

# Defford and Besford Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Tuesday 13th May 2014 at Defford Village Hall

**Present:** Cllrs Robert Bemand (Chairman), Ron Davis, (arrived 8:30pm) Sonja Lee, Ian Spiers, Patricia Steel, Roy Shepherd, Hazel Wakefield and Clive Woods.

**Absent:** Cllr David Robinson.

**Also present:** Linda Blake (Clerk); PC Sean Woods; Mike Sparrow, Defford Short Mat Bowling Club; Sheila Burley, Defford Humming Birds; 10 members of the public

### 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Adrian Hardman.

### 2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 7th May 2013

It was resolved that the Minutes of the meeting of the 7th May 2013 should be accepted and signed as a true record.

### 3. Report from West Mercia Police Local Policing Team

PC Sean Woods, Safer Neighbourhood Constable for Pershore Rural North and South addressed the meeting and presented an Annual Report for Defford and Besford, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

### 4. Chairman's Annual Report – Cllr Robert Bemand

The Chairman presented his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

### 5. District Councillor's Annual Report – Cllr Ron Davis

Cllr Davis reported that whilst the budgets at Wychavon have now been signed off for the next 12/24 months, they still continue to look for savings in all departments. To date, £4.3 million of savings have been identified up to 2016/17. Currently funds on deposit are approximately £36.8 million.

Cllr Davis informed the meeting that the South Worcestershire Development Plan is still to be signed off by the Inspector who has stated that another 4100 homes must be found within the districts of Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon. As a 5 year land supply still cannot be demonstrated, we can expect to see a number of planning applications submitted which have not been identified in the SWDP. Cllr Davis also commented that the recent call for sites exercise had identified a further 268 sites in Wychavon.

Cllr Davis was pleased to confirm that the New Homes Bonus scheme is to continue for the time being with Defford and Besford still having a healthy sum of money to spend. Cllr Davis reinforced the need to spend the money within 2 years of eligible draw down by the Parish; otherwise the Parish would be contacted to see if it did have a realistic prospect of using the money.

Finally Cllr Davis reported that in addition to his Executive Board duties, he sits on 8 committees outside of Wychavon; 4 relating to Health, 1 Police, 2 Shared Services Committees and the most recent appointment is to the Worcestershire Telecare Board.

#### 6. County Councillor's Annual Report – Cllr Adrian Hardman

County Cllr Hardman had sent apologies, but had submitted a written report which is attached to these minutes.

#### 7. Report from the Village Hall Management Committee

There was no report submitted from the Village Hall Management Committee.

#### 8. Reports from Village Organisations

##### Short Mat Bowling Club

Mike Sparrow reported that the Bowls Club continued to play both competitive and friendly matches. The club meet four times a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 2pm and on Thursdays and Fridays at 7pm The Bowls Club will be taking part in the Eckington Expo on 14<sup>th</sup> June as a great way of promoting the club and showcasing the sport..

A 24 hour short mat “bowlathon” will be taking place in the village hall from 8am on Saturday 9 August and all are invited to come along and participate. There is an active social side to the club and a Burns night supper had been held during the year as well as the Annual trip to Torquay. New members are always welcome.

##### Defford Relief in Need

Hazel Wakefield reported that Defford in Need are a registered charity whose purpose is to relieve anyone resident in the Parish of Defford who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress. Defford Relief in Need has existed as a charity since 1974. There are 7 trustees and 1 ex-officio member. Anyone wishing to apply should approach one the trustees of the group who will then put in an application on their behalf. All applications are in the strictest confidence.

##### Humming Birds

Sheila Burley presented a report to the meeting. In late 2013, members of the Women's Institute in Defford decided to leave the organisation and set up their own group. By doing this they were able to reduce the annual subscription payable and to ensure that all money was retained locally rather than being sent to a central office.

The Humming Birds have held 2 meetings so far and have continued with similar activities as previously. The membership is gradually increasing and they would like to invite local ladies of any age to join the group.

