

# **BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2010**

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Robert Bettley-Smith, Seb Daly, Dave Hales, Richard Head, John Price, Frank Speed and Chris Watkin.

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Five members of the public  
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

271/10 Apologies for absence were received and accepted as valid reasons for absence under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 from Cllrs Ball (family commitment), Berrisford (family commitment), Harrison (work commitment), Morris (family commitment) and Thomas (other village event).

272/10 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

The following members declared personal interests in planning application 10/00580 (Hand & Trumpet) as customers of the business – Cllrs Bettley-Smith, Daly, Hales, Head, Price and Watkin. Cllr Bettley-Smith also declared personal interests in planning applications 10/00577 & 578 (St Margaret's Church) as a worshipper, and in 10/00603 (The Old Tower) as the applicant was a family friend. Cllrs Hales and Speed declared personal interests in 10/00577 & 578 in similar terms.

273/10 The meeting was adjourned to permit public participation.

Two members of the public were present representing the applicants in application 10/00580. They indicated their willingness to respond to any questions members might wish to raise. The purpose of the application was to strengthen an existing successful local business; they would not have submitted the application if they did not feel it was necessary.

(At this point Cllr Price advised the meeting that he had met and spoken with the applicant's representatives in advance of the meeting)

A resident of Cracow Moss then addressed the meeting. He felt it was very strange that the applicant's representatives had not advanced their case, but were merely waiting for questions from the Council. He felt this was unfair to potential objectors who would be unable to respond.

He also questioned whether the Council was qualified to respond as consultees on the application. The applicants had gifted a noticeboard to the Parish Council, which was situated on land owned by the applicant and for which no payment was made. He felt this was highly suspect. Another parishioner also made use of part of the car park, but was required to make a rental payment.

Turning to the application itself he reminded members that the business had been the subject of extensive refurbishment some five years ago, featuring renovation and extension of the building, and an extended car park. It was inconceivable that in planning at that time they would have 'guessed' the necessary car parking capacity. The original car parking provision had

been extended and extended again. Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill was primarily a linear development; the proposed car park was naughty in that it broke that pattern of linear development. It turned Green Belt into a brownfield site.

The applicants claimed that off-site parking on Old Road and the A531 was an issue, but he maintained this was not often an issue and that, in any case, parking on the road had always taken place.

The applicants were claiming “exceptional circumstances” relating to the parking issue; but such parking occurred regularly independent of the Hand & Trumpet.

The application failed to address local planning policies such as S.13 (light spillage), S.9 (nature conservation) and N.18 (area of active landscape conservation).

On nature conservation he provided a document listing species which had been noted in the area, which included badgers, lizards and partridge. There were owls in the wood, and barn owls used adjacent fields. The proposal would devastate a third of the wood, and transform the remainder into an urban park. This was not appropriate in an area of active landscape conservation.

In summary, the application was clearly contrary to policies S.3 and N.18 and should not be permitted. The claim was that there were ‘exceptional circumstances’. What are they? And why were they not applicable at the time of the previous refurbishment?

A second resident stated that he had lodged an objection with the Borough Council. The application was contrary to four local plan policies. It was a thriving business which wanted to grow, but enough was enough. Residents of Cracow Moss cherished the idyllic setting, and did not want woodland to be grubbed out and replaced by a car park. The area was covered by strict planning restrictions.

274/10 Members considered the following planning application:

**10/00580/FUL Change of use of land from field to provide additional car parking, Hand & Trumpet Inn, Wrinehill**

The Chairman cautioned members that in view of the statement made by a member of the public, that the Council collectively might be subject to a prejudicial interest, they should proceed with caution. The Clerk advised that in view of the fact that a definitive ruling could not be obtained without reference to the Borough Council’s Monitoring Officer that caution was advisable.

**RESOLVED** That the Parish Council is of the view that it cannot comment on this application as a member of the public has stated a belief that the Council has a prejudicial interest in the matter, and that the true position cannot be clarified within the timescale for consultation.

275/10 Members considered the following planning application:

**10/00557/FUL & 558/LBC Proposed boundary fencing, St Margaret’s Church, Church Lane, Betley**

**RESOLVED** That the Parish Council strongly supports the application, and regards it as appropriate development on the grounds of enhanced health and safety.

276/10 Members considered the following planning application:

**10/00603/FUL First floor rear extension, The Old Tower, Main Road, Doddlespool**

**RESOLVED** That the Parish Council supports the application, believing that it will improve the overall appearance, and is likely to prolong the life, of the building.

277/10 The Clerk advised members that, in view of the comments made during public participation and the Council's resolution on minute 274/10, he would advise seeking a ruling from the Borough Council's Monitoring Officer in respect of the issue raised.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to seek such a ruling.**

278/10 Members of the Website Working Group had considered the draft format supplied by the Clerk, setting out the suggestions made by the contractor.

**RESOLVED that the format be approved.**

279/10 Members considered the position regarding the provision of grit bins in the area.

**RESOLVED a) that the County Council be advised that the grit bins at Cracow Moss and East Lawns are both damaged and in need of repair or replacement;**

**b) that the County Council be asked whether it would be possible to have a stockpile of grit at a suitable location in the area.**

280/10 The Chairman reported that he had attended the AGM of the Cricket Club to express the concerns raised at the last meeting. He felt that the Club's presentation on finance was confused and confusing. He had requested a letter from the Cricket Club clarifying that the grant provided under the Community Chest scheme, and recommended by the Parish Council, had been used in accordance with the appropriate conditions.

281/10 The Clerk and Chairman tabled correspondence received since the last meeting and requiring action before the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

**RESOLVED a) that the request for payment for the Remembrance Sunday poppy wreath be passed to the Clerk for payment;**

**b) that the Chairman's action in writing to express concern at the deterioration in the local postal service be endorsed.**

282/10 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due. He also informed members that owing to an oversight the cheque presented at the last meeting in respect of the grant to the Senior Citizens Club had only been signed by one member, and that two further signatories were needed.

**RESOLVED a) that payment of the cheque to the Betley Senior Citizens Club be completed;**

**b) that the Council authorises payment of the following:**

<b>D T Askey</b>	<b>memorial garden maintenance</b>	<b>£ 80.00</b>	<b>922</b>
<b>Betley Village Hall</b>	<b>hall hire</b>	<b>£115.50</b>	<b>923</b>
<b>Audit Commission</b>	<b>audit fee</b>	<b>£182.13</b>	<b>924</b>