

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2015

236/15 PRESENT:

Cllrs Robert Bettley-Smith, Seb Daly, Graham Ecclestone, Richard Head, Frank Speed, Terry Townsend and Ian Walton.

237/15 IN ATTENDANCE:

Six members of the public.
County Cllr Loades.
Borough Cllr Frankish.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

238/15 Apologies for absence was received from Cllrs Berrisford (work), Morris (work) and Watkin (family commitment). An apology had also been received from Cllr Thomas who had been delayed and might not be able to attend.

239/15 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

Cllr Speed declared prejudicial interests in Agenda Items 7 (planning application Betley Court Farm) and 11 (licensing at Betley Court Farm) as the applicant in each case. Cllr Daly declared a prejudicial interest in Item 11 as an Officer of the Bonfire & Show Committee, which was a party to the licence.

All members declared a personal interest in Items 7 (planning application, Betley Court Farm) and 11 (Licensing, Betley Court Farm) through their acquaintanceship with the applicants.

240/15 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of 23rd July 2015 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

241/15 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of 27th August 2015 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman.

242/15 The Chairman outlined the procedure for public participation and the meeting was then adjourned.

243/15 Several members of the public wished to contribute.

The first member of the public was an applicant in respect of planning application 15/00703 (Betley Court Farm), did not wish to comment at this stage but would remain in order to provide any information sought by members later in the meeting.

The second member of the public reminded members that it was now ten years since the Parish Plan had been adopted. A lot of work had gone into the Plan and he felt that it would be useful to carry out a Review. The Chairman responded that some steps had been taken to review the Plan a few years ago but that this had not progressed. Progress had been made on a number of issues raised through the Plan process but the suggestion was something the Council would look to progress.

The third member of the public wished to comment on the licensing issue at Betley Court Farm. In his opinion the Young Farmers Ball had been intrusive for residents of Court Walk particularly as the event had gone on until 1am. In future he felt such events should finish by 11pm. The Three Night Event had been noisy, but liveable. The worst noise had been after the Friday night event when traffic and pedestrians had been delayed in leaving resulting in shouting and car horns being sounded. The Chairman replied that this had been raised with the police at the time and that the arrangements had not been optimal.

The member of the public stated that the Saturday event had been acceptable, except when the P.A. Was used to whip up the crowd between acts. The Sunday event had been o.k. except that there had been a firework display at the end which had not been announced.

In general there had been problems with the contact telephone numbers provided (a representative of the licensee explained this had been caused by electrical supply failures) and sound checks being carried out on the Thursday.

Two other members of the public commented on the same matter. One pointed out there had been no complaints lodged with either the organisers or the Borough Council on the night of the Young Farmers Ball; the other reported that from his location in the centre of the village the concerts could be heard on each night but without any significant impact. Concertgoers had been polite and obliging. There had been some traffic impact around The Swan but this had been cleared quickly once brought to the attention of the organisers.

244/15 The Chairman presented his report on matters since the last meeting. Along with the Vice-Chairman and Clerk he had attended the recent site meeting with a representative of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) on Laudy Croft. He had been unable to attend the most recent meeting of the Rural Transport scheme, but matters were proceeding normally.

245/15 The Clerk reported on three matters.

The External Audit of Accounts for 2014-15 had been completed and was a “clean audit” with only minor observations regarding the presentation of figures.

Friends of Staffordshire Archives had confirmed that the results of their Tithe Map digitisation project would be made available at local records centres, and that if the Parish Council was prepared to support the project a further copy could be made available for local use.

The Clerk advised that the recent Transparency Code published by the government would require an amendment to the way in which the Council published its minutes. In future draft minutes would be published in advance of approval by members.

246/15 County Cllr Loades presented his report on the following matters:

Two potential dates for a Highways meetings involving parish councils and highways officers were offered to members;

He had secured some funding which could be used to address the issue of vegetation encroaching onto pavements;

The Borough Council was in a difficult position on planning in the absence of both a Local Plan and a 5 year housing supply. This could lead to pressures from speculative development applications on unallocated sites. Cllr Loades would ask to be informed of any highways issues relating to planning applications;

A new person had been appointed to liaise with Community Speed Watch Schemes;

An independent survey had been completed at the Doddlespool flooding site and the necessary works had been identified. No budget could be identified currently but funding might be available around February 2016.

