

Minutes of the BELBROUGHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 31st March 2015 in The Fairfield Village Hall.

Present : Parish Councillors Dave Roberts (Chairman), James Bradley, Ian Dalziel, Ann Ince, Trevor Jones, Alan Mabbett, Paul Margetts, Sue Pawley and Chris Scurrall. Clerk & R.F.O.: John Farrell.

District Councillors: Janice Boswell & Margaret Sherrey.

County Councillor: Rachel Jenkins.

Other attendees - Paul and Lynn Hardcastle (Parish footpaths wardens), Sgnt. R Field, Parish Organisation representatives and 15 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Karen Green, Allan Hood, Bob Morgan and Paul Shotton.

County Councillor Sheila Blagg.

2. Minutes of the 2014 Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 14th April 2014

The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were approved as a fair record.

3. Reports

Parish Council Reports for 2014/15.

Chairman's Report

The Parish Council Chairman, Dave Roberts, welcomed all to the meeting. He advised that 43 Council and Committee Meetings had been held during the year - a third of these in Fairfield. The parish Lengthsman Scheme has continued this year with the clearing ditches and gullies adjacent to highways and general tidying carried out on behalf of Worcs C.C. This service provided by Parish Council was more economical and better targeted than the County could provide.

Maintenance of Green Spaces in the villages is paramount and the two parish gardeners continued to be contracted. Separately the grass cutting costs were £2,113 last year but dog waste bins emptying cost some £1,460. W.W.1. Commemoration trees had just been planted at the Fairfield Recreation Ground. New Farm Business Tenancy Agreements had been put in place for the Agricultural Holdings, modernising the contracts ensuring adequate legal protection for both the Council and the tenants. Speeding in the villages continues to be an issue for many people and a large number of 30 mph bin stickers had been distributed which are now noticeably displayed.

A major issue was dealing with the time consuming matter of The Green Belbroughton where negotiations were ongoing with the developer of the adjacent land to ensure a satisfactory outcome for residents. This included settling a boundary dispute where the Council was able to confirm the status quo.

A wide ranging 'Heads of Terms' with the Developer had at last been agreed and signed by the Council and the Developer. From this a formal legally binding settlement contract was expected to be completed shortly.

The incinerator bottom ash industrial complex, planning application to Worcester County Council from Veolia Plc in Sandy Lane was ongoing as was the permit application to operate it from Ballast

Phoenix Ltd which awaits the Environment Agency decision. The Parish Council continues to oppose the applications.

Bus Services, the Council successfully campaigned, along with others to oppose closure of services and promote a Dial a Ride Scheme in Belbroughton.

Occasional flooding to the path on Fairfield Recreation Ground is acknowledged and the council is investigating what cost effective actions can be taken.

The Parish Council is seeking to improve communications with Parishioners by using e-mail. 115 have signed up so far to receive e-mail messages from the Council. He encouraged residents to participate and to pass e-mail addresses to the Council. The database information would be held securely and not shared with any third party individuals or organisations.

Future issues to be aware of - Severn Trent Frankley Alternative Water Scheme the proposed new pipeline for water abstraction from the River Severn to Birmingham. This potentially will go through the Parish and the Agricultural Holdings land.

County Minerals Plan – there are three potential new extraction sites on the Parish.

Change of name of Parish Council to incorporate 'Fairfield', the Council seeks comments from residents on this action.

A 'Village Clean Up' is set for Saturday 6th June on Belbroughton as Ringway PLC. have offered to donate a team for days work.

Planting at Sylvester's Corner and The Green Belbroughton will be considered during 2015 to enhance these green spaces.

He thanked the Fairfield W.I. for providing the refreshments prior to the meeting.

Finance Report

Cllr. Bradley (Chair of the Finance Committee) advised that the Council receives income from both the Precept (Council Tax element) and income from its owned assets. The first category amounted to £65,000 plus £3,147 from the County Council for the Lengthsman Scheme for the year to 31st March 2015. Expenditure for the year was £57,797 resulting in a surplus of £10,350. This was due to the grass cutting contract working out £2000 cheaper than forecast and a saving of £4,000 in the street lighting costs due to a different accounting regime at the County Council. These 'bonuses' would not be repeated in the coming year. Further surplus last year was a result of not having to use the allocated budget contingency. Maintenance grants had been paid out:-

- Belbroughton Parochial Church Council £1,980
- Belbroughton Recreation Centre £1,100
- Fairfield Village Hall £660
- Belbroughton Church Hall £660

The secondary income source - Income from Council assets: Agricultural Holdings rents £6,973 Belbroughton Parish Room Rent £4,833 Fairfield Villa F C rent £2,474 Investment income from cash resources £1,702 and, Wayleaves £500 . This total of £16,482 was distributed:-

- **Capital Grants:**
- Belbroughton Recreation Centre £1,150
- Fairfield Village Hall £1,150
- Belbroughton Church Hall £1,150
- Belbroughton Cricket Club £1,150
- **Parish Projects:**
- Fairfield Village Hall £7,222
- **Minor Grants:**
- Belbroughton F.C. U 11s £250
- Belbroughton 'Fun Dog Show' £200
- Fairfield Welcome Club £150

A surplus resulted of £4,060 which was placed to reserves.

