Daly be elected to serve as Vice-Chairman for 2012-13.**

136/12 Apologies for absence were received and accepted as valid reasons for absence under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 from Cllrs Berrisford (holiday), Burton (holiday) and Kerr (maternity absence).

Apologies for absence had also been received from County Cllr Chapman (holiday) and Borough Cllr Becket (civic engagement).

137/12 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items. There were no interests declared at this point.

138/12 The Council considered the appointment of representatives to serve on outside bodies and internal groups.

139/12 **RESOLVED a) that the following members be appointed to outside bodies:**

<b>Conservation Advisory Working Group</b>	<b>Berrisford, Harrison</b>
<b>Standards Committee</b>	<b>Bettley-Smith (as Chairman)</b>
<b>Newcastle District Parish Councils Association</b>	<b>Thomas</b>
<b>Madeley Locality Action Partnership</b>	<b>Berrisford</b>
<b>Rural Runabout</b>	<b>Bettley-Smith</b>
<b>Betley Trust</b>	<b>Ball</b>
<b>Village Hall Committee</b>	<b>Head</b>
<b>Children &amp; Learning Partnership</b>	<b>Berrisford</b>

(to act as a point of contact; the Council would not seek to directly influence the meetings of the Partnership)

**b) that the following members (or Clerk as appropriate) be appointed to internal groups:**

<b>Press Liaison</b>	<b>Harrison (Parish Magazine)</b>
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<b>Internal Accounts</b>	<b>Chairman &amp; Vice-Chairman (other media)</b>
<b>Planning:</b>	<b>Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk)</b>
<b>Balterley</b>	<b>Ball, Watkin</b>
<b>Betley</b>	<b>Head, Thomas (general applications)</b>
	<b>Bettley-Smith, Daly (specialist applications)</b>
<b>Wrinehill</b>	<b>Berrisford, Harrison</b>
<b>Laudy Croft Maintenance</b>	<b>Bettley-Smith, Hales, Speed</b>
<b>Memorial Garden</b>	<b>Bettley-Smith, Daly, Hales, Speed</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b>Berrisford, Bettley-Smith, Daly,</b>
	<b>Harrison, Head</b>

c) that any appointments affecting members who were absent be subject to any necessary review at the next meeting.

(Cllr Watkin declared a personal interest in the appointment to the Betley Trust as his wife was Secretary to the Trust)

140/12 The Clerk outlined to members the requirement to carry out certain annual requirements: the appointment of a Responsible Financial Officer, Risk Assessment, consideration of Standing Orders, and schedule of meetings for the coming year.

141/12 **RESOLVED that the Clerk (Mr Gwyn Griffiths) be reappointed as Responsible Financial Officer for 2011-2012.**

142/12 The Clerk outlined to members the requirement for the Council to carry out an annual risk assessment. Members considered the Council's Risk Management Policy and the measures in place to address physical, financial and policy risks.

**RESOLVED that the Council is satisfied that all necessary and appropriate measures are in place to address risk.**

143/12 The Clerk invited members to consider whether any changes to Standing Orders were appropriate.

**RESOLVED that no changes to Standing Orders were required at this point, but that the matter be further reviewed in September.**

144/12 **RESOLVED that meetings in 2012-13 be held on the fourth Thursday of each month, but that no meetings be scheduled at this point for the months of August and December.**

145/12 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 26th April 2012 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

[It was noted that although minute 96 was an accurate record of the meeting, Cllr Head's absence had been as a result of ill-health rather than work]

146/12 There were no members of the public present to engage in public participation.

147/12 The Chairman reported on his activities since the last meeting. He had attended a meeting of the Rural Transport Scheme. A new policy was being drafted to deal with hires which were only short-distance, but included an overnight stay. Some thought was also being given to the date when vehicle replacement would be appropriate. He had also attended the mayor-making which had been an enjoyable and successful event.

148/12 The Vice-Chairman reported that he had also attended the mayor-making.

149/12 The Clerk reported that from 2012-13 the Council's External Auditor was likely to be Grant Thornton (replacing the Audit Commission) and that Staffordshire CC had now returned the Section 115(E) Agreement to allow the installation of the Balterley bench. He had also received notice from Staffordshire that the allocation of funding for highways works in the area would be £1,408 in 2012-13. It was agreed that sweeping of Church Lane should be a priority.

150/12 Cllr Head, as the Council's representative on the Village Hall Committee, reported that the AGM would be held on 22nd May, at which new officers were expected to be elected.

151/12 Members considered the following planning application:

**12/00175/FUL Replacement dwelling, Ravens Crest, Main Road, Wrinehill**

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council objects in the strongest terms to the application on the following grounds.

**That the contemporary design, although consistent with planning policy in terms of size, is considered too bold and futuristic for the visual environment and will represent a singular design that is not compatible with any other property, therefore detracting from the visual amenity of this area.**

**As such the Council believes the application is contrary to the following planning policies:**

**Policy S.3 (Green Belt) iv) which requires that evidence must be provided to justify replacement rather than alteration (to the existing building) and v) which requires any development to have a not materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. It is the view of the Council that the form, styling and materials proposed will have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;**

**Policy H.2 (Replacement of dwellings in the Open Countryside) which requires that the "materials and design of any acceptable replacement dwelling should fit in with, and not detract materially from, the character of the surrounding rural landscape and any other dwellings in the vicinity". It is the view of the Parish Council that the proposal will not fit in with, and will materially detract from the surrounding landscape;**

**Policy N.18 (Areas of Active Landscape Conservation) requires the planning authority to refuse developments which "harm the quality and character of the landscape" and requires particular consideration to ensure that the "siting, design, scale, materials and landscaping of all development ... is appropriate to the character of the area". It is the Parish Council's view that the bold and futuristic design of the proposal is inappropriate.**

**The Parish Council also draws to the planning authority's attention the Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Plan, which (in Appendix D Neighbourhood Planning Charter) urges that "to protect the villages from undesirable change, regulations concerning Areas of Special Interest, the Green Belt ... should be strictly enforced" (bullet point 7); that "in planning new buildings careful consideration should be given to their setting in respect of historic context, siting, size, design, materials etc" (bullet point 8); and that although 21st century design is acceptable it should be "neighbourhood friendly" (bullet point 9).**

[Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in the above application as the applicants were clients]

152/12 The Clerk advised that no planning decision notices had been received.

