

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2011

PRESENT

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Steven Ball, Mandy Berrisford, Karen Burton, Sebastian Daly, David Hales, Simon Harrison, Richard Head, Hayley Morris, Frank Speed, Jo Thomas and Chris Watkin (from min.263).

IN ATTENDANCE

County Cllr Frank Chapman; Borough Cllr David Becket.
Six members of the public.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

262/11 An apology for likely late arrival was received from Cllr Watkin.

263/11 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

All members declared a personal interest in respect of planning application 11/00509/FUL (Hand & Trumpet, Wrinehill) as customers of the facility.

[Cllr Watkin joined the meeting during consideration of this item]

264/11 Members considered the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of 22nd September.

RESOLVED a) that, subject to two corrections of typing errors ('valid reasons' for 'validreasons' in minute 222/11, and 'Watkin' for 'Watkins' in minute 223/11), the minutes of the meeting of 22nd September 2011 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman;

b) that although minute 259/11, relating to the provision of a water supply at the Memorial Garden, was an accurate record of the meeting in stating that "The Clerk advised members that the connection to the mains water supply had been completed by Severn Trent Water", and that such statement had been made in good faith on the basis of information supplied by Severn Trent, inspection after the meeting had revealed that the works had not in fact been completed.

265/11 The Chairman outlined the procedure to allow public participation, and then adjourned the meeting to allow public participation.

266/11 The first member of the public represented the applicant in respect of planning application 11/00509 (Hand & Trumpet). He firmly believed that the car park extension was essential to the viability of the business. As he had left the premises to attend the meeting there were only six spaces available for parking. By 8pm he felt people would be turning away or parking on the highway. The extra twenty spaces sought would not

adversely impact the environment; the existing plantation on the site was of minimal wildlife value; and the proposal was supported by patrons.

The second member of the public wished to speak against application 11/00509. It was contrary to planning policies S.3 and N.18. Five exceptions to allow development in the Green Belt were listed in the Local Plan; parking was not one of them. The proposal was an invasion into the greenbelt, and could not be considered a 'very special circumstance'. When the current owners had bought the premises they knew how many car parking spaces there were, and that the premises lay within the Green Belt. Two extensions to car parking had already been permitted. In one case this was on appeal, after refusal by the Borough Council, and had been justified on the grounds that additional staff would be employed. There was no suggestion of employment being created on this occasion.

The applicant claimed that cars were parked on the A531 on Sundays. He (the resident) had visited on two consecutive Sundays and found no vehicles parked on the road, and vacant spaces in the car park. Even if people did park on the main road this was permissible and no different to elsewhere along the road.

He challenged the claim that the car park was nearly full that evening. He too had passed the site on his way to the meeting, and there were plenty of spaces.

The ecology report was a strange report. Adjoining land had not been surveyed. A third of the water bodies had been missed. The report stated that no runs or tracks had been found, but a neighbour regularly fed both badgers and foxes which emerged from the woods. The wood was not of low significance to wildlife, and he provided a list of species seen in the past twelve months as previously supplied to the Council.

When a similar application had come before the Council previously (10/00580/FUL) the Parish Council had declined to comment because of a suggestion of a potential interest. This had been a good move to maintain the integrity of the Council but was probably unwise.

A Parish Plan had been drawn up by the local community, with the full support of the Parish Council. In that Plan the community had shown overwhelming 90% support for policies to maintain the balance between the built and rural environment, and to seek strict enforcement of relevant planning policies. This was the view of the parish community, and the Borough Council should be urged to adhere strictly to Policy S.3 (Green Belt).

A third member of the public also wished to speak against the application. He had approached Newcastle's planning department for pre-application advice on possible provision of hardstanding and car/caravan storage on a nearby field, and had been told that such development would be contrary to both Local Plan Policy S.3 and national planning policy. He had been advised that any such change of use would require exceptional and very special circumstances. In his view if there was an issue of capacity then this related to the building rather than the car park.

He also observed that it was not unusual for unaccompanied children to wander into the wooded area. If the area was to be converted to grazing might it be used as a petting area? This would lead to more children wandering with consequent dangers.

If a car park extension was acceptable within the Green Belt then why not caravan and vehicle storage and car valeting?

He had also asked the planning department if screening would make development more acceptable, but had been told that Green Belt was Green Belt, and shielding a use from sight would not make it acceptable.

