

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in Belbroughton Recreation Centre on Monday 23rd July 2012

Present: Cllrs K Green (Chair), J Bradley, I Dalziel, N Hartill, C Hine, A Hood, A Ince, T Jones, J Kitson, A Mabbett, S MacDonald, D Roberts, P Shotton, and C Scurrall

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk.

222/12 Apologies

No apologies were received on this occasion.

223/12 Declarations of interest

Cllr Ince declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest if any part of the discussion concerned the Parish Council's agricultural land since her husband was one of the Council's tenants.

224/12 Splitting the Council

- i. The Chairman explained that the Council's Standing Orders did not permit the Council to reconsider a decision within 6 months of its being taken. However, a number of Councillors had indicated that they no longer supported the decision to consult residents with the recommendation that the Council should split. She therefore asked the Council to consider suspending Standing Order 6 ('Rescission of previous decisions') so that the Council could consider whether to reverse the decision taken on 2nd April 2012 that 'the Council should consult residents with the recommendation that there should be a split into two Councils'. The Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 6 so that this could be discussed.
- ii. Councillors discussed the arguments for and against continuing with the process of splitting the Council. The main points made against the proposal were that the Council was working well and did not need to make this major change; that the Council could not control the outcomes and guarantee that the results would be in the interests of the whole parish; that the costs of the process (estimated at about £10,000 by the working group) were uncertain and could not be justified to the electorate; that there would be additional running costs from having 2 Councils; and that creating 2 smaller Councils could weaken their capacity to respond to central Government and other initiatives.
- iii. In support of the proposal, the main points made were that it was a good time to consider change when the Council was working amicably and could make rational decisions based on fairness; that splitting would enable each village to pursue their aspirations without affecting the other, at present it was necessary to tax the whole parish if money needed to be raised through the precept to fund a significant development in one part of the parish; that the risks of unwelcome outcomes were being over-estimated and could be evaluated during the consultation process; and that running 2 Councils would not necessarily cost more since costs would depend on the decisions taken by each Council about how to run itself.
- iv. The Chairman asked the Council to vote on whether it supported the decision taken on 2nd April 2012 that it should consult residents with the recommendation that there should be a split into two Councils. Councillors voted by 7 votes to 7. Councillors Bradley, Dalziel, Hartill, Kitson, MacDonald, Roberts, and Shotton voted in favour of proceeding with the consultation; Cllrs Green, Hine, Hood, Ince, Jones, Mabbett, and Scurrall voted against. The Chairman gave her casting vote against continuing with the consultation process.
- v. In the light of this decision it was agreed that there would be a number of issues for the Council to consider at future meetings. These included ways of working, for example the scope to set up Committees to handle specific village issues, and implementing the proposal to change the Council's name to include Fairfield. It was agreed that the Council's next

newsletter in September/October should inform residents about the decision not to proceed with the consultation process.

225/12 Venue for November and December Council meetings

It was agreed that:

- the Barton Room at Fairfield Village Hall should be booked for Council meetings in November subject to Cllrs Green and Ince checking to confirm that it would be large enough to accommodate the whole Council
- Belbroughton Recreation Centre should be booked for Council meetings in December.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed.....Chairman