

Defford and Besford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

of Tuesday 1st December 2015

at Defford Village Hall

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

Also present: Linda Blake, Clerk; 7 members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Cllr Julian Clarke, who had informed the meeting that he would try and attend later in the evening if he were able.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Szabranski had submitted a dispensation request in respect of her two children who may make use of facilities provided by the Parish Council or attend the village youth club.

The Parish Council considered this request and **AGREED** that Cllr Szabranski should be granted this dispensation to allow her to both discuss and vote on any related matters. 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 Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 13th October 2015 be accepted and signed as a true record and the Chairman signed them.

4. Extraordinary Meeting 26th November 2015

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had called an Extraordinary Meeting on Thursday 26th November to discuss some administrative / governance matters that had been raised by a series of Councillor training sessions held by Worcestershire CALC.

Items that had been covered at the meeting included Councillors Code of Conduct, Standing Orders / Financial Regulations, Parish Council Aims and Objectives, the list of Parish Assets and Risk Assessment.

The meeting had been a very useful debriefing and review session. It was noted that due to timing constraints, the minutes from this meeting would be presented for approval at the next Parish Council meeting in January 2016. The Chairman emphasised that Councillors are elected to represent the residents of the village, so if there are any issues that need to be looked at, please let one of the Councillors know.

5. Parish Clerk's Report

The Parish Clerk reported that she had received some very positive reports relating to the two new village clubs which the Parish Council had agreed to support.

A villager had contacted the Parish Clerk with an offer to donate a football table to the Village Youth Club, this had now been arranged and the football table passed to the Youth Club. The first meeting of the Posh Club, for the over 60s, had also been very well attended and appreciated.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's response to SWDP Main Modifications Consultation had been submitted in accordance with the timescale and formats required.

It was also noted that the streetlight in Crown Lane was still not working. This had been reported following the last Parish Council meeting in October and the Clerk would continue to chase this matter.

6. Councillors reports

It was noted that this agenda item had now been brought forward to the start of each Parish Council meeting, rather than at the end.

a) County Councillor A Hardman

Cllr Hardman was not present.

b) District Councillor R Davis

Cllr Davis reported the following:

- The Joint Advisory Working Board of Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils have been moving on with their integration of services. One head of Legal and Support Services has now been appointed with a saving of £60,000 and one head of Housing and Planning Services has also been appointed with a saving of £80,000. The board is continuing to meet to look at the possible merger of both legal services and planning services.
- Wychavon District Council is awaiting the final outcomes of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. This should include more detail on the future of the New Homes Bonus Money scheme. Cllr Davis informed the meeting that he was advising Parish Councils in his area to look at ways of using their available new homes funds as soon as possible.

c) West Mercia Local Policing Team

There was no update to present.

d) Parish Councillors

Councillor Ian Spiers reported that local residents had been very disappointed with the response to the condition and appearance of the site at Wren's Nest, Woodmancote. A Planning Enforcement Officer had investigated this matter and had reported that at this moment in time, it is considered that the property does not impact on local amenity enough to warrant the serving of a Section 215 Notice. Cllr Davis agreed that he would raise this matter again with the Enforcement Officer at Wychavon District Council.

Councillor Ron Davis thanked the Parish Council on behalf of Eckington Royal British Legion for their attendance at and contribution to Remembrance Sunday Observations.

Councillor Hazel Wakefield reported that the pathway between Harpley Road and Spring Bank was becoming covered with leaf debris and it was suggested that the lengthsman could be asked to put a blower across this pathway several times a year.

7. Planning

(a) New Applications

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

Proposal: To cease the builder's yard and to construct two new homes on the site in a traditional agricultural barn style. Variation of condition 2 of Planning Permission W/13/00001/PN to allow substitution of house type. (House B)

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

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

Proposal: Erection of dwelling house and detached garage – amendment to scheme approved under permission reference number W/08/00781/PN.

The Parish Council had no objection to this application.

