

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in the Barton Room at Fairfield Village Hall on Monday 4th February 2013

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

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk; Lynne and Paul Hardcsatle, footpath wardens (*for the item about footpaths*), County Councillor Ed Moore, District Councillor Janice Boswell (*second half of the meeting*) and three members of the public also attended.

027/13 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Mabbett and Scurrall.

028/13 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

029/13 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meetings held on 7th January 2013 were approved. The minute book was signed by the Chairman.

030/13 Reports

Chairman's report

The Chairman said that the Council New Year dinner had gone very well. Thanks were due to the Queens, Belbroughton, for a very enjoyable evening.

Planning Committee

The Council noted the Minutes of the meeting on 21st January.

Finance Committee

The Council noted the Minutes of the meeting on 21st January.

Clerk's report

- A planning application had been received relating to the collapsed wall on Church Hill. This would be on the planning agenda for 18th February.
- Rock salt for the grit bins was being stored in the parish room on a temporary basis. The lengthsman had a list of sites and would refill all the bins as necessary.
- The format for the Annual Parish Meeting in April would be on the agenda for discussion at the March Council meeting.

031/13 National Trust

Cllr Kitson was nominated as the Council's representative to sit on the National Trust's Clent Hills Advisory Committee.

032/13 Wall at Sylvesters Corner, Belbroughton

The Conservation Officer had attended a meeting with the Council's surveyor to discuss restoration work on the wall. She was content to see the wall built to a lower level than previously but wanted to see a partially rebuilt structure – with coping stone to the top to match local styles. The surveyor was preparing drawings accordingly for discussion with her. These would be brought to the Council for approval before formal submission to the District Council. It was agreed that Councillors would inform local residents when the plans were available and invite them to attend the Council meeting if they wished. In relation to the funding of the work on the wall, the Council agreed to defer decisions about this until the final costs were known.

033/12 Parish Council Meeting Room, Hartle Lane

Two expressions of interest in the room had been received – one to purchase the site for a dwelling and the other to rent the room in the first instance. Advice had been received from a local valuer about the scope for the sale of the site or for letting the room. His view was that either course would be possible but that selling the site was not the best option in the current climate. The Council agreed that it did not wish to sell the site at present but preferred to seek a tenant by advertising. Letting would generate some regular income whilst retaining the capital asset. Selling the site would produce a capital sum but at present the Council was finding it difficult to gain a good return on its capital. Other factors taken into account were that selling the site for housing would reduce diversity in the village since there was already a good deal of new residential development. Renting the site would leave the Council's options open whilst testing the planning climate with an application for a change of use. The Council agreed that it should consider the best value for the village not just in monetary terms but also in terms of what might be added to the community.

The Council agreed that letting the site to a suitable tenant should be pursued as quickly as possible but that the Clerk should first seek advice from two more local valuers. The Council delegated a decision about the choice of letting agent to the Finance Committee.

034/13 Footpaths

Paul Hardcastle gave a report about parish footpaths. He and Lynne had put in 154 hours of work between April and December 2012. The majority of their time was spent on maintenance to keep footpaths clear. Only a small amount of time had been available for work on new items. A similarly high level of maintenance was likely to be necessary in the coming year. The installation of new steps by the County Council in the Hockley Brook Lane area had been delayed by poor weather but should be completed this year. Paul hoped to use a D of E student again on some projects.

Specific items discussed were:

- the entrance to the footpath at Brookfield Farm, Belbroughton was unuseable at times because of deep mud churned up by cows. But improvement work might not be worthwhile since the eventual objective was to close this path and create a new route from Brookfield Farm to the cricket ground.
- in relation to a new path and extinguishment of footpath BB509 the County Council was encouraging in principle but would not consider any new applications for footpath closures for at least a year. The Parish Council would need to consider whether to pursue and what role it was prepared to take.
- an area of the footpath from Breech House to the cricket ground, Belbroughton needed to be reinforced with hardcore. This could be a potential Community Payback project. Paul Hardcastle agreed to explore with the Countryside service.
- problems on the footpath from the Nash Works to the Queens - including a tree overhanging the path. These had been raised with the landowner – it was agreed that the tree should be discussed with the tree officer.
- in general the footpath wardens found local landowners to be co-operative. Paul would tell the Clerk if any help received merited a special letter of thanks from the Council. It was agreed that the Council would include a request in the parish magazine for volunteers to help the footpath wardens with specific tasks.
- The laying of tarmac on an area of path near the cricket ground in Belbroughton had been suggested by Cllr MacDonald. Cllr Ed Moore would consider a contribution towards the estimated cost (£2,500) from his County Councillor funds if the Parish Council would find the rest. The Finance Committee was asked to consider this.

The Council thanked Paul and Lynne Hardcastle for their report and for the many hours of voluntary work they put in on behalf of the parish.

