

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2016

273/16 PRESENT:

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

274/16 IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Loades.
One member of the public.
Gwyn Griffiths (Clerk).

275/16 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Berrisford (work), Speed (work), Thomas (unwell) and Townsend (holiday). An apology for absence had also been received from Borough Cllr Bloor.

276/16 Members considered the declaration of interests in agenda items.

A prejudicial interest was declared in respect of the item relating to activities at Doddlespool by Cllr Daly (as the landowner was a client).

277/16 **RESOLVED** that, subject to the amendments below, the minutes of the meeting of 28th July 2016 be approved as a true record and be signed by the Chairman:

- a) in Minute 245/16 the name 'Walton' be replaced by 'Thomas';
- b) in Minute 255/16 the words 'firm alliance' be replaced by 'federation'.

278/16 No members of the public wished to engage in public participation.

279/16 The Chairman reported on activity since the last meeting. He noted that the Betley Concerts appeared to have passed without incident and represented an improvement on previous years. A meeting of the Safety Advisory Group was scheduled for 28th September which he expected to attend. He had forwarded to members a vigorous e-mail exchange in relation to activities at Doddlespool Hall Farm.

280/16 The Vice-Chairman had nothing further to report.

281/16 The Clerk reported that he had signed the Community Chest Agreement with the Borough Council for 2016-17 and that £800 was available. He had also submitted a booking for the Village Hall for meetings in 2016-17. Finally he had been advised that Aspire Housing was now intending to proceed with tree works at Main Road/ East Lawns.

282/16 County Cllr Loades presented his report which included the following matters.

Churchyard. He had understood that he had reached an agreement with the Leader of the Council regarding grant funding; however it now appeared that no funding would be available in the current financial year and that the earliest that funds might be available would be May 2017. The Chairman noted that the Borough Council had suggested that the lack of capacity

identified by the PCC was not the case and that there was adequate capacity. However it was unclear whether this was a local assessment or a borough-wide figure. Cllr Loades undertook to obtain parish-level figures from the Borough Council.

Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane Safety. Cllr Loades indicated that several ideas and drawings had been prepared. Indications were that funding would not be an obstacle, but there were doubts about the practicality and effectiveness of proposals. Highways Engineers had stated that creating a priority scheme (requiring traffic down Church Lane to give way) was not the answer, nor could the pavement be widened.

Members were insistent that a site meeting was necessary and Cllr Loades agreed to arrange such a meeting involving himself, Highways engineers, representatives of the School Governing Body and two or three Parish Councillors.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council welcomes such a meeting and nominates Cllrs Bettley-Smith, Daly and Ecclestone (or other members if necessary) to attend.

Speed Monitoring Equipment. Funding had been agreed to assist the Borough Council in acquiring portable speed monitoring equipment. There had been some procedural problems but these had now been resolved.

Speed Watch & Speed Sensors. Cllr Loades indicated that he had four sets of monitoring equipment available which could be used to monitor traffic levels and speeds.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council welcomes the offer and would ask for them to be used at the following locations: Wrinehill straight; at the top of the hill entering the village at the northern end; the narrow section of Bowhill Lane/Church Lane; centre of the village on the A531.

Future developments. Cllr Loades was continuing to work on a Newcastle Rural Deal, aiming to protect the area from the impact of future funding changes. He was preparing a Questionnaire for Parish Councils and would appreciate being able to present it either to the November meeting or a special meeting.

RESOLVED that a special meeting between Cllr Loades and members be arranged for Thursday 10th November.

283/16 There were no reports from Borough Councillors.

284/16 Cllr Head advised members that repairs to the Village Hall tennis courts had been completed and that an invoice would be raised for the Parish Council's contribution. Members noted the improvements carried out to the Committee Room.

285/16 The Clerk advised members of Urgent Business dealt with since the last meeting. A planning application (16/00640/COU) for change of use of ancillary land to residential curtilage at Hazelwood Barn, Balterley had been received. After notification of all members and consultation with the Chairman, who had viewed the plans, the Parish Council had entered no comment.

286/16 In the light of Cllr Loades' comments regarding the availability of grant funding from the Borough Council for works to extend the burial ground members reviewed the Parish Council's position on financial support for the project.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council notes that the Parochial Church Council having now retendered for the work, secured a significant reduction in the expected cost

and that the Parish Council's undertaking to fund 50% of the total cost would now require a provision of up to £1,750, a lesser figure than the £2,000 previously budgeted.

287/16 Members considered the following planning application:

16/00722/FUL Demolition of conservatory, erection of single-storey rear extension, 6 Brassington Street, Betley.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council has no objection to the principle of the proposed development but the Parish Council has serious concerns regarding the choice of render over brick within the Conservation Area. The Local Planning Authority will need to satisfy itself that the materials proposed are acceptable within the Conservation Area.

288/16 Members considered the following planning application:

16/00725/FUL Resubmission of 16/00036 for single-storey side extension, rear bay window, alterations to drive and front boundary wall, The Willows, 14 Chamberlain Court, Betley.

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

289/16 Members considered issues relating to activities at Doddlespool.

[Cllr Daly, having declared a prejudicial interest, withdrew during consideration of this item.]