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

Proposal: Proposed porch, playhouse and wood burner flue. (Retrospective)

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 & W/15/01980/LB: Home Farm, St Peters Lane, Besford

Pending Consideration

W/15/02341/PN: Besford Water Tower, Besford

Application Withdrawn

W/15/01979/PN revised: Home Farm, St Peters Lane, Besford

Pending Consideration

8. Finance

(a) To approve any payments due

The following invoices totalling £2,000.58 were approved for payment:

Salary Payments for October and November; N Power, Street Lighting for 2nd Quarter; New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman Scheme Works for October 2015; Defford Village Hall Trust, Hire of Village Hall on 12 May, 26 May, 13 October and 1 December 2015; Royal British Legion – Eckington Branch, Remembrance Wreath for Remembrance Sunday; Worcestershire CALC, Councillor Training x 4 sessions; LA Garden Services, Grass Cutting for October 2015 and 1st Half of Millennium Green Project.

(b) To Note the Quarterly Budget Monitor

The Clerk presented the Quarterly budget monitor and the figures were noted. Despite the agreed Millennium Green Project of £1,500, an overspend of only £379 against budget was being forecast.

9. Defford and Besford Grant Policy

The Parish Council considered the draft Grants Policy as prepared by the Clerk. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt this policy (as attached at Appendix A to these minutes) subject to the insertion of £250 in bullet point 1 of section 6 on page 2.

10. Procurement of Audit for Smaller Authorities

The Clerk explained the planned changes in audit regime for smaller Councils with a turnover of £25,000 or less. The Parish Council **AGREED** that they would not opt out of the proposed scheme and would choose to have an auditor appointed by the new 'sector-led body' called the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited.

11. Millennium Green Progress

The Parish Clerk reported that LA Garden services had now completed approximately three quarters of the work on the Millennium Green and that a meeting had been organised for December to meet with a representative from Playdale to finalise specifications for the new play equipment to be installed.

Councillor Wakefield reported that she had been contacted by a local resident who had concerns that now some of the trees surrounding the green had been cut back, footballs may become a danger to the sheep in the next field.

It was **AGREED** that Councillors Wakefield and Spiers would meet with the resident to discuss possible solutions to this matter. This would be reported back to the next meeting.

12. Parish Council Website

The Parish Council **AGREED** to fund the setting up of a Parish Council Website in line with the specifications provided by the Clerk. It was also **AGREED** that the Clerk should be delegated to manage this project and liaise with the website company accordingly. A budget of £500 was agreed.

13. Bus Shelters

It was noted that Councillor Clarke had requested this agenda item and unfortunately had not been able to make the meeting.

Councillor Steel addressed the meeting and emphasised the importance of local residents supporting the local bus service. Complaints had been received about the reduction in frequency of buses through Defford and Besford, but it remained an important service and if it not used then First Bus Service would withdraw it.

Several suggestions were made to try and address this matter:

Councillor Hardman could be approached to see if he could look any funding assistance, The Parish News could be asked to make a feature about the importance of supporting the local bus services, Local groups could be asked for their input on bus services and finally the Clerk would ask a representative from the bus company to attend the Council's Annual Parish Meeting to give local residents the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

It was noted that the state of the Council's bus shelter on the A4104 is in a bad state of repair and no longer used as a bus stop. It was suggested that options to demolish this shelter could be looked at in the future, although due to traffic management issues, the cost would increase.

14. Defibrillators

Councillor Thompson emphasised the benefits of having a defibrillator within the village and suggested that the phone box could be used to house the equipment, as this had happened in other villages in the County.

Other Councillors suggested that the Village Hall may be a better location for a defibrillator and that the Village Hall Management Committee could be asked for a financial contribution to this project.

It was **AGREED** to pursue the purchase of a defibrillator for the village and that an item would be included in a future addition of the Parish News to ask local residents whether they would support the use of New Homes Bonus Money for this project.

It was **NOTED** that other uses of New Homes Bonus Money such as the Village Hall Car Park could be included in such an article.

