

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2010

PRESENT

Councillors Robert Bettley-Smith, Mandy Berrisford, Seb Daly (from min.222), Simon Harrison, Richard Head, Frank Speed and Chris Watkin.

IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillor Frank Chapman
Two members of the public
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk)

213/10 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), Cameron (holiday), Morris (family commitment) and Price (family commitment). An apology for late arrival was received from Cllr Daly (work commitment). An apology for absence had been received from Borough Cllr Becket. It was noted that Cllr Price's absence was a result of he and his wife celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

RESOLVED that the Council offers its congratulations to Cllr and Mrs Price, and that the Chairman would write conveying the best wishes of the Council.

214/10 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllrs Berrisford, Head and Speed each declared a personal interest in planning application 10/00501 (Quinneys, Den Lane) as they were acquainted with the applicant.

215/10 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 22nd July 2010 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

216/10 **RESOLVED that the minutes of the special meeting of 26th August 2010 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.**

217/10 No members of the public present wished to engage in public participation.

218/10 The Chairman reported on his activities since the last meeting.

He had received a letter from the local senior citizens' group asking for a contribution toward the cost of their annual Christmas Lunch.

RESOLVED that the application be considered at the next meeting, and that an increase in the contribution to £175 be suggested.

He had received a number of representations from the public regarding the revised refuse service which appeared to have gone awry in that a large area of the village had been missed from the booked collection. He had received a representation regarding the planning application for a decking area at The Steps, Main Road, Wrinehill which had been refused. He had attended a meeting of the Rural Transport Scheme.

219/10 The Clerk reported on the steps taken to review the Council's insurance cover.

Unfortunately the alternative provider had declined to offer cover in view of the uncertainties

regarding the potential condition of the Laudy Croft site. The Council's current provider had been willing to provide cover, but with a substantial increase in premium. The Clerk advised members that in his view it was essential that cover was extended to protect the Council against any possibility of liability.

RESOLVED a) that the revised insurance cover offered be accepted;
b) that the Clerk be thanked for his thorough review of the Council's insurance arrangements.

220/10 County Councillor Chapman reported on the following issues:

Community Fund. A small sum was available from his Councillor's Community Fund which he suggested might be put toward the cost of repairing the bus shelter.

Grit Bins. The Council was inviting suggestions for appropriate locations for additional grit bins. Members suggested that Church Lane should be a priority (though a bin already was in place close to the entrance to Ladygates), along with the access to/egress from the Village Hall (although this might involve placement on private land). It was agreed that the County Councillor would liaise with the Chairman regarding appropriate siting.

Police Authority. Cllr Chapman noted that Staffordshire Police's policies on anti-social behaviour had been commended by a recent national report. There was a particular problem of alcohol-related violence in Newcastle Town Centre; Cllr Chapman along with the Chairman of the Borough Licensing Committee was going to spend an evening with the police to gain an understanding of the issue.

Concern had been raised in another parish regarding poor police response to incidents of fly-tipping. Cllr Chapman had taken this up and had been assured that responses would be improved.

Members drew to Cllr Chapman's attention the incident where a commercial vehicle had parked for some days in a way which blocked disabled access to the Reading Room and to which there had been no police response. Cllr Chapman responded by agreeing that the rural areas tended to suffer as a result of their remoteness from the base of the Neighbourhood Policing Unit at Kidsgrove.

221/10 Members considered arrangements for the events to mark the switching-on of the Christmas Lights. For this item they were joined, by invitation of the Council, by a member of the Village Hall Committee who set out the programme of events planned at the Village Hall.

RESOLVED a) that the event be held on Friday 26th November;
b) that the assistance of Audley Rotary be sought in securing the services of Father Christmas;
c) that the lights at the Memorial Garden be lit at 7pm;
d) that those involved then process to the Village Hall;
e) that the lights at the Village Hall be lit at 7.30pm;
f) that the Council notes with appreciation the arrangements made by the Village Hall Committee.

Cllr Head agreed to pursue the possibility of the choir being present to provide music at both locations at the switching on of the lights.

222/10 Members considered the operation of the new arrangements for the collection of refuse and recyclables. There was general satisfaction with the new arrangements but there were two principal areas of concern:

a) the non-collection of garden waste from the centre of the village which had provoked a number of complaints; action had been taken, and the material had been collected that morning;

b) because of the early start time for collection it was often necessary to leave cardboard out overnight, which could lead to it being damaged in wet weather; would it be possible for a slightly later start-time for collection?

(Cllr Daly joined the meeting during the consideration of this item)

RESOLVED that the matter be discussed further at the October meeting when it was hoped that Borough Cllr Becket could be in attendance.

223/10 Members considered a Borough Council consultation on a Rural Newcastle Green Space Strategy. Members discussed at length the scope and implications of such a Strategy, and the degree to which it could be relevant to the built-up and undeveloped areas of the parish.

RESOLVED that, in the absence of a clear explanation adequate to convince the Council of such a Strategy's relevance to a rural area, the Council considers such a Strategy to be inappropriate in a rural area.

(Cllr Speed declared a personal interest in this matter as some land in his ownership was identified in the consultation document. However, as the land concerned was already protected as an SSSI he did not consider that its listing in the document represented a prejudicial interest, as his interest in the land would not be materially affected)

224/10 In view of the appointment of a new member of staff to co-ordinate the scheme it was:
RESOLVED that discussion of the OWL neighbourhood watch arrangements be deferred to the October meeting.