247/15 Borough Cllr Frankish presented her report to members. She advised that a special council meeting had been held to appoint long-serving former councillors to the position of Honorary Aldermen, including David Becket.

248/15 Members considered pedestrian safety issues on Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane. Cllr Daly presented a summary of the current position indicating that the pavement standards fell well below those required by the relevant guidelines, with pavement width reducing to as little as 330mm against a standard of 700mm for a normal pedestrian and a recommendation of 2000-3000mm. Cllr Loades expressed a willingness to pursue the matter with the appropriate highway authorities.

RESOLVED that Cllr Daly be thanked for preparing his report and that the matter be placed with County Cllr Loades for action.

249/15 The Clerk advised members that, since the last meeting, there had been no urgent business requiring action.

250/15 Members considered the following planning application:

15/00703/ADV Retention of advertisement signs, Betley Court Farm, Main Road, Betley

RESOLVED that the Council has no objection in principle but would ask the Local Planning Authority to:

- a) make any permission personal to the applicant;**
- b) limit any permission to a period of display which is reasonable and necessary.**

251/15 Members considered the following planning application:

15/00736/FUL Proposed garden room, Briarwood, Common Lane, Betley

RESOLVED that the Council has no objection.

252/15 Members considered the following planning application:

15/00759/FUL Five detached dwellings, former Blue Bell Inn site, New Road, Wrinehill

RESOLVED that the Council objects in the strongest terms to this application in the absence of any provision for affordable housing and that it is therefore not in accordance with planning policy.

253/15 Members considered the following planning application:

15/00804/FUL Replacement dwelling, Ravens Crest, Main Road, Betley

RESOLVED that the Parish Council objects in the strongest terms to the application on the following grounds.

A. That the increased scale of the proposed replacement dwelling (at 150% of the volume of the existing building) is materially significant and should be regarded as a departure from policy, which requires very special circumstances to be demonstrated.

B. That the contemporary design is considered too bold and futuristic for the visual environment and will represent a singular design that is not compatible with any other property, therefore detracting from the visual amenity of this area.

As such the Council believes the application is contrary to the following planning policies:

Policy S.3 (Green Belt) iv) which requires that evidence must be provided to justify replacement rather than alteration (to the existing building) and v) which requires any development to have a not materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. It is the view of the Council that the form, styling and materials proposed will have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;

Policy H.2 (Replacement of dwellings in the Open Countryside) which requires that the “materials and design of any acceptable replacement dwelling should fit in with, and not detract materially from, the character of the surrounding rural landscape and any other dwellings in the vicinity”. It is the view of the Parish Council that the proposal will not fit in with, and will materially detract from the surrounding landscape;

Policy N.18 (Areas of Active Landscape Conservation) requires the planning authority to refuse developments which “harm the quality and character of the landscape” and requires particular consideration to ensure that the “siting, design, scale, materials and landscaping of all development ... is appropriate to the character of the area”. It is the Parish Council’s view that the bold and futuristic design of the proposal is inappropriate.

The Parish Council also draws to the planning authority’s attention the Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Plan, which (in Appendix D Neighbourhood Planning Charter) urges that “to protect the villages from undesirable change, regulations concerning Areas of Special Interest, the Green Belt ... should be strictly enforced” (bullet point 7); that “in planning new buildings careful consideration should be given to their setting in respect of historic context, siting, size, design, materials etc” (bullet point 8); and that although 21st century design is acceptable it should be “neighbourhood friendly” (bullet point 9).

254/15 The Clerk advised members of the following planning decision notices:

15/00521 Doddlespool - relaxation of time limit - PERMITTED (but only for nine months from September 2015)

15/00485 Wind Turbine, off Church Lane - relaxation of conditions - PERMITTED

15/00567 Extension, Yew Tree Cottage, Deans Lane, Balterley - PERMITTED

255/15 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman reported on their meeting with a representative of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust on Laudy Croft. He had advised that although the site was unusual the Council’s proposals were sound and had the potential to combine public access with ecological value.

