

BELBROUGHTON and FAIRFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16



Cllr. Dave Roberts' Review of the Year

This is the first Annual Report following the decision to rename the Parish Council – Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council which we believe better reflects the community the council serves.

Defibrillator

You may have noticed that Belbroughton now has a community Defibrillator located on the wall of the Talbot P.H. It was sourced by Belbroughton Scarecrow Committee from British Heart Foundation, the Talbot is providing the power and the Parish Council will provide the ongoing support - a true community effort. The unit is registered with the ambulance service. The Defibrillator is easy to use and its instructions would take you through its use in an emergency. However, it will be better if we have some residents who could be contacted by the ambulance service and who have had some training in both its use and artificial respiration. Could you help save a life? If you would like to register on our September training sessions taking place at Bel. Rec. 10.00 am Sat 3rd and 7.00pm Thurs 8th please contact our clerk or your local councillor. In Fairfield there is a Defibrillator owned by and located at the Fairfield Villa Football Club premises. A key is available at the village shop & school during their opening hours.



The 'Veolia' Planning Application

You will be aware that Veolia ES Ltd has a pending application to construct an Incinerator Bottom Ash Processing Plant at Western Quarry, close to the Stoneybridge island on the A491. Prior to the closing date on the 15th July the Parish Council distributed a circular giving information about the proposals and details of how residents may make individual comments to Worcestershire County Council. The Parish Council opposes the development and has submitted its own document* with reasons why we believe the development is not desirable and ill thought out. **the letter is available to read on our website.*

Speeding Traffic

This continues to be an issue in both villages. Shortly the long sought speed limit reduction on the stretch of Hartle Lane from 50 mph to 40 mph will be in place. Also, the introduction of a 30 mph speed limit on Top Road and Wildmoor Lane, Wildmoor is imminent. In Fairfield the possibility of a pedestrian crossing is being promoted. Careful consideration will be needed as a consequence of the crossing could be parking restrictions which could affect the shop. Further traffic calming measures including at the entrances to the villages remain under consideration following improved liaison with the County Council.



West Mercia Police's "We Don't Buy Crime Initiative"

The parish council is assessing the opportunity to take part in this Initiative. A key part is the marking of property in all houses in the parish with 'Smartwater'. Each householder would be given a unique bottle of a liquid which can be used to mark valuables. The police carry 'UV' torches and are able to detect the marking. Stolen property can be returned and the police have evidence to prosecute the thief. The normal cost of the 'Smartwater' is between £25 and £50. The police have negotiated a deal where councils can buy for their community at £ 8.75 per household if all houses are included. If your parish council joined the scheme it would be at a one off cost of approximately £10,000. DO YOU think this would be a good use of your council's money? Please let us know your opinions.

Queen's 90th Birthday events

The council supported events in Belbroughton and Fairfield over the weekend of 11/12th June.



The Green Belbroughton

The council continues to take advice from its legal advisers. It awaits the Developer signing the formal documents, the terms of which were agreed by both parties over 12 months ago. When the agreement is completed the council will consult with residents on improvements to The Green.

Parish Room, Belbroughton

The council is assessing applicants for a new lease of the room. The former tenant 'Crafterie' having decided not to apply for a renewal of its occupancy.

Open Spaces

The council is responsible for many of the open spaces in the villages. Through the Lengthsman's Scheme ditches and gullies on the roadside are cleared. Vegetation is removed where required and road signs cleaned. In April David Aldridge (*left*) retired after 11 years in the role and Nigel Williamson took over.



Along with the separate grass cutting contract, the council also contracts two gardeners James Callaghan and Bernard Edwards for 8 and 6 hours per week respectively between April and October. The council also arranges the emptying of the dog waste bins and maintains the 21 green grit bins across the parish.

Paul and Lynn Hardcastle, the volunteer Footpath Wardens, continue to give their time maintaining and improving the footpaths. If you would like to help them on their projects please contact the clerk. Works this year, jointly with W.C.C. included levelling and widening the pathway from Cricket Club to Breach House. New gates on the path at Hurst Lane to Mearse Lane. Also, with the assistance of the W.C.C. Community Payback Group major winter clearance works were carried out on paths from Hurst Farm to Wood Lane Fairfield and Madeley Road to Harbours Hill.



