

# Defford and Besford Parish Council

## Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
at Defford Village Hall

Present: Cllr Robert Bemand (Chairman), Ron Davis, Sonja Lee, Ian Spiers, Patricia Steel, Hazel Wakefield and Clive Woods.

Also present: Linda Blake, Jane Thompson, 12 other members of the public

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

None

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes of the following Parish Council meetings to be confirmed and signed**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 be accepted and signed as a true record.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 be accepted and signed as a true record.

### **4. Casual Vacancy Parish of Defford and Besford (Defford Parish Ward)**

The Clerk reported that there had been one application for the Casual Vacancy in Defford Ward.

It was **RESOLVED** that Mrs Jane Thompson be co-opted to Defford and Besford Parish Council as a Councillor for Defford Ward. Mrs Thompson signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Clerk. Mrs Thompson then joined the Parish Council for the remainder of the meeting.

### **5. Planning**

#### (a) New Applications

It was **NOTED** that applications W/14/02020/OU: Land Adjacent, Hillside and W/14/01881/OU Land surrounding and around 1 and 2 Avon Bank had been discussed at the Extraordinary Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The Parish Clerk had written to Wychavon District Council to register the Parish Council's objection to both applications.

#### (b) Wychavon District Council decisions

W/14/01244/PN: Defford Aerodrome, Rebecca Road, Besford

Approved

W/13/02118/OU: Defford Motors, Upton Road, Defford

Pending Consideration

W/14/00711/PN: Land off Harpley Road, Defford

Planning Permission Refused

As part of the discussion under this agenda item, the Parish Council discussed problems that had been experienced with Wychavon's Planning website. Concerns were expressed over delays in updating the website following decisions, the reliability of the website and in particular the time taken to publish comments which had been lodged about planning applications.

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Clerk would write to Wychavon District Council to express the Parish Council's concerns about the planning website and in particular problems experienced with the management of objections to planning applications.

#### **6. Finance:**

##### **a) To approve any payments due**

The following invoices totalling £1,043.50 were approved for payment: New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work September 2014; N Power, Street Lighting – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2014/15; LA Garden Services, Grass Cutting October 2014; Royal British Legion, Wreath for Remembrance Sunday; New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman work October 2014.

##### **b) To note the quarterly budget monitor**

The Clerk presented the Quarterly budget monitor and the figures were noted.

#### **7. Use of New Homes Bonus Money**

Following discussion of a proposal for new notice boards in the village at the Parish Council meeting in September, Anne Booth had been invited to speak at this meeting to discuss proposed locations for the notice boards.

It was **PROPOSED** that new homes bonus money should be applied for to provide two notice boards in the village at the following locations

- i) The entrance to the Village Hall Car Park
- ii) By the Church in the centre of the village

A vote was taken, 1 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention; therefore the motion failed.

Following further discussion, it was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would support an application for New Homes Bonus Money to provide one notice board in the village, which would be situated at the entrance to the village hall car park.

#### **8. Parish Asset War Register – War Memorial**

Two parishioners had recently located a War Memorial Wooden Plaque in a garage in the village. This plaque contains the names of local school children who lost their lives in the First World War and is an asset owned by the Parish Council. It was felt by many parishioners that a permanent home should be found to display this plaque within the village of Defford.

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Clerk would write to the headmistress of Defford-Cum-Besford First School and ask if the school would agree to display the plaque. It was further **AGREED** that Defford and Besford Parish Council would contribute a budget of £50 towards the proper erection and display of this memorial within the school.

The Parish Council expressed their thanks to Mrs Allard for her efforts in retrieving this War Memorial.

#### **9. Display of Railway Memorabilia**

It was **AGREED** to invite the former clerk Graeme Evans to the next meeting of the Parish Council and to ask him to bring along the Railway Memorabilia owned by the Parish Council so that the exact display needs of this collection could be accurately assessed.

## **10. Street Lighting**

The Parish Clerk reported that following several concerns regarding street lights in the village, the contractor for street lights had been contacted with a view to carrying out some repair works.

The Parish Clerk had been informed that electrical testing is required at least once every six years on each street light in the village and that this testing now needed to be done before any other work could be undertaken. A quote had been received of £30 per lamp for electrical testing and a further quote of £50 for a blanking plate to be fitted to the Street Light in Crown Lane as discussed as the Parish Council meeting in September 2014.

The Parish Council **AGREED** to spend £240 on the electrical testing of the Council's 8 street lights and £50 on a blanking plate for the street light in Crown Lane.