A member of the Council asked for clarification on whether further lighting would be required on site if the development proceeded.

The applicant's representative stated that no further lighting would be required.

267/11 County Councillor Chapman presented his report to the meeting. He had attended his regular six-monthly meeting with a Senior Highways Officer. Preventive maintenance was planned for Checkley Lane and Den Lane, Post Office Lane, Deans Lane and Englesea Brook Lane; streetlighting renewal was planned for the East Lawns area. The issue of the burger van on the A531 was still under investigation. There were legal controls on trading on the highway, but responsibility was split between county and district councils.

268/11 Borough Councillor Becket presented his report to the meeting. Action against the burger van under planning legislation was currently on hold awaiting clarification of the land's ownership and status. Cllr Becket also outlined the current position regarding the Boundary Commission's proposals for reorganisation of parliamentary constituencies. The draft proposals saw the Newcastle Borough divided between two constituencies: the town and southern part of the borough to a 'Newcastle & Stone' constituency, the north and western part to a 'Tunstall & Kidsgrove' constituency. Cllr Becket indicated that an alternative proposal, maintaining the connection between borough and constituency, had been drawn up and invited the Parish Council to consider making a submission in due course.

269/11 The Chairman presented his report on actions since the last meeting. The Clerk had supplied members with the legal position regarding the use of fire hydrants, and suggested the information might usefully be made available via the Parish Magazine. He (the Chairman) had received a representation regarding the planning application at Old Hall Farm, but had responded that the Parish Council had made its response as a consultee and would be unable to comment further. A meeting of the Rural Transport Scheme was scheduled for 4th November. He had received a letter from the Vicar regarding Remembrance Sunday, and would respond appropriately.

270/11 The Clerk advised members that he had received a response from the Parochial Church Council, who had indicated that they would give early notice to the Parish Council of any intention to amend the status of the Old Churchyard.

271/11 Cllr Daly reported that he had spoken again with the resident who had expressed interest in a Community Speed Watch Scheme, and there appeared to be four current volunteers to participate. The Clerk advised that experience elsewhere suggested that a pool of around twelve volunteers was necessary for a viable scheme.

RESOLVED that the matter be reviewed at the November meeting.

272/11 Members considered the following planning application:

11/00509/FUL Change of use of land from field to provide car parking and pasture land, Hand and Trumpet, Main Road, Wrinehill.

RESOLVED That the Parish Council would not normally support an application of this kind for development within the Green Belt.

However the Council believes there may be very special circumstances to justify such a development on the following grounds:

a) by securing an improvement to highway safety by reducing any level of on-road parking which may be occurring, and that the planning authority should consider this, in particular paying due regard to evidence provided by local residents;

b) noting that two local public houses have closed in recent years there may be a need for additional parking in order to secure the long-term sustainability of the business.

If the Planning Authority is minded to approve the application the Parish Council is strongly of the view that:

a) no additional lighting should be permitted, in order to protect residential amenity and the appearance of the open countryside;

b) that the proposed planting on site should be enhanced, using native deciduous species and including standards as well as whips, to accelerate the beneficial impact of such planting.

273/11 Members considered the following planning application:

11/00516/FUL Extensions and alterations, Doddlespool Farm, Main Road, Balterley.

RESOLVED That the Parish Council objects to the proposal as it has concerns that the proposal will detract visually from an important and prominent building, contrary to Local Plan Policy H.18 clauses ii and iii.

274/11 Members considered the following planning application:

11/00548/FUL Additional garage and replacement workshop, Yew Trees, Main Road, Betley.

RESOLVED That the Parish Council objects to the application on the grounds that the size, shape and form of the development will have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area, contrary to Local Plan Policies B.10 and B.13, which require development to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In particular the Council draws attention to the need to respect the setting and character of the walled garden wall, an important retained architectural feature of the Betley Hall Gardens development, within the Conservation Area.

275/11 The Clerk advised members of four planning determinations:

11/00409/FUL Extension, rear balcony and canopy, and alterations to driveway, 21 Ladygates, Betley – PERMITTED

11/00445/AGR Cladding of existing Dutch Barn, The Old Hall Farm, Main Road, Betley – PERMITTED

11/00457 & 458/FUL Agricultural buildings, Fields Farm, Church Lane, Betley – PERMITTED

RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to clarify the apparent discrepancy between the use identified in the application (storage of hay) and the more general use permitted as granted.