035/13 Street Lights

Cllr Kitson outlined the final recommendations of the street lighting working group. These would complete the work required for the time being. The County's new maintenance contract should keep the lighting stock in good repair. The Parish Council would want to review its operation in due course.

The Council endorsed the following recommendations:

- i. Point 14 junction of Mearse Lane and Hartle Lane, Belbroughton - the existing light should be left in place until it fails but in the meantime a new one should be installed on the other side of the road – estimated cost £1,300.
- ii. Point 10 junction of High Street and Church Road – light should either be removed or just disconnected and another light erected in better position on other side of the road (on Sylvesters Corner). Estimated cost £1,192 plus cost of making good masonry on house hosting current light if the householder wants the light removed.
- iii. Point 9 corner of Church Road and Church Hill- light to be relocated on school side of entrance to village hall to provide good illumination of the junction. Estimated cost £2,278.50 plus cost of making good masonry on house hosting current light if householder wants removed.
- iv. The Clerk should write to the 2 householders whose homes would be directly affected by the removal of lights (points 9 and 10 above). General information item should be included in the parish magazine and a letter hand delivered by Councillors informing residents in the areas affected about what is proposed.
- v. The light at Belbroughton Recreation Ground car park should be adopted by the Council. Cost £45 for a condition report plus the cost of any repairs needed.
- vi. A request by some Hartle Lane residents for an additional light to be provided on Hartle Lane should not be supported. This would not be consistent with the Council's policy of lighting the central areas of the villages whilst maintaining the rural nature of the remainder of the parish. The Council was not seeking to install additional lights at the moment, but if it were would want to consider needs across the parish.
- vii. Belbroughton Village Green electricity – the current electricity supply should be maintained for the time being.

036/13 Minerals Local Plan and Sandy Lane Landfill

The Council noted the timetable for the development of a new Minerals Local Plan. The Clerk was asked to register the Council's interest in being involved in the consultation process and to stress the importance it attached to the inclusion of adequate monitoring and enforcement arrangements throughout the life of a development.

The Council asked the Clerk to write to Veolia to ask for an early meeting about the firm's proposed planning application and for the reinstatement of regular liaison arrangements with the site.

037/13 Communication

The Council reviewed current arrangements for communication with residents. Most methods provided information about Council decisions or activities. The notice boards (including the notice board on the Council's website) provided the most immediate means of conveying urgent information, but relied on residents to check them. The main difficulty was in getting urgent information out to residents as illustrated by the collapse of the Belbroughton wall and subsequent traffic measures.

It was agreed that the following actions should be pursued:

- Use all the notice boards consistently. Cllr Hine said that the notice board in Fairfield was poorly sited and difficult to access. It was agreed that the need for an additional board and/or alternative site should be considered.
- Use the Parish Council MyParish website as fully as possible and direct people to look at it
- Remove all PC information from the Belbroughton.com site and just provide a link to the Myparish site; use of both websites to be reviewed more fully in due course
- Contact the main organisations in the parish, eg the schools and Rec. Committee, to ask if they would be willing to pass on urgent information if necessary to their contacts
- Compile a data base of residents' E-addresses so that newsletters and urgent information could be sent to them- residents could be asked if they would like to supply their address in the next Council newsletter; the Council would pay for help to set up the data base if necessary

The Council also discussed the operation of the Council's guidelines for Councillor communication with residents. The Chairman suggested that one problem was communication with only a selection of residents which meant inequality of access to information. It was agreed that the guidelines should be reviewed more fully on another occasion. However, the Council stressed the importance of any communications about Council business being copied to all Councillors and the Clerk to keep them informed.

038/13 Councillors' Items

- Cllr Roberts noted the good work done by the lengthsman on Holy Cross Lane. He asked for a future discussion about the new Community Infrastructure levy.
- Cllr Kitson requested that the Agricultural Holdings Committee should look at the current policy of not allowing animals on the Council's land and at the possibility of purchasing additional land as an investment.
- Cllr MacDonald thanked County Cllr Ed Moore for agreeing to have the 30 mph sign on Bradford Lane moved closer to the school.
- Cllr Dalziel mentioned overhanging branches at Bell Hall. He undertook to find out who owned the land.
- Cllr Bradley said that Paul Mason was ready to discuss the village green in Belbroughton in advance of work starting on the factory site. Cllr Bradley was also meeting the BDC tree officer and the local flooding/land drainage officer at Little Bell Hall pool to discuss any work required there.
- Cllr Hartill reported that he was obtaining access to mapping information from the Ordnance Survey.
- Cllr Ince passed on thanks from Wildmoor residents to the lengthsman for his work to clear gullies and prevent flooding.

The meeting closed at 10.05 pm.

Signed.....Chairman