

# Defford and Besford Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

of Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

at Defford Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Clive Woods, (Chairman) Roger Atter, Julian Clarke, Ron Davis, Patricia Steel, Nicola Szabranski, Jane Thompson and Hazel Wakefield.

Also present: Linda Blake, Clerk; 8 members of the public.

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

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Cllr Ian Spiers.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Thompson had submitted a dispensation request in respect of her position as a signatory on the bank account for the village youth club.

The Parish Council considered this request and **AGREED** that Cllr Thompson should be granted this dispensation to allow her to both discuss and vote on matters relating to the Youth club. This dispensation would apply for her period of office until elections in May 2019.

**Public Question Time** – see notes at the end of these minutes

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

#### ➤ **Extraordinary Meeting held on Thursday 26 November 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be accepted and signed as a true record and the Chairman signed them.

#### ➤ **Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1 December 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 be accepted and signed as a true record and the Chairman signed them.

### **4. Parish Clerk's Report**

The Parish Clerk explained that all items requiring updates were being covered under other agenda items during tonight's meeting and that there was nothing further to report at this point.

### **6. Councillors reports**

#### a) **County Councillor A Hardman**

Cllr Hardman reported the following:

- Council Tax levels at Worcestershire County Council were due to be set in mid-February 2016 and at present it looked as if a 1.9% general increase as well as a 2% increase for social care would be implemented.
- The Local Government Finance settlement affecting Worcestershire County Council had been considerably harsher than expected. The County Council had been expecting a reduction in central government funding in the region of £13 million, but the actual reduction received has been £24.5 million. This is a lot more than expected and there will be further reductions in grant support for 2017/18.

- Cllr Hardman reported that the financial situation for the County Council should improve when business rates are repatriated to the County Council. By 2019/20, the Council will be Revenue Support Grant neutral, but until that point they will continue to face difficult decisions whilst trying to balance their budget.
- With the recent weather conditions, flooding is at the forefront of everyone's mind. The Land / Drainage Officers at Wychavon District Council are often the best first port of call for some of the Parish's drainage issues. Highway drains are often piped onto private land and blockages which seem to cause overflows around highway drains can often be due to problems further up the drainage system and quite often this is also on private land.
- There is £4,500 left in Councillor Hardman's divisional budget for the current financial year and any applications for use of these funds should be made directly to him.
- Councillor Hardman informed the Parish Council that he would request that the cutting and maintenance of the grassed areas on the main footpath through the village be looked at, because these areas were once again beginning to encroach on the width of the pathways.

b) District Councillor R Davis

Cllr Davis reported the following:

- The tax base in Wychavon had seen an overall increase of 2.78%
- The joint committee which is working with Malvern Hills District Council is continuing to look at ways of streamlining its services and are also currently reviewing Section 106 payments and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

c) West Mercia Local Policing Team

The Clerk had received an update from PCSO, Julie Pardoe. There had not been any reports in the Parish for this month, although there had been a couple of attempted scam calls locally; members of the public had been telephoned and asked to give out their bank details, but had fortunately realised these were not legitimate calls before they went any further.

d) Parish Councillors

Councillor Roger Atter reported that speed cameras had been operating in Defford village in recent weeks and had been seen at several different times of day.

Councillor Patricia Steel reported that Eckington Parish Council had been in touch with the First Bus Group regarding a review of the local bus timetable for 2016. The response has seemed to be a positive one as the bus company have indicated that they would be willing to take part in this review.

Councillor Ron Davis reported that there had been several instances in the village of hedge cuttings being left in the road and mud from tractors getting onto the road surfaces; he suggested that a reminder should be given to local landowners to keep the roads clear and clean.

Councillor Jane Thompson referred to the on-going problem of dog foul in the village. She suggested that the local youth club could become involved in raising awareness of this problem and it was suggested that this should be an agenda item for the next Parish Council meeting.

## 6. Planning

### (a) New Applications

W/15/03073/PN: Wright's Farm, Besford Bridge, Besford.

Proposal: Proposed replacement dwelling.

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

W/15/03174/LB: Besford Bridge House, Besford Bridge, Besford.

Proposal: Alteration of brick walls on access to road to allow better visibility on exit from drive – listed building consent application.

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council has no objection to this application.

### (b) Wychavon District Council decisions

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

Pending Consideration

W/15/01502/OU: Land off Church Lane, Defford

Pending Consideration

W/15/01979/PN (revised) & W/15/01980/LB: Home Farm,  
St Peters Lane, Besford

Approved 2/12/2015

W/15/02709/PN: Woodbine Cottage, Woodmancote, Defford

Approved 4/12/2015

W/15/02533/PN: Land adjacent, Cannon House, Harpley Road,  
Defford

Approved 24/12/2015

W/15/02810/PP: 1 Jubilee Barns, Woodmancote, Defford

Approved 17/12/2015

## 7. Finance

### (a) To approve any payments due

The following invoices totalling £1,009.76 were approved for payment:

Salary Payments for December 2016; Besford Court Management Committee, Hire of Community Hall for meeting on 26 November; LA Garden Services, 2nd Half of Millennium Green Project.

### (b) To Set the Precept for 2016/17

The Finance and General Purpose Committee had met to consider the budget for 2016/17 and had made a recommendation to Council that a budget requirement of between £9,160 and £9,300 should be set. This represented an increase of between £150 and £290 from the 2015/16 budget requirement.

In considering the budget requirement for 2016/17, the working party had been mindful of new projects, the need to support local groups, maintenance and improvement works at The Millennium Green, the new Parish website and the need to eventually tarmac the village hall car park and the associated costs of this project.

The Council discussed the different budget options. Some members felt that although an increase was required, any increase should be kept as low as possible.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council's budget requirement for 2016/17 should be set at £9,160, this representing an increase of £150 from the previous year and also a 2.4% increase on a Band D Council tax charge.