RESOLVED **a) that the basic principles as previously set out be reaffirmed;**
b) that as a first stage a scheme be prepared that provides for fencing on the southern and eastern part of the site with gates as necessary;
c) that further consideration be given to addressing the safety implications of the rabbit burrows;

d) that a revised plan and an appropriate invitation to tender be submitted to the October meeting with a final decision to be taken at the November meeting.

256/15 Members considered issues relating to recent events held under the Premises Licence relating to Betley Court Farm.

[Cllr Speed declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as the owner of the licensed premises. Cllr Daly declared a prejudicial interest as Vice-Chairman of the Show & Bonfire Committee, events which were covered by the Licence. Both councillors withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the discussion.]

The Chairman noted that members had heard the public comments made earlier in the meeting and that the points made would inform the representatives of the Parish Council at the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group scheduled for 6th October.

257/15 Members considered the Council's policy on contact information for councillors. RThe Clerk advised that a wide range of views had been expressed by members and that it was difficult to strike a balance between members being easily contactable and their right to enjoy their private and family lives. Unlike County and Borough Councillors (who exercised significant executive functions and received financial allowances) Parish Councillors exercised their role in an entirely voluntary capacity. There was also a concern that readily available telephone numbers and e-mail addresses could be "harvested" by commercial operators.

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Council reaffirms its policy of not publishing telephone numbers and e-mail addresses on the website, and that the Clerk's contact details should continue as the initial point of contact with the Council;

B) that further options for contact details to be made available locally, via leaflets and/or noticeboards be considered.

258/15 The Clerk advised that no further response had been received from Aspire regarding the proposals for tree works at Main Road/ East Lawns. He had also advised Aspire Housing of the damaged benches at the eastern end of East Lawns but he was unsure whether any further action had been taken.

259/15 Progress on the Community Speed Watch Scheme was reviewed. Monitoring sessions had been carried out recently and training for further volunteers had been requested.

260/15 Area issues raised by members were considered.

Balterley. The damaged signage at the junction of Post Office Lane had been restored, but poorly. Cllr Townsend had reported this to Highways and had also contacted the Wildlife Trust regarding the hedges at Black Firs overgrowing the pavement. He had been assured that work would be carried out within the next two weeks.

Betley. A member expressed concern regarding the timing of works at the Wind Turbine site. He had understood that the works were to have been carried out during the school holidays, to minimise the impact on the school, but this had not taken place.

261/15 Members considered highways issues.

RESOLVED a) that, notwithstanding Cllr Loades' undertaking to press for safety improvements on Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane, the Parish Council formally request the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school.

b) that the general condition of pavements in the parish be tabled as an agenda item at the next meeting.

262/15 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting. There were no matters requiring decision.

263/15 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

264/15 **RESOLVED** a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:

TW Heler	Highways works	£ 276.00	1195
G Griffiths	Salary/expenses	£ 811.48	1196
CPRE	Subscription	£ 36.00	1197
Grant Thornton UK LLP	Audit fee	£ 120.00	1198

b) that the Financial Statement be received;

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

265/15 Members considered any necessary works at Laudy Croft. No immediate works were required.

266/15 Members considered any necessary works at the Memorial Garden.

[As the discussion related to contractual terms between the Council and its contractors members considered whether the press and public should be excluded during consideration of this matter]

267/15 **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded during consideration of this item under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100A (Schedule 12A Part I) of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it relates to potential contractual arrangements for the supply of goods and services and that it is considered to be in the public interest to exclude.

Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED a) that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, be authorised to seek a one-off tender price for the supply and planting of winter bedding at the Memorial Garden;

b) that if the tender price be considered unacceptable then the Memorial Garden Working Group be authorised to make appropriate arrangements.

268/15 Date of next meeting: Thursday 22nd October 2015.