The Clerk also explained that whilst this work was being undertaken she would request that the contractor look at several lights which had been reported as not working properly.

## **11. Timing of Council Meetings**

Following a suggestion at a previous meeting, the Clerk had investigated the possibility of earlier start times for Parish Council meetings. This would not, however, be possible on a Tuesday evening at present and would require a change to the day on which Parish Council meetings are held. It was therefore **AGREED** to keep Parish Council meetings at the same time and weekday.

## **12. Correspondence for Information**

The clerk outlined correspondence as circulated;

- 1) Letters from Wychavon District Council regarding applications from Drakes Broughton and Eckington Parish Councils to designate their Neighbourhood Areas.
- 2) A letter from leaders of the three South Worcestershire Councils regarding the South Worcestershire Development Plan.
- 3) An email from Tadjio Szczepanik in response to a letter sent by the Parish Council regarding the Parish Council Meeting on 5 August 2014.
- 4) An email from Fiona Argyle, Maintenance and Improvement Officer at the Countryside Service regarding the condition of footpaths at the top of Spring Bank.
- 5) A report from Julie Pardoe, Police Community Support Officer regarding crime.
- 6) A letter from SunEdison to the Chairman of the Parish Council regarding potential funds available for Community Benefit Projects following agreement of the Solar Farm at Defford Aerodrome.

The Parish Council **NOTED** all the correspondence received.

- The Parish Council stated that they welcomed the letter regarding the SWDP.
- With regard to item 4, the Parish Clerk was asked to write to County Councillor Hardman to see if he would be able to contribute to the refurbishment of the footpath at the top of Spring Bank. It was suggested that the quotes already received for this work should be sent along with the letter.
- The Parish Clerk would email Julie Pardoe to thank her for the information and notices she is sending round.

## **13. Councillors reports**

- a) County Councillor A Hardman  
Cllr Hardman was not present.

b) District Councillor R Davis

Cllr Davis reported to the meeting that Budget Strategy Discussions had begun once again and that Wychavon District Council was in a good financial position.

Cllr Davis also reported about his work as a portfolio holder in trying to increase recycling targets within the district. This had largely been successful.

c) Parish Councillors

- i. Cllr Spiers raised issues about a broken man hole cover outside the Oak Inn at Woodmancote and also problems with the drains in Bourne Road. The Clerk would raise these matters with Highways.
- ii. Cllr Woods informed the meeting that following discussion with the lengthsman, the state of the junctions in Besford have now improved.  
Cllr Woods also brought up on an on-going issue regarding the poor state of repair of a passing point just past the bus stop adjacent to the Besford Court Estate. The Clerk would follow this up with Worcestershire County Council.
- iii. Cllr Steele also asked about the timetable for New Homes Bonus Money. Cllr Davis responded that the process was dependant on the amount of money requested and that he as the ward councillor would be involved once an application had been submitted. The Clerk confirmed that there were two submissions currently ready to be made.
- iv. Cllr Bemand pointed out that the Oak Inn at Woodmancote was flying the Union Jack upside down. The clerk would write to the landlord to alert them to this fact.

**14. To confirm date of the following meetings**

It was suggested that the Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting to discuss the budget should be held on a Tuesday in the first two weeks of January 2015. The Clerk would check availability of the village hall and confirm the date with members of the committee.

The date of the next Parish Meeting will be 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Defford Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 9:45pm.

**Public Questions / Comments**

- i. A parishioner queried the progress of repairs to the steps on Hill View. The Clerk had spoken to Rooftop Housing and had been assured this work would be done. The Parish Clerk agreed to follow this up as soon as possible.
- ii. Comments were made regarding problems experienced when accessing agendas and minutes on the My Parish Website. The Clerk responded that she was aware of this problem and had contacted the technical support department for advice on why certain files would not open. The Clerk also suggested that if parishioners wished to pass on their email addresses then she could set up a mailing list for agendas and minutes if anyone was interested.

- iii. The landlady of the Defford Arms asked about the protocol for voting at meetings and expressed her disappointment that some members of the Parish Council had abstained from voting on important planning decisions. It was noted that Councillors have to abstain if they have a pecuniary or prejudicial issue in the item being discussed.

It was also noted that it is up to each individual councillor as to how they voted. If electors are dissatisfied with the way a councillor represents their electorate, this could be expressed at the forthcoming elections in May 2015.

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