276/11 The Clerk updated members on progress regarding other current planning issues. Snack Bar A531. The Borough Council had indicated to the operator that in the view of the planning authority the use represented a change of use which required permission. An application had been submitted but had been found to be incomplete. Further action was in abeyance pending clarification of the site's ownership and status.

Bowhill Lane. The Borough Council was investigating whether the development which had taken place to the rear of a property in Ladygates was such as to require planning permission.

Tudor House. The Conservation Officer had reviewed the work which had been carried out, and a Listed Building Consent was likely to be sought.

[Cllrs Bettley-Smith and Daly declared personal interests in the Snack Bar as users; Cllr Berrisford a personal interest in the same matter as an acquaintance of the operator; Cllr Morris a personal interest as a resident of the area, and as she had visited the operation. Cllr Bettley-Smith declared a personal interest in the Tudor House matter as an immediate neighbour]

277/11 The Clerk had forwarded to members information regarding the government funding made available to improve broadband access in rural areas.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the County Council reminding them of the need to improve broadband access in Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill, particularly as they had responsibility for areas postcoded CW2 and CW3, and to enhance business development in rural areas in accordance with county and borough policies.

278/11 Members noted that the community website was now operative.

279/11 Members considered a number of Policy Documents tabled by the Clerk.

RESOLVED a) that the following be approved with immediate effect:

Data Protection and Information Policy

Records Management Policy

Policy on Requests for Information under the Freedom of

Information Act

b) that consideration of a Members Allowances and Expenses Policy be deferred to the November meeting to allow members to consider their view on the potential payment of a Participation Allowance.

280/11 The Clerk advised members that Cllr Bettley-Smith had been nominated for the Borough's Joining Big Society Group.

281/11 Members considered progress on initiatives undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken, by the Parish Council.

282/11 The County Council had carried out some of the requested pavement clearing work in the Balterley area, but some sections had been left untreated.

RESOLVED that Cllr Ball would review the work done, and provide a schedule of works required for the Clerk to seek to have the work completed by either the County Council or the Council's own contractor, subject to the work being within the allocated budget.

283/11 Members considered the difficulties faced by residents trying to use the Crewe-bound bus stop at Main Road/East Lawns.

RESOLVED that the Clerk seek an indicative cost from the County Council for the provision of hardstanding and access, which was considered essential, and a bus shelter, which was considered desirable, at this location.

284/11 Members considered a report from the Clerk regarding the provision of plaques on the benches installed by the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to arrange the supply of three plaques, worded as set out in the Clerk's report, to be provided by Timpson's within a total budget of £60.

285/11 Members considered area issues raised by members.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the highways authority asking for clarification regarding the suggestion that the Cheshire Railings at Post Office Lane/ B5500 should have been moved backwards to aid visibility.

286/11 Members noted that the grit bin in Church Lane had been replaced as requested by the Council.

RESOLVED that the Council expresses its gratitude to the County Council.

287/11 The Clerk and Chairman tabled correspondence received since the last meeting. There were no matters requiring decision.

288/11 Members considered a request for financial support received from the Betley Senior Citizens Group.

RESOLVED that a grant of £175 be made toward the Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch.

289/11 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

290/11 **RESOLVED** a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

Betley Village Hall	hall hire	£ 288.42	889
DT Askey	Memorial Garden	£ 135.00	890
G Griffiths	salary & expenses	£ 332.36	891
DT Askey	Memorial Garden	£ 135.00	892

b) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

291/11 Members of the Laudy Croft Working Group advised that no maintenance work was required.

292/11 Members considered issues relating to council communication, and items to be included for the December issue of the Parish Magazine.

293/11 The Clerk assured members that he was taking all appropriate action to secure completion of the water connection work at the Memorial Garden, and that Cllr Becket had agreed to assist.

RESOLVED that the disposal of the redundant Christmas lighting be considered at the November meeting.

294/11 The Clerk advised members that no response had yet been received from the Borough Council regarding the Laudy Croft site, and there was therefore no business requiring discussion and no need to exclude the press and public.

295/11 Date of next meeting – Thursday 24th November 2011