

BELBROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15



Chairman Dave Roberts' Review of the Year

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council with several major issues as well as the day to day business of the council.

Traffic and speeding in the parish continue to be a problem for many. The council has distributed 30 mph stickers to be attached to wheelie bins for properties adjacent to the major roads, which give a visual reminder to motorists. The council is also working closely with Sgt. Richard Field of Bromsgrove Safer Neighbourhood Team and the County Council to actively monitor and control speeding and parking in the villages. It is hoped that this can further develop and improve the local traffic conditions.

Open Spaces

The council is responsible for many of the open spaces in the villages and through the Lengthsman's Scheme employs David Aldridge for 20 hours a month on the clearing of ditches and gullies on the roadside. He also clears vegetation where required. He is a great asset to the council and is often out at weekends ensuring gutters are clear prior to bad weather. As well as a grass cutting contract, the council also contracts two gardeners who look after the open spaces in the villages. Although their number of hours worked had been increased in the last budget to 14 hours a month, this still means that there is work which cannot be completed and if anyone would like to offer a few hours of voluntary work much more can be achieved.

Coordinated opposition with other councils has protected the bus services to both villages which were under threat from proposed cuts by Worcester County Council. In addition the council supported the proposed Clent Dial a Ride Scheme which would cover

the Belbroughton ward and was being assisted by County Councillor Rachel Jenkins from her Divisional Fund. At the time of this report the scheme awaits sufficient resident numbers to have registered an interest before assessing if the service will operate. For information please ring 0121 453 9682.

Paul and Lynn Hardcastle, the Footpath Wardens, generously give their time maintaining and improving the footpaths. Over the winter they have worked on the path between the cricket ground and Breech House which has been greatly improved. Other activities undertaken during the year included, General Inspection & Maintenance - 45 hours, installing 2 new way markers. 3 new stile crossover steps, and strimming/brushcutting - 80 hours. The Community Payback Scheme in co-ordination with the County Council led to an extension to the ditch on Hurst Farm path to divert water. Working with County Council contractors, surfacing was undertaken on a bad section of Royal Foresters Walk in Nutnells Wood and on the path to Drayton the installation of steps beyond bridge. 2015 plans are for further improvements on Drayton path along with ongoing maintenance. If you would like to help them on their projects please contact the clerk.



As we are now in the growing season I would like to remind householders that they are responsible to ensure that hedges and trees do not obstruct paths and pavements. The council would like to thank the vast majority of dog owners for using the dog waste bins provided. Emptying these fortnightly costs some £1500 p.a. I would urge all owners to use the bins and not allow their dogs to foul the open spaces and footpaths and so eliminate the potential dangers to health, especially our children's.

The Green in Belbroughton continues to be an issue. The council has agreed "Heads of Terms" which outline a legal agreement with the developer of the adjacent site which will ensure the long term security of the Green and enable improvements such as a new path and fresh tree planting to be carried out at the developer's cost. The agreement remains to be signed however and the council is very mindful of the time taken on this matter and of residents' concerns. In view of this, when the agreement is signed there will be further consultation with residents on the detail of improvements to be made to The Green. Plans are being prepared to carry out planting on Sylvester's Corner to complete the restoration following the collapse of the wall.

In Fairfield prevention of flooding to the footpath at the recreation ground remains under investigation, however the problem is more complex than initially thought as access to drains is not possible. Other proposals are under review.

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. (The link below can also be used to report other road issues).

worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20064/issues_on_the_road



Planning

The council has an advisory role to the District Council on planning applications and considered 43 planning applications during the year. Of these the council had 'no objection' to 13, 'no objection but with conditions' to 26 and 'objected' to 4 applications. Larger planning issues continue: The Ballast Phoenix Ltd Incinerator Bottom Ash processing facility (proposed for the Sandy Lane Veolia PLC site) permit application is currently with the Environment Agency which has raised several concerning issues. The council continues to oppose the application and keeps a watching brief on developments and attends liaison group meetings.

The council is aware of other future proposals which could affect the Parish. These include: Severn Trent Frankley Alternative Water Scheme, a proposed new pipeline for water abstraction from the River Severn to Birmingham which potentially will go through the Parish and the Agricultural Holdings and the County Minerals Plan. The outcome of the Bromsgrove District plan is also due in the next year. The council will continue to monitor and work to ensure the residents' best interests are fully represented in these key projects.

Finances

The council is very fortunate to have additional income to distribute over and above the 'Precept' - which is your part of the council tax that comes to the Parish Council. This extra income comes from rental of 85 acres of farm land in Wildmoor and Stoneybridge. During the last year new updated Farm Business Tenancy agreements have been agreed with the 13 tenants. The council has also benefitted from the rental income from the Parish Room in Belbroughton and from the Fairfield Villa F.C. Together with interest from cash reserves this enables the Council to give capital grants and fund projects to local organisations. The recipients obtain an equivalent amount of matched funding from their own resources. The council also endorsed an application for funding by Belbroughton Cricket Club from the England and Wales Cricket Board & Cory Environmental Trust which together secured £48,000 for new nets at the club. My congratulations to them on securing this funding.