153/12 Members considered progress on initiatives undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken, by the Parish Council.

154/12 Balterley pavements. It was noted that no work appeared to have been carried out by the neighbourhood gang as requested in the Balterley area, though work had been done at The Wilderness.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to clarify with the relevant highways engineer what works had been carried out by the neighbourhood gang in the Balterley area.**

155/12 Cllr Thomas reported on continued progress regarding arrangements for the events to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A commemorative tree had been donated and details of the inscription for the accompanying plaque were discussed. Arrangements were now in place for the attendance of the Mayor at events, but it was necessary to arrange that he was formally greeted and accompanied. Arrangements for the Children's Party were in place, but that confirmation of funding from County Cllr Chapman had still to be received. The Monday evening event would run from 7.30pm, with two bands secured to play, hot pork baps for all ticketholders, and the lighting of the beacon at 10.15. It was anticipated that (subject to confirmation of Cllr Chapman's funding) the event cost would fall within the available budget, but some costs would have to be met on, or shortly after, the day of the events.

**RESOLVED a) that the Chairman would formally greet and accompany the Mayor during the events;**

**b) that the Clerk be asked to pursue with County Cllr Chapman the availability of his funding;**

**c) that the Council notes that a thorough Risk Assessment had been completed;**

**d) that the Clerk be authorised to arrange the payment of any costs incurred, within the specified budget and funding provided, if appropriate before the date of the next meeting of the Council;**

**e) that the Council records its thanks to Cllr Thomas and her team of helpers for all their work in organising the commemorative events.**

156/12 The Chairman reported that a successful site meeting had been held in connection with the Council's Community Paths Initiative application, attended by Cllr Burton and himself together with the County Footpaths Officer and a colleague. Significant progress had been made, and it would be appropriate to review the matter with Cllr Burton at the next meeting.

157/12 The Clerk reported that he had now been able to contact the officer responsible for Community Speed Watch Schemes at the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership. He had undertaken to supply scheme details, together with appropriate volunteer forms, and to establish any necessary contact with the local police. The Clerk also advised members that he had been advised of possible lower cost ways of obtaining the necessary equipment, either by using a cheaper model of speed gun or by purchasing a used device from another parish council.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to progress the scheme as appropriate.**

158/12 Members considered progress on the community website. Concern was expressed that local news could not be prominently displayed on the site. The Clerk undertook to explore if this could be addressed. The Clerk advised members that a policy on the use of cookies

needed to be adopted to meet data protection requirements, but that a model scheme was available from the website hosts.

**RESOLVED that the model cookie policy be approved and adopted, and that the only use of cookies be that necessary for the operation of the site.**

159/12 Members considered area issues raised by members. It was noted that the snack bar in Balterley was still operating on highways land. A member expressed concern at the condition of the bench and its surroundings on Church Lane. Members noted that a stretch of historic wall had collapsed between the Telephone Exchange and Jerusalem Cottage, Betley. The wall was considered to be of significant historical importance, and that its restoration was essential. Ownership was unclear, but was likely to lie with the adjoining landowners, including the County Council.

(Cllrs Ball, Bettley-Smith and Thomas declared personal interests in the matter of the wall as sections of the wall – but not the area affected by the collapse – bordered their respective properties)

A member of the public had expressed concern to a member regarding the condition of the triangle of land at the junction of Old Road/ New Road, Wrinehill.

**RESOLVED a) that the Clerk be asked to arrange for any necessary works to be carried out by the Council's regular contractors in respect of the Church Lane bench and Wrinehill land;**

**b) that the Clerk contact Newcastle Borough Council urging them to act to secure the restoration of the Betley wall.**

160/12 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting. There were no items requiring decision.

161/12 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

162/12 **RESOLVED a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:**

Severn Trent Water	water supply	£ 12.11	958
DT Askey	mevl garden maintenance	£135.00	959
G Griffiths	salary & expenses	£667.37	960

**b) that the Financial Statement be received;**

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

163/12 The Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate to review the terms under which the Clerk was remunerated, and to assess whether they were appropriate to his workload.

**RESOLVED that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to meet with the Clerk to discuss his terms of employment.**

164/12 Members of the Laudy Croft Working Group advised that no maintenance work was currently required.

165/12 Members considered issues relating to parish communication, and items to be included in the next issue of the Parish Magazine.

166/12 Members considered the maintenance of the Memorial Garden. The Clerk reported that the Borough Council had refused the request to prune the conifer tree within the lawned area.

**RESOLVED that a site meeting be held with the Borough Council to discuss options for dealing with the tree.**

167/12 Date of next meeting: Thursday 28th June 2012.

**168/12 RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100A (Schedule 12A Part I 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, and that exclusion is considered to be in the public interest.**

169/12 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.