

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2017

325/17 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Seb Daly, David Hales, Richard Head, Frank Speed (from min.331), Terry Townsend, Ian Walton and Chris Watkin.

326/17 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Northcott.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

327/17 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Berrisford (work) and Ecclestone (holiday), and Borough Cllr Frankish.

328/17 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items. There were no declarations at this point.

329/17 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 2nd November 2017 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

330/17 There were no members of the public present to engage in public participation.

331/17 The Chairman presented his report on matters dealt with since the previous meeting. He had received representations regarding the condition of the pavement between the centre of the village and the Village Hall. He had been in correspondence with Mon Bailey regarding the twinning arrangement with Agny. It had been suggested that the twinning link could be revived in some form by involving local schools. The Rural Transport Scheme was still struggling with a low level of bookings and a meeting was to be held in December to consider another group taking over the assets and role of the scheme.

332/17 The Vice-Chairman reported that he had represented the Council and the wider community at the Remembrance Sunday commemoration. He had also accompanied Cllr Head to oversee the planting of the community orchard at Sandy Croft.

333/17 The Clerk advised members of progress on the County Council's Review of Supported Bus Services. It appeared that all of the options on offer involved the withdrawal of support for the 85 Newcastle-Crewe service (evenings and Sundays), though it appeared that some third-party funding might be available to maintain the Sunday service. He advised members that there was now a vacancy for a councillor which could be filled by co-option. The Chairman advised that he had received an expression of interest by a member of the public with a professional background who he felt would add to the Council.

RESOLVED that the question of co-option be tabled at the January meeting

334/17 No Reports, nor Apologies, had been received from either of the Borough Councillors.

335/17 Cllr Hales reported he had attended a meeting of the Betley Trust on 19th October. He felt that the Trust was both worthwhile and useful and a report on its work was being prepared for the parish magazine.

336/17 Cllr Head reported on events which would be taking place at the Village Hall following the switching on of the Christmas lights.

337/17 Cllr Daly reported that the School Governors had met the previous day. There was nothing of significance to report.

338/17 The Clerk advised members that no matters had been dealt with under the Council's provision for Urgent Business.

339/17 Members considered the following planning application.

17/00919/FUL Erection of double garage, land rear of Old Post Office, Main Road, Betley.

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

[Cllr Head declared a personal interest in the above matter as a nearby resident.]

340/17 Members noted the following planning decision:

17/00768/FUL Alterations, Eastcote, Main Road, Betley - PERMITTED.

17/00814/AGR Produce shed, Bow Hill Farm, Betley - Not considered to fall under permitted development and would therefore require a full application.

Members were concerned that the consent for 17/00768 was contrary to the views of the Parish Council and inconsistent with past decisions in the immediate area.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the Borough Council to ask:

a) how the Conservation Officer reached her conclusion that she had no objection to the proposal;

b) why permission was granted when a similar application at a nearby property was refused?

[County Cllr Northcott joined the meeting at this point]

341/17 Members considered the County Council's consultation on its Review of Public Rights of Way. The Clerk completed the consultation questionnaire as requested by members for submission.

342/17 The Chairman welcomed County Cllr Northcott and invited him to present his report, which covered the following areas.

Bus Services. The County Council had adopted Option 1 from the consultation, which would result in the loss of evening and Sunday services on the 85 service. He was seeking to gather information on a possible collective partnership which could perhaps provide third party funding involving Keele University, Cheshire East Council and the railway industry;

Unaccompanied Children. The scale of the challenges facing the County Council in funding social services was underlined by the fact that no fewer than 79 unaccompanied children had been found in Staffordshire in the past year, mostly at service stations;

The Better Care Fund had been approved with conditions;

Castle House (the new multi-agency office building in Newcastle) was still not ready for occupation;

The Ryecroft Regeneration Scheme had been approved, involving seven retailers and student accommodation;

Highways. Pothole repair work was being scaled down to release resources for gritting work. He had been approached regarding excessive traffic speeds on Checkley Lane; he was seeking a warning sign for the S-bend and was checking the positioning of the wall on the Blue Bell site.

The Chairman advised that his site meeting with Rob Steele (of Highways) and Amey (highways contractor) had been very useful and that some outstanding work was being addressed. He thanked Cllr Northcott for helping to facilitate the meeting.

Cllr Townsend expressed concern about mud on Waybutt Lane. Cllr Northcott advised that concerns should be directed to both Highways and the Police.

343/17 Members considered no further action was required at this point on matters relating to Aspire Housing or HS2. However it was noted that the consultation on the Crewe Hub had drawn 1,500 responses. This had a potential impact on the parish as the precise layout at Crewe could impact on the arrangement of junctions, viaducts etc. Further south.

344/17 Members considered the Council's property and assets.

345/17 In respect of Sandy Croft it was noted that the community orchard had been planted, having been funded in full by local residents.

RESOLVED that the thanks of the Parish Council be extended to the members of the community who had assisted with the funding and planting of the community orchard.

346/17 In respect of the Memorial Garden it was noted that there was still some outstanding electrical work to be completed before the Christmas lighting event could take place.

RESOLVED that the Chairman be authorised to arrange the necessary work using the recommended contractor, and that the Clerk be authorised to arrange payment up to a maximum figure of £350.

347/17 Members considered suggestions for potential "feelgood" initiatives in the parish. Discussion centred on signage, including possible decorative signage or improving the signage at the entrances to the constituent parts of the parish. The Clerk was asked to investigate the practicality of improving such signage. The possibility of planters/ hanging baskets at appropriate locations was also discussed. It was suggested that a Village Pride Group, independent of but supported by the Parish Council, should be explored. Cllr Townsend agreed to lead this initiative.

348/17 **RESOLVED that further work on the Council's Financial Regulations be deferred to the February meeting.**

349/17 Members considered progress on the Neighbourhood Plan. Everything was now in place for the business consultation. A Draft Plan was under preparation. A Newsletter had been drawn up and would be delivered to every property in the parish.

350/17 There was nothing to report relating to speed monitoring.

351/17 The Clerk invited members to consider the basis on which he should prepare a Draft Budget and Precept for 2018-2019. He outlined the Council's current financial position, mid-

term prospects and the likely direction of precepts set by the other authorities (Borough, County, Fire & Rescue, Police) and asked for guidance on the policy supported by the Council.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be instructed to draw up a budget to allow a 0% increase in the Council Tax precept payable by householders for parish purposes, using balances as necessary, recognising that an increase is likely to be needed in the future.

352/17 Members considered area issues raised by members.

RESOLVED a) that continuing issues with mud on the roads and blocked drainage in the Balterley area be reported to the County Council;

B) that the Borough Council planning department be pressed for action on the creation of an additional gateway on the A531 in Balterley, as previously reported;

353/17 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:

G Griffiths	Salary & Expenses	£812.48	1323
G Griffiths	Sal & Exps (Neighbourhood Plan)		
		£377.22	1324
L Rimmer	Meml Gdn Maintenance	£ 90.00	1325
Royal British Legion			
(Poppy Appeal)	Donation	£ 18.50	1326

c) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

354/17 Members considered issues relating to council communication.

355/17 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 25th January 2018.