Changes to the County Council street lighting financing methodology, plus a lower than expected grass mowing bill gave the council an unplanned one off bonus last year which has enabled a significant additional payment into reserves to replace monies spent on the repairs to the Sylvester's Corner wall.

Communication

The Council is seeking to improve communications with Parishioners by using e - mail. 125 residents have signed up so far. The intention is to inform residents about council matters and also items of interest such as road closures and local developments, If you would like to participate please pass your e -mail address to the clerk. Your information will not be shared with any other individuals or organisations. Council and Committee meetings are open to the public and are held at either Belbroughton Rec. or Fairfield Village Hall. Details of the meetings can be found on notice boards & on the 'My Parish' web site <http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish/> where you can also download documents and obtain background information.

May brought the elections and the end of the old council. I would like to thank John Farrell, the Clerk for his support and guidance to the council and all the councillors for their commitment and hard work. I would particularly thank former councillors Paul Shotton, Ann Ince, Karen Green and, Ian Dalziel who retired at the election, for their contribution over 26, 20, 13 & 4 years respectively.



Detailed Finances

The Council's 'Ordinary Income' for 2014-15 was £68,147. Of this £65,000 came from the parish precept, with £3,147 from the County Council to fund the Lengthsman Scheme. 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 increased by 10% at £4,400:- £660 each was paid to Fairfield Village Hall and Belbroughton Church Hall, £1,100 to Belbroughton Recreation Centre and £1,980 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	25,610
Communication, including newsletters & memberships	1,600
Councillors' expenses / training	234
General Maintenance items	947
Maintenance grants to parish bodies	4,400
Open spaces, including grass cutting, Lengthsman, emptying dog bins and improvements	11,661
Street Lighting	2,383
Replenishing of reserves from prior year's Queens Hill wall repairs	10,000
Donations	748

Legal & Professional fees	364
Total	57,947

The Parish Council's 'Other Income' totalled £16,481. This was achieved from its owned assets :- Rental of 85 acres of agricultural land £6,973. Rental of the Parish Room Belbroughton £4,833. Lease of part of Fairfield Recreation Ground to Fairfield Villa F.C. £2,474. Investment Income £1,702. and Wayleaves £499.

This income is used mainly to fund capital and minor grants to parish bodies and local organisations. In addition specific parish 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 in 2014-15 were:

Belbroughton Recreation Ground- £1,150 for rainwater drains.

Belbroughton Church Hall - £1,150 for heating improvements.

Fairfield Village Hall - £1,150 for resurfacing driveway and ramps.

Belbroughton Cricket Club £1,150 for new nets.

A parish project was completed with £7,222 paid out to Fairfield Village Hall towards new kitchens and flooring.

Minor grants agreed and paid:

Belbroughton under 11s football club £250

Fairfield Welcome Club £150

Belbroughton Fun Dog Show £200

The Parish has also benefited from funds donated by District Councillors Brian Lewis £385 and Janice Boswell £1,154 from their 'Ward Member's Fund'.

These monies purchased a new 'strimmer' which will be used by the Footpath Wardens and the purchase and installation of the Fairfield Recreation Ground First World War memorial of five Worcestershire fruit trees and the accompanying plaque.



Change of Name

The council has approved a change of the council name to 'Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council' but remains interested to hear of residents' comments on this change which will be processed later this year.

Council Meetings

Your council meets on the first Monday of the month (except in August and 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 Barton Room at Fairfield Village Hall on a 2:1 month rotational basis – Residents are welcome to attend all meetings and to raise issues with the Council 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 be found on the Parish Council website
<http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish/>

Committees

In May the new Council appointed the following members to committees.

Finance Committee:

Cllr James Bradley (Chair)
Cllr. Allan Hood
Cllr. Alan Mabbett
Cllr. Paul Margetts
Cllr. James McFarling
Cllr. Bob Morgan
Cllr. Gemma Parsons
Cllr. Dave Roberts
Cllr. Chris Scurrall

Planning Committee:

Cllr. Chris Scurrall (Chair)
Cllr. Janice Boswell
Cllr. Trevor Jones
Cllr. Scott Mac Donald
Cllr. Gemma Parsons
Cllr. Sue Pawley

Agricultural Holdings Committee:

Cllr. Allan Hood (Chair)
Cllr Trevor Jones
Cllr. Paul Margetts
Cllr Bob Morgan
Cllr. Dave Roberts
Mrs Ann Ince (co-opted)
Mrs Marjorie Rees (co –opted)

Your Councillors contact details:

Belbroughton Ward

Dave Roberts (Chairman)

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

Janice Boswell 1 Stoneybridge Farm Stoneybridge,
Belbroughton DY9 9XT 01562 731239
janice.boswell@outlook.com

James Bradley (Chairman of 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
pmargetts@tiscali.co.uk

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

Fairfield Ward

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

James McFarling 6 Bournheath Rd Fairfield B61 9LB
07754 569975 j_mcfarling@hotmail.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 Scurrall (Chairman of the Planning Committee)
16 Yew Tree Lane, Fairfield,
B61 9LT 01527 876485 chrimeriel@gmail.com

Clerk to the Council

John Farrell 8 Dovecote Rd. Droitwich Spa WR9 7RN
01905 775417
belbroughtonpc@live.co.uk