

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2016

338/16 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Graham Ecclestone, Dave Hales, Richard Head, Mark Morris, Ian Walton and Chris Watkin.

339/16 IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the public.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

340/16 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Speed (family), Thomas (unwell) and Townsend. An apology for absence had also been received from Borough Cllr Bloor (work).

341/16 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

All members declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12 as acquaintances of Cllr Speed.

342/16 **RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of Cllr Thomas to the list of those in attendance and the insertion of a space in Min.305/16, the minutes of the meeting of 27th October 2016 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

[Cllrs Berrisford & Daly joined the meeting at this point]

343/16 The Chairman outlined the procedure for public participation and the meeting then adjourned to allow members of the public to speak.

344/16 The member of the public indicated that she was attending to provide any information requested by members in relation to Agenda Item 12 (Betley Court concerts). She also advised members that Betley Court Farm would be participating in the national chain of beacons to mark the centenary of the Armistice on 11th November 2018.

345/16 The Chairman reported that since the last meeting he had represented the Council at the Remembrance Sunday service and wreathlaying. He had received further representations regarding the situation at Doddlespool, which he would report on at the appropriate stage in the agenda.

346/16 The Vice-Chairman advised members that he was still waiting for County Cllr Loades to arrange the County Council/ School/ Parish Council meeting to discuss highway issues in Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane.

347/16 The Clerk advised members that the Borough Council was intending to withdraw clerical support from the Parish Forum meetings, and had suggested that Parish Councils could provide clerical support on a rotating basis. The Clerk felt this would lead to inconsistency and confusion and that personally he would not wish to take up such a role.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council considers the Borough Council's proposal to be both unworkable and unacceptable.

348/16 There was no report from the County Councillor.

349/16 Borough Cllr Bloor had sent an e-mail to the Clerk in relation to the non-provision of a christmas tree and also outlining her recent work on the Borough Council.

350/16 Cllr Daly advised members that a recent 'league table' had placed Betley School in 1st place in Staffordshire and 43rd in the country. Members expressed their admiration of the school's achievement.

351/16 The Clerk advised members of Urgent Business dealt with since the last meeting.

At a late stage it had emerged that the Borough Council had stopped its long-standing policy of providing a Christmas Tree for the Memorial Garden. The Borough Council had made no attempt to advise the Parish Council of this change in policy which only became apparent when the expected tree did not arrive. The Clerk had conveyed this information to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Within the necessary timescale it had not been possible to obtain and place a suitable tree and the Chairman, in consultation with several members and the Clerk, had concluded that the best course of action was to use the existing natural tree and to obtain a further wiring loom in order to illuminate a larger tree.

RESOLVED that the actions of the Clerk and Chairman be endorsed.

As a result of the changed arrangements the bed which normally accommodated the tree would be left bare and the Vice-Chairman had authorised the Council's contractor to plant up that bed.

RESOLVED that the actions of the Vice-Chairman be endorsed.

Members discussed arrangements for future years on the assumption that use of the natural tree proved to be satisfactory.

RESOLVED that the following arrangements be agreed:

- a) That all looms be removed in January 2017;
- b) That the looms be replaced in November 2017;
- c) That from January 2018, in order to minimise expense, the risk of damage to the lighting and tree, and in the interests of safety, the upper looms should then remain attached to the tree, with the lower loom added for the lighting period;
- d) That the matter of potentially relocating the electricity supply be considered at the March meeting.

352/16 The Clerk advised that he had received a phone call from a representative of the Parochial Church Council who had expressed satisfaction with the Council's offer of £1,750 toward the cost of extending the burial ground.

353/16 Members considered the following planning application:

16/00875/FUL Erection of a metal clad agricultural building, land north west of Pigeon House Farm, Deans Lane, Balterley.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection in principle, but the Local Planning Authority will need to assure itself that there is an adequate agricultural justification for the proposed development.

354/16 Members considered the following planning application:

16/00791/FUL Garage loft conversion with dormer, The Old Wood, Betley Hall Gardens, Betley.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection to the proposed garage loft conversion with dormer; the Parish Council has no information on any proposal regarding an implement store other than a passing reference in the documentation supplied and can therefore comment only on the garage conversion.