Footway Lighting

The council owns 80 streetlights and these are maintained through a contract with Prysmian via the County Council. Should you notice that a bulb has failed before the contractors do so, please contact the clerk or raise the issue via the Worcestershire Hub link. (This link can also be used to report other road issues).

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/>

Severn Trent- new water pipeline

The Council will monitor this significant project to ensure that any breach of planning conditions are brought to the attention of the District Council.

www.belbroughtonandfairfield-pc.info

Our new website became operational this year and is the now the prime source of parish council and community information. It contains our agendas and minutes of meetings as well as useful information links. The council also maintains a database of e mail addresses to whom information is sent periodically. If you would like to participate please send your e-mail address to the clerk at belbroughtonpc@live.co.uk Your information will not be shared with any other individuals or organisations. The Council wishes to move away from issuing paper copies of information as soon as possible.

Planning

The council has an advisory role to the District Council on planning applications and considered 42 planning applications during the year. Of these the council had 'no objection' to 15, 'no objection but with conditions' to 21 and 'objected' to 6 applications. Larger planning issues continue: The Ballast Phoenix Ltd Incinerator Bottom Ash processing facility permit application (for the Sandy Lane, Wildmoor Veolia site) was approved by the Environment Agency which led to Veolia ES Ltd resurrecting their 2013 planning application with the County Council which will now be considered this autumn. The Parish Council continued its stance on opposing the application and sent a detailed letter of objection. The outcome of the Bromsgrove District plan is due later this year. The council will continue to monitor and work to ensure the residents' best interests are fully represented.

Finances

The Council reported an overall surplus of around £12,000 on its ordinary income of £70,000, nearly all of which comes from the council tax you all pay. This was after paying a further £10,000 towards the earlier repair of the collapsed wall on Queens Hill, Belbroughton, which was originally financed from our reserves. The underspend came from a combination of factors that worked in our favour; they don't always. They included not having to pay for a Parish Election which we had allowed for, the unexpected receipt of an additional grant from Bromsgrove and, not replacing in the year a footway light that we allowed for. We have taken account of this underspend in reducing our precept by £5,000 for this year (2016/7).

The underspend increased our substantial reserves. These stem mainly from the sale of a farmhouse years ago, and successive Councils have maintained the principle of generally spending the income from the reserves but not the capital, so that it is preserved for

the long-term benefit of residents. This income was boosted by £15,000 from the 30% return on an investment, which needs to be viewed as 5 years' income at once. We continue to keep investments under review, but, as savers know, it's difficult to make a good return. Most of the rest of our "other" income comes from the rent of our agricultural land around Stoneybridge. "Other" income is used mainly to pay for grants to parish bodies, especially to help with one-off improvements, for example to community halls in the villages.

Detailed Finances

The Council's 'Ordinary Income' for 2015-16 was £71,996. Of this £65,000 came from the 'Parish Precept', (*your council tax*), with £3,147 from the County Council to fund the Lengthsman Scheme, £2,849 from the Council Tax Support Grant and £1,000 from the Parish Room rent. Spending on 'Ordinary' items covers the Council's day to day administration, open spaces and footpaths maintenance, street lighting and maintenance grants made to parish organisations. Maintenance grants given increased to £4,625:- £695 each was paid to Fairfield Village Hall and Belbroughton Church Hall, £1,155 to Belbroughton Recreation Centre and £2,080 to the Parochial Church Council for churchyards maintenance and the maintenance of the Holy Trinity church clock.

The table below indicates the main areas of spending.

Ordinary spending	£
Administration, including the Clerk, rents for meetings, insurance, and audit costs	21,067
Communication, including newsletters & memberships	1,251
Councillors' expenses / training	245
General Maintenance items	912
Maintenance grants to parish bodies	4,625
Open spaces, including grass cutting, Lengthsman, emptying dog bins and improvements	13,558
Street Lighting	6,178
Replenishing of reserves from prior year's Queens Hill wall repairs	10,000
Donations	599
Election costs	151
Legal & Professional fees	35
Total	58,621

The Parish Council's 'Other Income' totalled £32,863
This was achieved from its owned assets :-
Rental of 85 acres of agricultural land - £7,295.
Rental of the Parish Room Belbroughton - £4,750.
Lease of part of Fairfield Recreation Ground to Fairfield Villa F.C. - £2,517.
Investment Income - £17,790 and - Wayleaves £511.
This income was used mainly to fund capital and minor grants to parish bodies and local organisations. In addition specific parish council projects also benefit.
Capital grants are generally offered towards assisting with one-off costs and are for up to 50% of the total cost of the item.

