

# Defford and Besford Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

of Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2015  
at Besford Community Hall

Present: Cllrs Roger Atter, Julian Clarke, Ron Davis, Ian Spiers, Patricia Steel, Nicola Szabranski, Jane Thompson, Hazel Wakefield and Clive Woods

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

### **1. Vacancies after Election: Co-option of 3 members to the Defford and Besford Parish Council**

4 candidates had put in applications to be considered for Co-option. 3 candidates were present at the meeting and gave a brief presentation to Council, after which Councillors were invited to ask questions of the applicants. The fourth applicant had sent apologies as they were unable to be present at the meeting, but information from their application form was considered by councillors in their absence.

Further to a secret ballot, It was **RESOLVED** that the following be co-opted to the Parish Council:

Julian Clarke to represent Besford Ward

Roger Atter and Nicola Szabranski to represent Defford Ward

The 3 successful candidates signed their declarations of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk and joined the meeting.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

None.

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

### **4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 be accepted and signed as a true record.

### **5. General Power of Competence**

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council now met the criteria required to adopt the General Power of Competence. This power was created by the Localism Act 2011 and is intended to give local authorities wider powers and to give them the power to do anything that individuals generally may do.

It was **RESOLVED**, that from 11 August 2015, until the next Annual Council Meeting after Ordinary Elections that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011, the Council would adopt the General Power of Competence.

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

The Parish Clerk confirmed that following the suggestion that the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council should be held on one evening next year, a date had now been confirmed as Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The meetings would commence at 6:30pm at Defford Village Hall.

The Clerk also informed the meeting that the Annual Return had been received back from the External Auditor, Grant Thornton and that Defford and Besford Parish Council had been given an unqualified (i.e. clean) audit for the 2014/15 financial year.

## **7. Planning**

### **(a) New Applications**

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

Proposal: Five Dwellings and New Access.

The Parish Council had no objection to the location of the site or to the number and design of the housing, but had raised concerns regarding access to the site from Church Lane.

W/15/01780/PP and W/15/01781/LB: 490 Croome Road, Besford.

Proposal: Front Porch Alteration, loft conversion and single storey rear extension.

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

C/15/01371/OL: Overhead lines, Pirton

Approved

W/15/01399/PN: Wright's Farm, Besford Bridge, Besford

Approved

## **8. Finance**

### **To approve any payments due**

The following invoices totalling £3,979.48 were approved for payment:

LA Garden Services, Grass Cutting May, June and July 2015; Zurich Municipal, Annual Insurance Contract; Salary Payments for May, June and July; New Farm Grounds Maintenance, Lengthsman Work for May, June and July 2015; Gallagher & Co, Internal Audit 2014/15; N Power, Street Lighting for the 1st Quarter 2015/16; Grant Thornton, External Audit – Annual Return 2014/15.

## **9. New Homes Bonus – Location of Parish Noticeboard**

Further to the decision at the last Council meeting to review the location of the new Parish Noticeboard, the Clerk read out a letter from a parishioner requesting that the noticeboard should be located as originally agreed at the entrance to the Village Hall Car Park in Defford.

Councillors discussed the merits of locating the notice board either at this original location or within the Church Grounds.

It was **AGREED** that the most important consideration is that the noticeboard should be located where it can be most easily seen and where parishioners can either walk to it or pull up in the cars to look at the notices. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the New Parish Noticeboard should be located by the entrance to the Village Hall Car Park in Defford.

It was **NOTED** that Councillors Spiers should be consulted regarding the exact location notice board as he currently cuts the hedges in the car park and this needs to be taken into account.

## **10. Village Youth Club**

Councillor Jane Thompson spoke to the Parish Council about the possibility of setting up a Youth Club in Defford as there were two parishioners who had volunteered to help set one up and to run it. She asked if the Parish Council would be able to assist with this matter.

It was **NOTED** that a feasibility study would need to be done to establish if there is a demand for this club and also that the age range of those attending the club would need to be carefully considered.

It was **AGREED** that a working party would be set up to evaluate this proposal. Councillor Jane Thompson agreed to lead this working party and Councillor Nicola Szabranski also agreed to assist. It was suggested that someone from the Village Hall Management Committee should be invited to sit on the working party and that the youth worker attached to the Church room could be asked to if they would be willing to help with this project.

## **11. Display of Railway Memorabilia**

Further to the decision made by this Parish Council that it would support the display of Railway Memorabilia and Photographs in Defford Village Hall, the Village Hall Management Committee have agreed that a display can be mounted in the entrance area of the Village Hall.

It was **RESOLVED** to purchase a Wall Mounted Glass Display Cabinet and a Photo Picture Frame to display items of the Council's Railway memorabilia and photo collection in Defford Village Hall. The Parish Council **AGREED** to pay for the items at a cost of approximately £250.00 plus installation costs. The Parish Council will also be responsible for the insurance.