Planning Report Cllr. Ann Ince (Chair of the Planning Committee) gave a brief outline of the work of the Committee, advising that 43 planning applications had been heard, with the Committee recommending approval for 13, approval with conditions for 26 and refusal for 4. The Committee maintains a close watch on the activities and planning applications at the three quarries within the Parish. She advised that the Planning Committee meets once a month and that residents were always welcome. As she was retiring from the Council she thanked her fellow councillors on the Committee and the clerk for their support.

Agricultural Holdings Report Cllr. Allan Hood (Chair of the Committee) advised that the council owned 85 acres of agricultural land in the Wildmoor/ Stoneybridge areas. This is let to 13 tenant and is used for various cropping types. It provides a regular income for the Council, now at £7,200 p.a. which is used to fund community Parish Projects, Capital and Minor Grants. The Council inspects the holdings during the year to ensure they are well maintained. As well as providing a regular income the land is a significant area of Green Belt in the Council's ownership and therefore control.

Reports by District and County Councillors

County Cllr. Rachel Jenkins advised:- she had allocated £5,500 from her 'Divisional Fund' to support the Dial a Ride service in Clent which was also available to residents in Belbroughton to use. After lobbying reduced speed limits were now in force on Heath End Road, Bell Heath. She supported Hagley Parish Council with its taking over of the local library from the County Council. She confirmed that the County Council was looking to commission out services and that this would lead to job losses. She confirmed that the Council tax would be rising by 1.94% but felt that this would ensure ongoing support for looked after children.

District Cllr. Janice Boswell thanked the parish councillors and the clerk for their hard work during the year. She advised that she had diverted her Ward members funds totalling £1,154 to support

the Parish Council who had used the funds to assist with drainage needs of the Belbroughton Recreation Centre , and the purchasing and planting of fruit trees at Fairfield Recreation Ground as a memorial to the 25 soldiers from Fairfield, Wildmoor and Bournheath who had lost their lives in the First World War. As she was now retiring from the District Council after 15 years she wished to thank all those in Belbroughton and Clent who had supported her.

4. Police Sgnt. Richard Field – Bromsgrove Safer Neighbourhood Team

Sgnt Field outlined the crime position in the area advising that it was relatively crime free. There was a defined patrol strategy and felt that most crime was centred on shed break-ins and vehicle crime. There would be a number of 'Bull Dog' days to target rural crime and speeding. The Community Speedwatch Scheme was available. He felt landowners should investigate placing barriers on entrances as a deterrent to traveller incursions. He then took questions from the residents who were concerned at speeding and parking on the Stourbridge Rd Fairfield. He committed to setting up a speed check on the road.

5. Footpath Wardens

Paul Hardcastle on behalf of himself and wife Lynne detailed the activities undertaken which included, General Inspection & Maintenance – 45 hours, installing 2 new waymarkers, 3 new stile crossover steps, and strimming/brushcutting - 80 hours. The Community payback scheme in co-ordination with the County Council led to the 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 Nutmells Wood. On the path to Drayton - Installation of steps beyond bridge.

2015 plans included: Ongoing Maintenance, further improvements on Drayton path, Improvement Programme Status for Breach House to Cricket Club path where WCC contractors had been allocated.

6. Parish Organisations

Fairfield W.I. - Mrs Mary Fairbairn advised that the group was vibrant despite a number of members being currently unwell or looking after partners who were unwell. Fairfield W.I was one of 9 groups in the Bromsgrove area and advised that the subscription was only £36 p.a. and new members were very welcome. It was the centenary of the W.I. and there were to be large gatherings in London for the AGM and at the royal garden party set for 2nd June.

Belbroughton Horticultural Society - The representative was indisposed and so there was no presentation.

Wildmoor Residents Association - Mr Hugh Norris advised that the association had now been in existence for over 20 years initially formed to lobby against the western orbital road, which was successfully rejected. Current issues surrounded the quarries – the possible extension of Wildmoor quarry and the proposed incinerator bottom ash facility at the Veolia site in Sandy Lane. The Association attended all meetings with the County Council and the Environment Agency to ensure that residents are kept informed on activities. The Association was generally in favour of seeing vacant buildings brought back into use. The Association was always looking for new members and he would welcome an injection of youth.

Crafterie - Mrs Lindsay Law informed the meeting of the activities held at the parish room Belbroughton. These included activities to promote children's creativity and some 40 under 5s attended. She expected to be adding a third member of staff to her team. She anticipated a number of joint ventures with the Belbroughton Nursery and primary school. There were also adult classes for crochet, knitting and bridal products. In the future she hoped to establish a sensory garden and open on Tuesdays to all residents for craft work sessions.

Dial a Ride - Mr Jim McGuire advised residents of the history of the service and the opportunities it gave for local residents in Belbroughton.

7. An Open Forum then prompted questions and comments raising concerns concerning possible travellers incursions, a potential fleet gas refuelling depot in Wildmoor, the ongoing issue of dog fouling.

Residents were recommended to visit the Parish Council owned Badger's Copse as a pleasant area offering a peaceful experience.

The Chairman thanked residents for attending the evening and as this was the last Parish Meeting before the elections in May advised residents that should they wish to stand for the Parish Council to contact the Parish Clerk or Electoral Services Department at Bromsgrove D C.

He thanked all councillors for their hard work and commitment over the last four years and particularly thanked current councillors Ann Ince, Ian Dalziel, and Paul Shotton who would not be standing for re-election.

Finally, on behalf of the Council he wished Cllr. Karen Green a full and speedy recovery from her recent operation.

The meeting was closed at 9.50 p.m.

UNAPPROVED