## **8. Millennium Green**

### **➤ Progress Update**

The Clerk reported that maintenance works to cut back overgrowth at The Millennium Green had now been completed and that the new gate would be fitted within the next couple of weeks at a cost of £190.

The Clerk had held a site meeting with the Play Equipment Company's representative in December 2015, when the site was surveyed in readiness for the team swing's installation. A further meeting will be held early in the New Year to confirm further details such as play surfacing and then the order for installation would be given, with a six week lead time until installation.

### **➤ Consideration of the purchase of goal nets**

Councillors Spiers and Wakefield had met with a local landowner who had raised concerns following the cutting back of trees at the Millennium Green, about the safety of her livestock when balls went over the fence from the Green. It had been suggested at this meeting that football nets could be purchased for the goalposts to try and alleviate the problem and the Parish Clerk informed Council that it would cost approximately £82.00 to purchase nets.

Possible problems relating to this suggestion were raised including the fact that nets would only stop those footballs which were on target and also health and safety issues from having football nets permanently in place and the possibility of children trying to climb them

It was suggested that "No Trespassing" notices could be erected on the boundary fence to encourage children with footballs to be a little more careful or otherwise lose their footballs. Councillors Wakefield and Szabranski were asked to report back to the landowner regarding the Council's discussions.

## **9. Parish Council Website**

The Parish Clerk updated Councillors on the progress of the Council's website. An initial meeting had been held with the contractor and the following had been agreed:

- The website would be based on Serif's Webplus package.
- A domain name of **deffordbesfordpc.co.uk** would be used at a cost of £45 plus VAT for five years.
- A five page website was suitable for the Parish Council's requirements and this would be provided at a cost of £350 plus VAT.
- A photo session to include photos to be included on the website was included in the cost.
- The website would be registered with Google and Bing, in order to aid search engines.

Another meeting will now be held in January to decide on design details and it is hoped that the website will be ready to go live in March / April 2016.

## **10. New Homes Bonus Money**

The Parish Clerk reported that Defford and Besford had £5,784 of New Homes Bonus Money currently available to draw down; a further £17,724 will be available in future years.

The Parish Council agreed that consultations should take place with local residents to assess if ideas to use New Homes Bonus Money to purchase a defibrillator and / or to fund tarmacing of the village hall car park found support.

The Parish Clerk informed councillors that she would be putting an advert in the next edition of the village newsletter regarding New Homes Bonus Money and that letters would also be sent to users of the village hall for their input.

It was noted that the cost to tarmac the village hall car park including levelling and drainage works could amount to £30,000 and councillors suggested that other areas of funding such as lottery funding and grants from network rail could be pursued.

### **11. Parish Council Aims and Objectives**

The Parish Council **AGREED** not to set up a working to consider Aims and Objectives.

Councillors felt that Aims and Objectives were important, but that a working party was not required. It was suggested that a brainstorming exercise could be carried out initially and it was **AGREED** that Parish Councillors would circulate their ideas and thoughts for Parish Council Aims and Objectives that should be pursued within the next year. These items would then be collated for consideration at the next meeting. It was suggested that individual councillors could each be asked to 'champion' specific objectives and to review their progress through the year.

Parish Councillors also **AGREED** that the usual group presentations at the Annual Parish Meeting should include any recommendations for improvements within the parish as well as encouraging local residents to raise issues or problems that they felt the Parish needed to address. In this way the meeting could act more as a positive forum for parishioner's to resolve ongoing issues.

### **12. Correspondence for Information**

The Parish Clerk drew Council's attention to some correspondence she had been involved in regarding the naming of the stretch of road between the T junction of Rebecca Road and Salters Lane at Besford Bridge in Besford Parish to the point at which this road meets the B4084 at Allesborough Hill in Pershore's Parish.

The Clerk had received notification from a local resident that there uncertainty as to the name of this stretch of road and that this had caused confusion for the local emergency services.

As this road runs through the Pershore Town area, the Clerk at Pershore has been contacted about this matter and has stated that as far as Pershore Town Council are concerned; the name of this road is Croome Road. She had agreed to look into this matter at a forthcoming planning meeting and developments were awaited.

### **13. To confirm date of the next meeting**

The date of the next Parish Meeting will be Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 at Defford Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 9:35pm.

### **Public Questions / Comments**

- i. A parishioner commented on the state of a footpath from Upper Street to Hill View. It was noted that footpaths are the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council and that this matter will be passed onto them.
- ii. A number of parishioners spoke about drainage problems within the village, particularly after the recent wet weather. The drain in Upton Road near to The Defford Arms has been a problem for a number of years with water flowing down the main road towards Bluebell Lane and Bow Brook. When the temperature drops below zero, this water freezes and has been the cause of a number of accidents on the road.

Residents stressed that this matter had been raised a number of times in previous years and that something must be done to address this matter. The clerk would write in the first instance to the Land / Drainage officers at Wychavon and take their advice on the best way to pursue this matter.

- iii. It was also noted that debris accumulates under the bridge that crosses Bow Brook and that this must contribute to the very high water levels in this area. There is also often a sewage type smell in this area. Again this matter would be passed to Wychavon District Council in the first instance.
- iv. It was noted that the bench was still missing from the graveyard and that it had not been in place for some time leaving a deep hole where it is normally fixed. Councillor Wakefield stated she believed Councillor Ian Spiers had removed it for maintenance and that this would be followed up.
- v. A resident asked Councillors if they had any knowledge of the status of the Solar Farm. Councillors stated that the Solar Farm had been given planning permission and therefore the company had up to three years from the date of approval to start developing the site, but that neither the Parish or District Council were in possession of any further information.

Signed by the Chairman .....