### Pathfinders

Sue Slater had sent a short report which was read out by the Clerk. Pathfinders continue their Tuesday walks around Defford. Walks are 3-5 miles long and are advertised in the Parish News Every month. Pathfinders are a small, friendly and informal group who would love to welcome new walkers. Just turn up at the village hall car park at 9:30am or 6:30pm depending on whether it is a morning or evening walk.

### 9. Proposals for Use of New Homes Bonus

Only one application for New Homes Bonus had been received by the Clerk and this was from The Village Hall Trustees who had not been able to make the meeting.

Several other uses for New Homes Bonus money were put forward at the meeting and it was agreed that full and detailed presentations would be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council on 27 May 2014. Parishioners will then be able to ask questions regarding the proposed projects.

### 10. Parishioners Open Forum

- i. A parishioner asked whether a letter of thanks could be sent to Mr Porter who invites local people to enjoy the bluebells on his private land. The Parish Council agreed to do so.
- ii. The issue of the streetlight in Crown Lane was once again raised. The Clerk had not received a response to her letter but it was possible for the Lengthsman to clear the foliage around this street light head if the Parish Council wished.
- iii. A parishioner asked a question about organising litter picks within the Parish. The health and safety implications of this were hi-lighted.

## Annual Report for Defford and Besford Parish 2013-14

The last 12 months has seen significant change within the team and the police as a whole. We lost our long serving CSO Simon Williams who not surprisingly joined the ranks of warranted police officers and is currently undergoing training with Warwickshire Police. I know Simon was well thought of by the parish and brought a great deal of commitment to the role. I have no doubt that Julie Pardoe who is currently off sick will also bring the same level of commitment to the role when she is back on her feet. We also have another new member of the team who is currently in training and we can expect to see him out on the patch around June time and he is CSO Steve Tinkler.

This report is based using the recorded crime figures between 12/5/13 and 13/5/14 the comparison is relating to the corresponding dates in 2012/13.

Overall the police recorded 103 incidents that were reported by members of the public this is compared to 177 incidents reported the previous year.

Of the 103 incidents the parish had 29 recordable crimes (Incidents where a specific offence has occurred) this was in comparison to 47 recordable crimes the previous year.

The breakdown of offences is as follows:

	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012/13</u>
<b>Burglary Dwellings</b>	1	1
<b>Burglary Other (i.e. sheds)</b>	4	7
<b>Attempt Burglary</b>	2	0
<b>Theft</b>	7	13
<b>Criminal Damage</b>	4	14
<b>Other Offences</b>	11	12

(Include domestic related incidents, assaults)

Over it has been a good year for reducing crime and recorded incidents. The rural areas of the patch however are still being targeted particularly sheds and out buildings and the team again asks that the residents ensure that they have adequate security in place and failing that remove attractive and valuable items to a more secure place.

On behalf of the team and myself I should like to offer my thanks to the parish council for all its help over the last 12 months. I would also like to say thank you to the parish as a whole for its continued support of your local policing team and for the numerous calls we have received relating to suspicious activity all I ask is that you continue to do this

Sean Woods  
PC3243  
Safer Neighbourhood Constable  
Pershore Rural North and South

***Defford and Besford Parish Council Chairman's Report to the 2014 Annual Parish Meeting***

The main event of the year was to reluctantly receive the resignation of our long standing Parish Clerk Jo Adams. Due to pressure of family and other commitments, Jo felt that she needed to concentrate her efforts as she was already Clerk to Upton Town Council. Jo acted in a most professional manner in doing all she could to help in the location of a successor, and ensure a smooth hand over. May I pay tribute to Jo Adams, for the untiring work that she has done over the years to serve your Council and community through some most difficult and challenging times.

The Parish Clerk recruitment process involved search and selection, and may I thank those Councillors who gave their time willingly outside of Council who helped me in this task.