Those agreed for 2015-16:

Projects

New Christmas lights in Belbroughton £1,616
Refurb. of Fairfield bus shelters and planters £863

Capital Grants -

Belbroughton Recreation Centre £1,161 towards the costs of fencing requirements. - Belbroughton Church Hall £1,598 towards the costs of improvements to disability access.

Minor Grants -

Fairfield Social Group £250 - WRVS More the Merrier Club £250 - Fairfield Welcome Club £250.

New Councillor

Due to work and family commitments, in April Fairfield Cllr. James McFarling resigned from the Council. His place has been taken by Gez Ingram following his co-option onto the Council in July. Gez has joined the Council's Finance Committee. The Council now has its full complement of 14 members.

New Chairman

After over two years in post Cllr. Dave Roberts resigned from the Chair in July and Cllr. James Bradley was elected to the position at the August Council. The Council wished to place on record its appreciation of the hard work and considerable time Cllr. Roberts had devoted to the role.

Council Meetings

Your council meets on the first Monday of the month (except allowing for bank holidays) with Planning and Finance Committee meetings on each third Monday. Meetings are held in the Jubilee Room, Belbroughton Recreation Centre and the Fairfield First School on a 2:1 month rotational basis – Residents are welcome to attend all meetings and to raise issues with their councillors or comment on items on the agenda. The agendas are posted on the notice boards in Belbroughton, Fairfield and Bell Heath. Agendas and minutes of meetings can also be found on the new Parish Council website

belbroughtonandfairfield-pc.info

Your Councillors' contact details:

Belbroughton Ward

Janice Boswell 1 Stoneybridge Farm Stoneybridge, Belbroughton DY9 9XT 01562 731239

janice.boswell@outlook.com

James Bradley (Chairman of the Council and Finance Committee) 26 High St. Belbroughton, DY9 9SU 01562 731025 jmbradley10@btinternet.com

Allan Hood (Chairman of Agricultural Holdings Committee) Fiveways, Quantry Lane, Belbroughton DY9 9UY 01562 710755 a.t.hood@btinternet.com

Scott MacDonald Beech Tree Cottage, Bradford Lane, Belbroughton, DY9 9TF 07872 607391 scott4belbroughton@gmail.com

Paul Margetts Field House Farm, Dark Lane, Belbroughton DY9 9SS 01562 730003 margettssculpture@btinternet.com

Dr Bob Morgan Fennbrook Cottage Chapel Lane Madeley Heath Belbroughton 01562 710337 Morg1952@gmail.com

Sue Pawley 59 High Street Belbroughton DY9 9ST 01562 730996 suepawley@lineone.net

Dave Roberts 43, Holy Cross Lane, Belbroughton DY9 9SH 01562 730518 davelindaroberts@tiscali.co.uk

Fairfield Ward

Gez Ingram 3 Pepperwood Close Fairfield B61 9ND 01527 880788 gez.ing@sky.com

Trevor Jones 42 Mount Rd, Fairfield, B61 9LW 01527 833774 tpajones@aol.com

Alan Mabbett 26 Yew Tree Lane, Fairfield B61 9LT 01527 871103 alan.mabbett@btinternet.com

Simon Nock Farmhouse Barn Stourbridge Rd Fairfield B61 9NG 01384 575684 simon-nock@tnmca.com

Gemma Parsons 87 Stourbridge Rd Fairfield B61 9LY 01527 835188 theparsons5@btinternet.com

Chris Scurrell (Chairman of the Planning Committee) 16 Yew Tree Lane, Fairfield, B61 9LT 01527 876485 chrimeriel@gmail.com

Clerk to the Council

John Farrell Millers Cottage Pinkham Cleobury Mortimer DY14 8QE 01299 270722

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