

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in the meeting room Belbroughton on Monday 7th November 2011

Present : Cllrs K Green (Chair), N Hartill, L Harvey, C Hine, A Hood, A Ince, T Jones, J Kitson, D Roberts, C Scurrall, and P Shotton.

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk. County Cllr Ed Moore, District Cllr Janice Boswell, and three residents also attended.

328/11 Apologies – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Bradley, MacDonald, and Wright.

329/11 Declarations of interest – Cllr Harvey declared a personal interest in the discussion relating to the meeting room since she runs a group which uses the room; Cllr Scurrall declared a personal interest in the discussion about the Hagley housing proposals since he is a District Councillor for Hagley.

330/11 Minutes of the meeting on 3rd October 2011
The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

331/11 Reports

Planning

The Minutes of the meeting on 17th October were noted.

Finance

The Minutes of the meeting on 17th October were noted.

Allotments

Cllr Ince reported on an allotments inspection undertaken on 19th October. There were a few items to be followed up – missing gates on two allotments, the surface of the access track from Madeley Road (work previously proposed there had not been done since the track surface had improved over the summer), and a damaged fence next to gate at the end of this track. In Wildmoor, Badgers' Copse and the adjacent footpath were not well signposted to encourage visitors. The Clerk was following these issues up.

Clerk's report

The annual ROSPA report on the Fairfield play area equipment had identified two items needing attention. The Clerk would arrange this.

The replacement gate for the footpath leading onto Hartle Lane had been fitted by the footpath wardens and Peter Bridge.

Councillors were asked to note the letter, which had been circulated, from the Chairman of the District's Standards Committee which emphasised the importance of all Councillors having training on the Code of Conduct.

332/11 Grass cutting contracts from 2012

The Council agreed to delegate all the decisions required, including the tendering exercise for the grass cutting contracts and about letting the contracts, to the Finance Committee.

333/11 Splitting the Council

The Clerk said that further legal advice obtained from NALC had confirmed that, in the event of a split into two Councils, the default position under the relevant regulations was that property rights and liabilities would transfer to the Council in whose area they were situated.

However, the Reorganisation Order made by the District Council could over-ride this and make different provision. The Clerk suggested that she should brief the Council's solicitor on the issues and involve him as necessary as the Council took this forward.

The Council agreed to return to this item in January with the intention of setting up a working group to consider the next steps. A key issue would be a strategy to explain to residents why the Council was pursuing a split and to seek residents' views. In the meantime it was agreed that the Clerk should involve the Council's solicitor as and when necessary in the development of proposals.

334/11 Parish Council meeting room

The note of the first meeting of the working group set up by the Council to consider the implications of the Council's decision not to improve the room had been circulated. The working group had made some proposals about future Council meetings but would need to meet again to consider other issues, including the future of the meeting room. The Council agreed the following:

- Early 2012 was a reasonable timescale for ceasing to hold meetings in the meeting room.
- Meetings should continue to be held on Monday evenings
- In principle, meetings should be held in both villages, but achieving this would depend on whether suitable venues were available.
- Alternative venues should themselves be DDA compliant.
- The capacity of alternative venues should not be significantly less than the current room for full Council meetings; a slightly smaller space would be sufficient for Committee meetings.
- The Council's requirements were the first priority – especially in the short term.
- The needs of other local groups for a small meeting space should also be a consideration if and when the Council was considering supporting the development of other venues.

Members of the working group had visited venues that were currently available on Monday evenings – Fairfield School, Belbroughton School, and the Barton Room in Fairfield village hall. Of these, the Barton Room was not DDA compliant, but could be suitable for Committee meetings or for meetings of a Fairfield Parish Council if improvements were made. Belbroughton School had only small tables and chairs or benches available for seating- a number of Councillors thought that these were not suitable and it was agreed not to use this venue at the moment. It was therefore agreed that the Council should hold its main and Committee meetings in Fairfield School for the first 4 months of 2012.

335/11 Speeding in the parish

Cllr Hood said that he had been approached by local residents about vehicles travelling at excessive speeds along Quantry Lane and Heath End Road. County Councillor Ed Moore said that highways funds for the current year had been allocated - but he would arrange a speed check in this area as soon as possible. He would raise this area for consideration of potential anti-speeding measures next spring.

Cllr Roberts reported that he was involving Belbroughton Horticultural Society in drawing up a planting scheme for the Hartle Lane entrance to the village. He hoped to have some proposals for the Finance Committee meeting. Cllr Ed Moore said that County Highways would be checking speeds along Hartle Lane, following the speed limit reduction to 50mph, probably in spring 2012.

336/11 Hagley housing proposals

Information about the proposed housing development in Hagley and the potential impact on Belbroughton parish had been circulated. The Council needed to decide its stance in relation to the core strategy and the Cala homes proposals and whether it wished to either play a full role in the Hagley Parish Council working group or to direct its efforts to specific concerns by questioning and challenging the County and District about how the proposals will impact on school places and on traffic and roads. The Council decided to pursue the second approach and not to take part in the Hagley PC working group.

337/11 Fairfield Parking

The Council had received letters from the head teacher of Fairfield School and from the village hall committee asking if it could improve parking and access at the Recreation Ground to ease parking problems in the village. Fairfield Councillors had met on site to consider these suggestions. They concluded that more hard-standing for cars at the Rec. would not have a significant impact unless an unacceptable area of the Recreation Ground was made over to parking. Widening the entrance would be difficult to achieve and of limited value because the access narrows at the top of the drive making an 'in and out' lane impossible. Creating a wider access drive would also mean the loss of half a dozen parking places.

Councillors had noted that parking problems at school dropping off and picking up times were to some extent being solved by other solutions like parking in side roads or at the Swan. It was agreed that the Clerk should respond to the letters, setting out the points above, and that Councillors would continue to monitor the situation.

338/11 Newsletter

It was agreed that the next Council newsletter would be distributed in the New Year. The Clerk would prepare a draft for consideration at the December meeting.

339/11 Councillors items

- Cllr Shotton said that cars were being parked inconsiderately on the grass verge between Woodgate Way and Hartle Lane. Cllr Moore agreed to investigate. The Clerk would check when the new bus shelter would be installed there.
- Cllr Kitson had walked round Belbroughton with the District's waste awareness officer who was making periodic visits to check on the dog mess problem.
- Cllr Hood said that only one grit bin had been installed in Bell End, and that was leaning at a dangerous angle. The Clerk would raise this with WCC.
- Cllr Surrell invited Councillors to the vicar's last services (27th November) before her retirement.
- Cllr Janice Boswell said that the District's Planning Committee meetings would in future be held in the evening rather than the afternoon.

340/11 Dates for meetings in 2012

Dates for meetings in 2012 were agreed as set out in the schedule attached to these Minutes. It was agreed that the Council would consider the dates and format of the Annual Parish Meeting separately.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed.....Chairman