

DRAFT

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in the meeting room Belbroughton on Monday 10th January 2011

Present : Cllrs J Bradley, T Cherry, L Deeley, K Green, I Hadley, L Hardcastle, A Ince, T Jones, J Kitson, P Shotton, C Scurrrell, J Westley and S Wright.

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk. PC Lord for police item. 3 residents also attended.

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Judy Gill, a former Belbroughton Parish Councillor, who had died recently.

001/11 Apologies : There were no apologies on this occasion.

002/11 Declarations of interest : None.

003/11 Police Matters

PC Lord gave a follow up report on the incidents reported by Sgt. Millwood at the previous Council meeting. The larger than usual number of incidents mentioned at that meeting could be largely explained by the fact that the report had covered a longer period than usual. There had been on average 6 recorded crimes per month in Belbroughton since April 2010. Only one had been recorded since the last Parish Council meeting.

004/11 Minutes of the meeting on 13th December

Cllr Kitson suggested an amendment to paragraph 372/10ii. This was accepted by the Council. Subject to this, the Minutes were agreed.

005/10 Reports

Chairman's report

Cllr Bradley suggested that the Council should have affordable housing on a future agenda. Bromsgrove District Housing Trust had offered to send a representative to a parish council meeting to discuss the issues.

Planning

Cllr Ince reported on the meeting held on 13 December. The Minutes had been circulated.

Clerk's report

The Clerk would be attending a briefing at County Hall the following evening about the timetable and arrangements for the May elections. This topic would be on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

A meeting of the Fairfield Recreation Ground group would be arranged to discuss recent unauthorised excavations at the spinney adjacent to the Rec. The group would report back to the Council with any recommendations.

006/11 Cllr Peacock's resignation

The Council noted Cllr Peacock's resignation and asked the Clerk to write to him to express their thanks for his work on behalf of the Council. The Clerk said that since the next full Parish Council elections were so close it was not necessary to invite an election to fill the vacancy. The Council could co-opt if it wished. It was agreed that the Council would seek to co-opt and the Clerk was asked to advertise this on the parish notice boards - with a view to a co-option at the February meeting if a suitable candidate came forward.

007/11 Finance

The final ratification of the Council's budget and the precept for 2011/12 had been put on the agenda to give the Council the opportunity to take account of any new information about income or spending that could have an impact on the following year. There was no new information of any relevance. The Council therefore endorsed the budget proposed by the Finance Committee and agreed that the precept request sent to the District Council should be for £55,000.

It had been agreed at the previous meeting that the Council would invest £50,000 of the Council's capital in the Gartmore multi-manager fund. Papers provided by the Council's financial adviser for signature indicated that there was a 2.75% pa management charge for this fund as well as a 3% initial charge. This seemed quite high, although the adviser had said that the fund's track record was good and that it had produced a good rate of return over and above these charges. Cllr Green said that the potential splitting of the Council also raised further issues - the funds could be accessed if necessary but, particularly in view of the set up costs, would need to be left in place for a number of years if they were to yield a worthwhile return. It was agreed that this investment required further thought and the Finance Committee was asked to consider this in the first instance and to report back to the full Council with any recommendations for a decision in February.

008/11 Parish Council meeting room

The future of the meeting room would be on the agenda for a decision at the February meeting. In the meantime the Clerk had sought legal advice, which had been circulated, on the Council's obligations. In particular this advice suggested that the potential splitting of the Council would not justify deferring a decision about the meeting room. The Council should move speedily to deal with the problems identified. If it wished to defer the decision about major improvements or the sale of the room it would need to consider what action to take - either to make the room more accessible by temporary measures, if possible, or to meet elsewhere. The Council agreed that the use of temporary measures, like mobile ramps, should be explored.

009/11 Splitting the Council

The Council had received the report of the working group on the feasibility of splitting the Council and on the issues this raised. The Council decided that a split into two parish councils - one for Belbroughton and one for Fairfield - was desirable and should be pursued. The Council endorsed the working group's recommendations concerning treatment of the Council's assets, new parish boundaries and the further work required on the costs and impact on the Council of pursuing and managing a split.

In relation to the timetable for taking this forward, the Council agreed that it should not seek to initiate a petition for a community governance review but should put forward the working group's recommendations to the new Council to consider and pursue after the May 2011 elections. The Council's decision in favour splitting the Council should be the main item for the spring newsletter. Residents should be given the chance to express any views at the Annual Parish meeting.

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010/11 Parish Council work programme and priorities

The Clerk had circulated an update on the work programme and priorities. The Council noted the position. Lack of progress on the new footpath along Hackman's Gate Lane was discussed. Revised proposals had been put to the landowner's agent several months ago but despite a reminder no response had been received. Cllr Bradley undertook to speak to Mr Beckett about this.

011/11 Maintenance and Improvements

The County Council had offered a free day's work from the Community Payback team so that the Parish Council could see what the team could offer. Work suggested by the footpath wardens to level the path between Chapel Lane and the A491 was agreed by the Council as a suitable project. The Clerk was asked to put this forward to the County. Work in Fairfield Rec. spinney could be a further option if required.

012/11 Correspondence received

A note of correspondence received since the last meeting was circulated for information.

013/11 Councillors Items

Councillor Cherry said that a bench on the green area opposite Belbroughton school had been damaged by fire during the last Scarecrow weekend. It was agreed that a replacement bench should be purchased by the Council. The Clerk would obtain estimates for a new bench and would find out whether an insurance claim would be worthwhile.

Cllr Westley asked if information could be obtained about the County Council's bus service review.

014/11 New year meal

The Council agreed that the Swan in Fairfield should be the venue for its New Year dinner. All staff should be invited as the Council's guests.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed.....Chairman