15. Correspondence for Information

Councillors noted two items of correspondence:

- 1) Welcome to Superfast Worcestershire
- 2) Parish Matters from Wychavon District Council

16. To confirm date of the next meeting

(a) The date of the next Parish Meeting will be Tuesday 12th January 2016 at Defford Village Hall.

(b) It was **NOTED** that a meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Group would take place in early January to produce budget proposals ready for submission to Council.

The meeting was closed at 9:05pm.

Public Questions / Comments

- i. A parishioner asked whether Parish Councillors had heard any information relating to the development of the area of land near to The Acre in Defford. Councillors confirmed that there had been no news on this matter.
- ii. Tony Kent, Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee thanked the Parish Council for their support of the two new initiatives now running from the Village Hall. The Posh Club had over 20 people attend their first meeting in November and the Youth Club had also been very successful in its initial stages.
- iii. Mr Kent also invited any thoughts or ideas for the running of the village hall in 2016. 2015 had been a successful year for the Village Hall, but any input for future improvements was very welcome.

Signed by the Chairman

APPENDIX A

DEFFORD AND BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL GRANTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Defford and Besford Parish Council recognises the value of voluntary and community activity and its contribution to residents' well-being. The following policy and procedures are based on the principles of fairness, responsiveness to local need and ensuring that public money is spent in a responsible manner.

The award of any grant is decided against criteria set by, and which can be amended from time to time by, Defford and Besford Parish Council. In order for this Council to be able to assess applications rationally and objectively, it is both necessary and helpful to assess all applications received against a range of criteria. These are designed to be a general indication of need but are not exclusive and can be flexibly applied.

In general, the following principles apply:

- Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
- Applicants must clearly show how any grant given will benefit residents of Defford and Besford.
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year-to-year basis.
- Grants will not be given for staffing costs.
- Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Parish Council.

2. The Aims of the Council's Grant-Making Policy

The Parish Council provides grant funding to support the following aims:

- To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
- To help voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.
- To support organisations that meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all residents to the services it provides and funds.
- To improve or enhance the local environment.
- To achieve value for money.

The Parish Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee.

3. Application and Determination Process

Information about grants will be available from the Parish Clerk and on the Parish Council's website. Grant applications should be submitted to the Parish Clerk for consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

All organisations in receipt of grants will be required to provide a short report as to how the grant has been spent at the Parish Council's next Annual Parish Meeting

4. The eligibility of applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Applicants must answer all the questions on the application form.
- Applications must demonstrate direct benefit to the residents of Defford and Besford.
- The funding requested must be commensurate with the benefit obtained by local residents.
- Groups must be able to provide the following in support of their application:
 1. A short statement explaining how the grant will be beneficial to your organisation and the community or residents of Defford and Besford. This will be presented to committee to assist in the decision making process.
 2. A quote or estimate showing the purchase price or cost of the project / activity for which the grant is being sought.
 3. A copy of your organisation's constitution or similar document which governs your organisation.
 4. A copy of your organisation's latest bank statement.
 5. The organisation's most recent annual accounts preferably audited and / or prepared by a qualified accountant. In the case of a newly formed organisation, a comprehensive budget and business plan should be submitted instead.

5. The Parish Council will not normally fund the following:

- Organisations that do not provide a service to the local community.
- Individuals.
- General appeals.
- Statutory organisations or the direct replacement of statutory funding.
- Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs.
- Religious groups where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs.
- Projects with no community or charitable element.
- Organisations that have a closed or restricted membership.

6. Further information

- Grants will be awarded up to a value of £250 and are offered on a one-off basis to support a particular project, event, activity or the purchase of equipment.
- Grants cannot be used to support general running costs.
- Grants must be spent within 1 year of award. Any unspent monies left after this time must be returned.
- Any award made is not an indication that funding will be continued in other years.
- The grant can only be used for the purpose stated in the application and the Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant not being used for the specified purpose of the application.
- Should for any reason the organisation disband or the project not be completed, the Council may ask for all or part of the monies to be paid back.
- Only one application per year will be accepted from any organisation.

A schedule of awarded grants will be published on the Council's website annually.