We have been most fortunate to have recruited a most able Parish Clerk in Ms Linda Blake who commenced her duties on Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

Linda has a first-class honours degree in geography and archaeology from Manchester University. Linda also works for Malvern Town Council where she has been both Events Officer and Accounts Clerk and now occupies the position of Deputy Town Clerk. Linda is a Chartered Management Accountant (CIMA) and is also a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Linda settled in immediately to her additional role as Parish Clerk, contributed effectively and efficiently to the conduct of Council business, and I'm sure that you will join me in welcoming Linda to our community.

The Parish Council is responsible for the up-keep of the boundary of Besford churchyard. Following a five yearly inspection by appointed surveyors, works were necessary to repair the south-east wall of the Churchyard. Any undue delay would naturally increase the risk of the repairs, and costs, escalating. Site meetings were held and professional quotations for the work were obtained. Parishioner Mr R B Clements stepped in and completed the repair in a most competent manner.

I and the Council would like to thank Mr Clements for the work he has done on the Besford churchyard wall, and for saving the Parish Council a great deal of money with his very reasonable quote.

Following a meeting of the Parish Council Finance and General Policy Committee, information was presented which showed that despite the recent changes affecting the Council tax base, if the precept amount was kept the same as for 2013/14, in Defford and Besford Parish this would actually mean a decrease in the Council tax charge per household.

However, the recent expenditure to carry out repairs to the Besford churchyard wall had resulted in expenditure above budget for the current financial year, and that it would be prudent to try and replace this overspend amount over a five year period.

The Parish Council increased the precept for 2014/15 by £150 to compensate. This increased amount will be ring-fenced into general reserves as part of a five year plan to offset the overspend in the current year caused by the cost of repairs to the churchyard wall. The precept for 2014/15 was therefore set at £8,860 which is equivalent to an approximate increase of 5 pence on a Band D Council tax charge. Hence the major cost of the repairs of Besford churchyard wall has been absorbed without any perceptible increase to the precept.

Various suggestions for the use of the New Homes Bonus money were discussed over the year and your Council agreed that a notice should be put in the Parish Newsletter prior to the Annual Parish Meeting in May to invite parishioners to come along with suggestions for projects that this money could be used for. The Clerk has also written to local clubs and groups who may have a suitable project needing funding to invite them to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and make a short presentation.

Finally, I would like to thank all Councillors who have helped and contributed to a most challenging year, and maintained a stable and sustainable Council.

*Bob Bemand, Defford and Besford Parish Council Chairman*

*April 2014*

**Defford and Besford Annual Parish Council Meeting**  
**County Councillor's Annual Report**  
**13 May 2014**

Dear All

I am sorry not to be with you tonight since it is the annual meeting of the District Council and afterwards, if I have time, I will be attending the annual meeting of Ashton under Hill Parish Council.

I am aware that sadly it has been a year of sparse attendance by me but I am trying to put your meetings in my calendar so that I will be able to attend in future. There are just three issues that I would wish to raise with you.

1. We continue to manage the effects of scorching austerity which has seen our budget reduced by some £70m over the past 3 years to the best of our abilities. But part of this is that the evening bus service, the 383, from Pershore via Eckington to Worcester is unlikely to continue to be subsidised and I expect will probably run until the 1<sup>st</sup> September, but the 382 bus service should remain unaltered.
2. I did promise the Parish Council that we would install a permanent flashing 40 mph sign at the start of the Village entrance from the Upton direction and I am aware that this has not yet happened. I have been chasing the officers but I am afraid we are having some issues over power connections and so to circumvent this we have on order a solar powered sign which will only need occasional maintenance from ourselves to get this underway. I am sorry for the delay and I can blame it only on ourselves and Western Power Distributions inaccurate mapping.
3. The County Council is doing a considerable amount of surface dressing this year and I know that some roads within the Parish boundary are being attended to and I do hope that you will not find this work to inconvenient.

As always I have every confidence that Defford and Besford Parish Council continues to be in good heart under its excellent Chairman and its strong membership and I look forward to seeing you in June or July.

Thank you  
Adrian Hardman