

Draft

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in the meeting room Belbroughton on Monday 4th April 2011

Present : Cllrs J Bradley (Chair), K Green, I Hadley, A Ince, T Jones, J Kitson, K Nind, P Shotton, C Scurrall, and J Westley

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk. County Cllr E Moore and 6 residents also attended.

101/11 Apologies : Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Cherry, Deeley, Hardcastle and Wright.

102/11 Declarations of interest : No interests were declared.

103/11 Police Matters

PC Lord was not able to attend on this occasion. He had sent a written report on recent incidents in the parish.

104/11 Minutes of the meeting on 7th March 2011

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and the minute book was signed by the Chairman.

105/11 Reports

Chairman's remarks

The Chairman noted that this was the last full meeting of the current Council. A dinner was being held on 9th May to mark the end of the Council's term and to say farewell in particular to Cllrs Cherry and Westley who were both long standing members of the Council. The Council sent Cllr Cherry and his wife their best wishes for a happy Golden Wedding anniversary and for their recovery after their house fire.

Planning meeting held on 7th March

The Minutes had been circulated and were noted by the Council.

Finance meeting held on 21st March

Cllr Green reported that there was a surplus of income over expenditure for the 2010/11 financial year rather than the expected deficit. The Minutes were noted by the Council.

Belbroughton Recreation Centre

Cllr Hadley reported on developments at the Rec. over the previous year and the changes made by the Management Committee. Hall bookings and rents had increased and there were plans for improving the hall and providing additional outdoor play equipment. The Council thanked Cllr Hadley and noted the hard work put into the Rec. by the new Committee.

106/11 Allotments

Cllr Ince reported on an allotments walk which had taken place on 14th March. The allotments were generally in good order, but the access track to the Madeley Road allotments was deeply rutted and needed to be improved. The Council approved Cllr Ince's

suggestion that it should purchase some road planings which could be used to fill the holes. One of the tenants would be asked to spread this material.

107/11 Finance

Cllr Green introduced the revised Financial and Investment Strategy which had been drafted by the Finance Committee. She said that in her view the paper did not fully address two key issues – first the Council’s attitude to risk versus the preservation/guarantee of the capital and second its attitude to the use of the capital in certain circumstances. Other Councillors agreed that these issues needed further consideration. It was agreed that there was no merit in rushing this and that the best way forward was for the new Finance Committee to consider these issues prior to a discussion by the full Council.

108/11 Hartle Lane housing development and village green

The developers’ proposals for planting on the village green had been circulated. The Council was generally content but wanted to reserve the right to approve the final details of the scheme. The Clerk was asked to request that the developers also provide two new benches for the green to replace those that had been recently damaged. The Council was also content with the proposed access arrangements to and from the green.

A nearby resident had raised concerns about anti-social behaviour on the green, including litter and the damage to the benches. The Clerk had mentioned this to PC Lord who said he would ask his CSOs to keep an eye on the green as often as possible. Councillors did not generally favour other measures and noted that the housing development, if built, would provide an oversight of the area. The possible need for a dog bin when the houses were occupied was noted.

109/11 Roads and traffic

The County Council had indicated that they would not agree to relocate one of the Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) in Hartle Lane to the village entrance at present. They wanted first to assess the impact of the proposed change to the speed limit along Hartle Lane. Residents present pressed the Council to agree in principle to fund the sign’s relocation. Cllr Bradley pointed out that the Parish Council could not move the sign without the County’s consent. It was agreed that the Parish Council would reconsider this issue when the impact of the speed limit changes had been assessed. Susan Jones said that a representative of the Safer Roads Partnership was coming to Hartle Lane on 20th April to assess whether the previous speed surveys had been done in the right location.

County Cllr Ed Moore mentioned the road closures planned in the centre of Belbroughton in June. The Clerk was setting up a meeting with the County liaison engineer to discuss these.

110/11 Communication

Cllr Bradley reminded the Council that Peter Bridge was currently managing the Belbroughton.com website but was ready to hand this over. Two possible volunteers had come forward. It was agreed that they should be asked to consider collaborating to run the site and to put forward their proposals to the Parish Council for doing this. It was agreed that the Council should retain control of the domain name and continue to pay for this.

The Council had received several requests to borrow its projector. It confirmed that it was content to lend the projector to non-commercial parish bodies and for events organised by them, but not to private individuals. A £50 returnable deposit should be required.

111/11 Annual Parish Meeting 11th April

The arrangements for the APM in Fairfield Village Hall were agreed by the Council.

112/11 Parish Council meeting room

The Council noted the new information obtained by the Clerk about the costs of improvements to the meeting room and about other venues for meetings. It was agreed that decisions about the future of the meeting room should be left for the new Council to take after the May elections.

113/11 Correspondence received

Correspondence received since the last meeting was noted.

114/11 Councillors Items

The Chairman said that the developers of the Nash Works site in Belbroughton were considering applying for permission to convert the buildings to residential use. James Jowett for the developers wanted to consult the Parish Council before approaching the District's planners. This would be on the agenda for the Planning meeting on 18th April.

Council Shotton suggested that the Council should consider providing mugs for local children to commemorate the royal wedding. Other Councillors thought that it was too late to organise this, but that the Council could consider this suggestion in relation to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

115/11 Staff salaries 2011/12

The Council resolved to exclude the public and the press for this item because of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

The Clerk reported that Lyz Harvey had resigned as meeting room booking secretary. The Council accepted her resignation with regret and asked the Clerk to thank her for all she had done, which was frequently beyond the strict terms of her job description. It was agreed that the Finance Committee could agree arrangements to recruit a new booking secretary.

The Council endorsed the Finance Committee's recommendation that staff salaries should not attract a cost of living increase for 2011/12 since local government pay generally was being frozen. This applied to the lengthsman, tidier and booking secretary. The Clerk's salary was based on national pay scales which had not been increased since 2009.

The Clerk left the meeting for the discussion of whether she should receive an annual increment. The Council agreed unanimously that her performance in 2010/2011 had amply met the requirement to be "satisfactory", entitling her, under her contract, to be awarded an increment. Despite her heavy workload it was agreed that her "conditioned hours" should continue to be 20 per week. It had been suggested that Bromsgrove and possibly other local authorities were also freezing salary increments normally due, because of the national economic situation. However, it had subsequently been confirmed that Bromsgrove had not

frozen increments and it was agreed that the Clerk should be awarded hers which would place her on point 31 of the LC2 range from April 2011.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Signed.....Chairman