The Parish Council extended their thanks to the Village Hall Management Committee for agreeing to this proposal.

It was also noted that electronic copies of the photographs should be taken to ensure their preservation.

## **12. Parish Plan / Neighbourhood Plan**

It was noted that work on the Parish Plan had been carried out a few years previously. Data had been collected and analysed, but this had never been written up in a formal format as a definitive Parish Plan. There had not been a great response to the questionnaires and furthermore the information that had been collected was now dated. It was further noted that Parish Plans, although informative, did not have any real power.

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Plan should not be pursued any further.

The Chairman outlined the main issues with undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan and emphasised that it did require a great deal of work as well as being able to find champions within the villages who were willing to put in some work to get the project going.

It was **AGREED** that before the next meeting, Councillors would talk with parishioners regarding their thoughts and ideas for a Neighbourhood Plan. If it is found that there are a number of individuals, outside of the Parish Council, who are willing to be involved, then the Parish Council could discuss the setting up of a working party to progress this matter,

It was also **AGREED** that Andy Ford from Wychavon District Council should be asked to come and speak at a future Parish Council meeting.

### **13. The Millennium Green**

Councillors discussed the current state of the Millennium Green and the works that are required to improve it.

It was **NOTED** that regular maintenance of the boundary hedges would now need to be undertaken as part of the annual programme and in addition to the grass cutting which is already done by a contractor. However in order to get the field in a suitable state for this to happen, larger scale works first need to be undertaken to clear the vegetation and cut the hedges back to the boundary fences.

The Clerk was in the process of getting quotations for this work and it was **RESOLVED** that a contractor should be engaged to carry out these clearance works to a maximum value of £1,500. It was further **RESOLVED** that a new metal gate and kissing gate should be purchased and installed.

### **14. 382 Bus Service**

Councillor Patricia Steel updated the Committee on the status of the 382 bus service. First Group Bus Services are taking over this bus route as from September, but it will only run every two hours.

Councillors expressed their concerns that the scaling back of the service could be further increased as the service is not used enough. It was **AGREED** that the Parish magazine could be used to encourage villagers to use the service.

### **15. Correspondence for Information**

There was no correspondence to note.

### **16. Councillors reports**

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

b) District Councillor R Davis  
Cllr Davis reported the following:

- The New Homes Bonus Scheme had now been reinstated, which means there will be more funds available to draw down during the year.
- Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils have been continuing the sharing of services in order to produce cost savings. Legal Services and Housing were being further shared between the two Councils as well as aspects of the planning services.
- The plan to combine Waste Recycling between the 3 Councils in Worcestershire will save £1.6 million if it goes ahead.
- Wychavon's business plan had received a setback in achieving its targets following a case where GP's have challenged business rates in the courts. Having won their case, Wychavon District Council will have to refund business rates already paid back to the GPs.
- The Waitrose planned for Evesham is to go ahead.

c) West Mercia Local Policing Team

PCSO Steven Tinkler had passed a report to the Clerk which was read out at the meeting. There had been 3 crimes to report during the recent period as well as a warning for people to be vigilant in locking their back doors during the warm weather.

d) Parish Councillors

It was noted that former Councillor Roy Shepherd had not been well and all Councillors supported a suggestion that a message should be sent to him with best wishes for a speedy recovery.

**17. To confirm date of the next meeting**

The date of the next Parish Meeting will be Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Defford Village Hall.

The meeting was closed at 9:55pm.

**Public Questions / Comments**

- i. A parishioner raised the issue of when public question time should be listed on the agenda at Parish Council meetings. She felt that it should be at the end of the meeting, so that members of the public can hear the comments made by the councillors before giving their opinions on any items discussed.

The Chairman and the Clerk both confirmed that it was normal practice to have public question time towards the beginning of the meeting. This allowed the public to give their views and opinions before a topic was debated, so that councillors could take these comments into account when making a decision. If public question time was at the end of a meeting, decisions would already have been made by the time the public were allowed to speak

- ii. Concerns were raised regarding the planning application for five dwellings off Church Lane in Defford. It was felt that this development could cause access issues at the entrance to the Millennium Green. It was also felt that there would be issues about access onto the already difficult junction with Harpley Road.

The Parish Council noted these comments and had already responded to this planning consultation stating their concerns about the access to the site and in particular the suitability of Church Lane as an access road.

- iii. Concerns were once again raised about the Millennium Green. The Chairman confirmed that this would be discussed at Agenda Item 13, so that works could take place in the near future.

- iv. A Parishioner raised the issue about the use of bus passes on the bus service through the village. At present bus passes can only be used after 9:30am, but with the agreed change to the bus services in Defford, the bus will pick up at 9:13am in the village with the next bus not being until two hours later. It was suggested that this did not seem fair.

It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Worcestershire County Council raising this issue.

Signed by the Chairman .....