355/16 Members considered the following planning application:

16/00939/FUL Rear conservatory with atrium roof, Lake View, 21 Betley Hall Gardens, Betley.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection.

356/16 The Clerk reported on the following planning decision notices:

16/00792/794 Old School Room, Main Road, Betley - PERMITTED (with five year condition on landscaping).

357/16 The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Safety Advisory Group meeting to review the Betley Concerts events. No problems of significance had been raised and it was generally considered to have been successful.

358/16 The Clerk advised members of recent events related to activities in the Doddlespool area as advised to him by the planning department of the Borough Council. The court case undertaken by the Borough Council had taken place on 16th November. At the last minute Mr Oulton had changed his plea from Not Guilty to Guilty. He had been fined £920 (including costs and surcharge). The Borough Council was disappointed with the level of fine, which was lower than the fine of nearly £3,000 imposed in January for the same offence.

[Cllr Daly declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as the person involved in the case was a business client and withdrew from the meeting for Mins.358-361]

359/16 In view of further potential legal action in relation to this matter it was **RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100.**

360/16 The Chairman advised members of discussions which had taken place involving the statutory regulatory bodies, the MP and local residents.

361/16 The press and public were then readmitted.

362/16 The Clerk presented a briefing on potential budget and precept setting for 2017-18. He advised members that the process could not be completed without notification of the Council Tax Base and the Borough Council's decision on whether to maintain a Concurrent Functions Grant to parish councils. Jointly these could result in an impact of up to 22% on Council income. However, the Council's robust financial management had allowed significant balances

to be built up which - in the short and medium term - could be used to cushion the impact of reduced external funding.

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk be authorised to draw up a draft budget with the aim of maintaining the Council Tax precept for parish purposes at an unchanged level;

b) that in the event of significant changes to the Tax Base and/or grants received the Clerk liaise as necessary with the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman.

363/16 Members considered issues relating to the Laudy Croft site, in particular the options for furnishing the site with benches and picnic tables as previously agreed. The Clerk advised members that, on the recommendation of a Borough Council officer, he had obtained details of benches and tables from a reputable supplier used by the Borough Council. Quality and price appeared to be in line with general suppliers and the budget allocated for such work.

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk be authorised to obtain prices, within budgetary provision, for supply of the following:

One recycled picnic table (Ref.433),

Two circular wooden picnic tables (Ref.441),

Two wooden Bromley Curved benches (Ref.343);

b) that the matter of fixing the tables and benches be considered at the January meeting.

364/16 Cllr Head reported on progress on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. There had been a detailed discussion of the Questionnaire and the timescale for its distribution and return. The Communication and Planning Policy Sub-Groups had met subsequently to further refine the document. The Clerk was progressing a grant application to pay for the Questionnaire and other expenditure up to end-March.

365/16 In the absence of County Cllr Loades there was no progress to report on pavement and highway issues in the parish, in particular in relation to Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane and Common Lane. It was noted that hedges on Bowhill Lane/Church Lane had been significantly trimmed. This appeared to have been prompted by a complaint from a local property owner.

366/16 The Clerk advised that the County Council's contribution of £1,500 toward the purchase of portable speed monitoring equipment had been transferred, though confirmation from the Parish Council's banker was not yet to hand.

367/16 Area issues raised by members were considered. There were no matters requiring decision.

368/16 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting. There were no matters requiring decision.

369/16 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

370/16 **RESOLVED a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:**

G Griffiths	Salary & Expenses	£ 610.39	1260
G Griffiths	Neighbourhood Plan salary	£ 205.20	1261
L Rimmer	Memorial Garden maint	£ 600.00	1262
Royal British Legion	Wreath	£ 18.50	1263

b) that the Financial Statement be received;
c) that the Bank Statements be noted, and the reconciliation verified
and be signed by the Chairman.

371/16 Members considered any necessary works at the Memorial Garden.

**RESOLVED that the Council carry out maintenance work to the paving
(powerwashing and pointing as necessary) in Spring 2017.**

372/16 Members considered matters relating to council communication.

373/16 Date of next meeting: Thursday 26th January 2017.