The Chairman updated members on an exchange of e-mails involving local residents, the local MP and the appropriate regulatory authorities. The MP had written to both the Borough Council and the Environment Agency on behalf of local residents. The landowner had been prosecuted by the Borough Council for failure to meet planning obligations, and following conviction had been fined. A further prosecution was underway as the obligations were still unmet, but the landowner had pleaded Not Guilty, and a court date had now been fixed for 16th November.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council notes the current situation, is aware of and supportive of the actions taken by the MP, and endorses the suggestion of the Chairman that the MP might wish to take up the response of the Environment Agency with the appropriate Minister.

290/16 Members considered issues relating to the Laudy Croft site. The first phase of fencing work had been completed and members were invited to consider issues relating to further works and public access.

RESOLVED a) that 3 picnic tables and 2 benches be provided, with tender prices to be obtained for the October meeting;
b) that further rabbit control be carried out as necessary;
c) that opening to the public be scheduled for March 2017 and involve a community event;
d) that the Working Group be tasked with preparing a schedule for further fencing work and seeding as a wildflower meadow.

It was noted that, as part of the fencing work and installation of a new gate, hardcore which had been placed at the entrance, on Parish Council land, had been consolidated into the ground surface. A complaint had been received from a resident that the hardcore was required for repairs to the lane.

RESOLVED a) that the Parish Council notes that it has no responsibility for materials placed on its land without permission, but as a gesture of goodwill agrees in principle to replace the material involved, but cannot give permission for it to be stored on Parish Council property.

291/16 Cllr Head reported on progress on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council had received formal approval for the process of developing such a Plan through the Steering Group. A further roadshow had been held, an outdoor event in the East Lawns area. At the Steering Group there had been extensive discussion on the issue of affordable housing and there were clear difficulties in achieving such properties. A site would need to be identified and obtained at a reasonable cost; a property/ies would need to be built; and a mechanism put in place to secure it in the long-term. An imaginative approach might be necessary, but the £40,000 received by the Borough Council following development of the Blue Bell site could play a role.

RESOLVED that the Borough Council be informed that, in the context of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, early feedback is showing a demand for local affordable housing and therefore the Parish Council would request that the £40,000 is earmarked to assist in the provision of affordable housing within the parish, as originally planned when development in the Green Belt was permitted.

292/16 Progress on pavement and highway issues in the parish, in particular in relation to Bowhill Lane/ Church Lane and Common Lane, had been set out in the County Councillor's report earlier in the meeting.

293/16 The Clerk advised members that he understood that a contribution of £1,500 from the County Council toward the cost of portable speed monitoring equipment had been approved but, as far as he was aware, no funds had been transferred. Members had agreed the principle of meeting the balance of the cost but he suggested it would be helpful to pass a further formal resolution.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council agrees to fund the purchase of portable speed monitoring equipment up to a figure of £1,000 to be met from balances.

294/16 Area issues raised by members were considered, which included the following:

Balterley. Noise concerns in relation to wedding events at Doddlespool. It was felt that if formal complaints were lodged the Borough Council (as the regulatory authority) should be asked to monitor the issue.

Betley. Provision of kissing gates in place of stiles in certain locations. Two gates were available but the cost of installation needed to be covered.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council agree to fund the installation of two gates in the most appropriate locations to a maximum cost of £100, to be funded from the earmarked provision for rights of way improvements provided by Staffordshire County Council.

Cllr Head reported on general comments raised at the East Lawns Neighbourhood Plan Roadshow event relating to the landscaping at the junction with Main Road. Members noted that responsibility for the land was shared between Aspire and the County Council which meant that different parts of the site were maintained at different times and to differing standards. The Parish Council had lobbied both bodies to try to effect an improvement, but without success.

RESOLVED that an explanation of the issues be set out in the Parish Magazine, and that the Parish Council continue to explore ways of improving the situation.

295/16 The Clerk tabled correspondence received since the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the Council renew its membership of CPRE but seek clarification of what support it can receive in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, Green Belt, HS2 etc.

296/16 The Clerk submitted to members a list of invoices to hand and payments due, and the Financial and Bank Statements to date.

297/16 **RESOLVED a) that the Council authorises payment of the following:**

TW Heler	Laudy Croft fencing	£2,820.00	1247
Mh-p internet	Website	£ 774.00	1248
G Griffiths	Salary & Expenses	£ 797.81	1249
S Daly	Neighbourhood Plan expenditure (reimbursement)	£ 81.60	1250
L Rimmer	Meml Gdn maintenance	£ 360.00	1251
TW Heler	Pavement works	£ 360.00	1252
CPRE	Subscription	£ 36.00	1253
Betley Snr Citizens	Donation	£ 200.00	1254

**b) that the Financial Statement be received;
c) that the Bank Statements be noted, and the reconciliation verified and be signed by the Chairman;
d) that the Council consider at its September meeting whether it should reduce the number of signatories required to sign cheques.**

298/16 Members considered any necessary works at the Memorial Gardens.

**RESOLVED that the Council's maintenance contractor be engaged to supply and plant winter bedding to a target budget of £300 (with an available budget of up to £500 if necessary).
any applications to fly a flag be considered by the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman.**

299/16 Members considered matters relating to council communication.

300/16 Date of next meeting: Thursday 27th October 2016.