225/10 Members considered the response received to their comments regarding the anti-social behaviour posters produced by the Safer Communities Partnership.

RESOLVED that the Council holds to its view that the posters were of no utility to the Parish, but that no further action be taken.

226/10 Members considered the following planning application:

(Cllr Daly declared a personal interest in this application as he was acquainted with the applicant)

10/00501/FUL Part single storey/ part first floor side extension, Quinneys, Den Lane, Wrinehill

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection.

227/10 Members considered the following planning application:

10/00509/FUL Two storey side extension, Glenwood, Den Lane, Wrinehill

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection.

228/10 The Clerk reported the following Decisions of which he was aware:

10/00146 Replacement agricultural worker's dwelling, Bowhill Farm, Bowhill Lane, Betley – WITHDRAWN

10/00147 Ground floor side extension, 6 Betley Hall Gardens, Betley – PERMITTED

10/00223 Rear conservatory, The Rosary, Main Road, Betley – PERMITTED

10/00225 Retention of covered decking area, The Steps, Main Road, Wrinehill – REFUSED

10/00263 Detached double garage, The Estate House, Main Road, Betley – PERMITTED

10/00299 Single storey rear extension, St Margaret's House, 10 Chamberlain Court, Betley – PERMITTED

229/10 Members considered the recommendations of the Website Working Group regarding the basic structure of the proposed community website.

RESOLVED a) that the recommendations of the Working Group be approved in principle;

b) that a final decision be taken at the next meeting, subject to the layout being proved practical and the issue regarding its printing being resolved.

(Cllrs Daly and Speed each declared a personal interest in this item as their businesses might be included within the 'local services' listed on such a community website)

230/10 The Council considered area issues raised by members.

RESOLVED a) that the Borough Council be asked to address the height of the litter bin provided at the East Lawns bus stop which was sited at an excessive height;

b) that the Clerk write to the County Council regarding falls suffered by residents in the East Lawns area, and advising the County Council of its potential liability;

c) that options for action in respect of improving facilities at the East Lawns bus stops be presented to the next meeting;

d) that the costs of potential work to the bus shelter adjoining the Village Hall site be presented to the next meeting.

231/10 Members considered the programme of works to be carried out by the Highways Neighbourhood Gang on its next visit.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to collate a list of works to include the following, together with any other works identified by Sunday 31st October:

Sign washing; removal of post at Memorial Garden; clearing of gully outside veterinary practice; cutting back of vegetation masking road signs; clear passage of The Butts past overgrown hedging.

232/10 The Clerk submitted details of correspondence received since the last meeting.

233/10 Members considered the following issues referred from previous meetings:

Church Lane Bench. The bench had been obtained and would be installed when members were available to carry out the work.

Balterley Bench. The Clerk advised that he had received no response from the County Council regarding permission to site a bench at this location.

Community Footpaths Initiative. Members had been unable to progress this matter due to other commitments. Members would seek to identify the key locations at which improvements would be most effective.

Betley Old Churchyard. No action was currently required.

Community Wildlife Funding Initiative. The Clerk advised that the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust had not responded to the request for advice; it would therefore be impossible to progress the matter within the timescale set by the funding provider.

234/10 Members considered the preparation of Parish Council News.

RESOLVED that a draft of the Autumn Parish Council News (which would be the final edition) be brought to the October meeting.

235/10 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank statements to date. The Chairman placed before members the letter from the Senior Citizens' Group seeking financial assistance. The Clerk also presented a report on applications received under the Community Chest scheme.

236/10 **RESOLVED** a) that consideration of the request from the Senior Citizens' Group be deferred to the October meeting;

b) that the applications under the Community Chest scheme be dealt with as follows:

i) that the application from the Betley Bowls Club be declined, as the scheme is designed to assist projects of greater utility than simply the organisation seeking the grant;

ii) that a grant of £500 be recommended to the Village Hall Committee at this time;

iii) that a grant of £125 be recommended to the Madeley & District Community Association at this stage, and that the organisation be advised that a further grant of up to £125 would be considered subject to their being able to give wider publicity to their project in the area of the Parish Council.

237/10 **RESOLVED** a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

G Griffiths	salary & expenses	£951.99	913
Zurich Insurance plc	insurance premium	£496.44	914
TW Heler & Sons	highways work	£235.00	915
DT Askey	memorial garden maintenance	£135.00	916
CPRE	membership subscription	£ 29.00	917

b) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

238/10 The Clerk advised members that the External Audit of Account for 2009-10 had now been completed, and was a 'clean' audit. There were two points which he felt he should draw to the attention of members. Firstly, the Auditor had noted a discrepancy between the year-end balance and the Council's bank balance at the year-end. This was a result of uncleared cheques at the year-end date. Secondly, in view of the Auditor's previous comments regarding the Council's risk assessment and management – which she had indicated were inadequate – he had sent a copy of the Council's new risk management policy. This had, however, been returned as "documents not required", which was disappointing given the Council's efforts in this field.

RESOLVED that the Council considers its response to the Auditor at its October meeting.

239/10 Members of the Laudy Croft Working Group reported that spot treatment of weeds on the site had now been carried out.

240/10 Members of the Memorial Garden Working Group reported that they had been unable to make progress on the installation of a water supply and that it might be appropriate to employ a contractor to carry out the necessary work.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be asked to seek tenders for the work required in providing a lockable tap, standpipe, stop tap and 25mm piping to the boundary with the highway.

241/10 Date of next meeting Thursday 28th October