

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in the Barton Room, Fairfield Village Hall on Monday 5st November 2012

Present: Cllrs K Green (Chair), J Bradley, I Dalziel, N Hartill, C Hine, A Hood, A Ince, T Jones, J Kitson, A Mabbett, S MacDonald, D Roberts and P Shotton.

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk; County Councillor Ed Moore, District Councillors Janice Boswell and Brian Lewis and one member of the public also attended. PC Chris Lord for Police Matters.

312/12 Apologies

Apologies for his late arrival were received and accepted from Cllr Scurrrell who arrived for item 319/12.

313/12 Declarations of Interest

- 1) Cllr Kitson declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to discussions concerning the Council's investments with the financial advisers Prosperity since he was associated with the firm.
- 2) Cllr Kitson had submitted a request for a dispensation to enable him to take part in the debate and to vote in discussions concerning the Council's investments with Prosperity. The Council considered that it was in the interests of residents that Cllr Kitson's expertise in financial matters should continue to be available to the Council for its discussions about the investment of its capital reserves. It was agreed that Cllr Kitson should be granted a dispensation to enable him to take part in discussions but not to vote on matters concerning the Council's investments with Prosperity.

314/12 Police Matters

Cllr Lord attended his last Parish Council meeting before his imminent retirement. He said that for the time being the Belbroughton part of the parish would be covered by his Hagley colleague - PC Tim Burling- and Fairfield would continue to look to PC Kelso. The longer term arrangements for local policing were uncertain at present – the new Police Commissioner would have views on this and there was also the impact of the proposed amalgamation with the Warwickshire force.

The Council thanked PC Lord for all his help and support for the parish and wished him well in his retirement.

315/12 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st October were approved and the minute book was signed by the Chairman.

316/12 Reports

Planning meeting on 15th October

The Council noted the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting.

Finance meeting on 15th October

The Council noted the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

Clerk's report

- Guidance had been received that Parish Councillors who live in the parish and therefore have a Dislosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to their home should apply for a dispensation under the new Code of Conduct to enable them to take part in setting the Council's budget and precept. This would be on the December agenda.
- Bournheath Parish Council had sent information about the recent court case in which Severn Trent had been fined for allowing a local water course to become polluted. Bournheath had suggested that local parish councils should work together if any similar issues arise.
- The County Council had sent information about winter services – new salt bins were available at £150 each to include a first fill of salt; salt supplies were £40 per bag and needed to be ordered at the start of the winter; a dedicated telephone line would be available during severe weather for parish councils to report urgent problems.
- Neighbourhood Planning- Ruth Bamford (head of planning at the District Council) was willing to meet the Parish Council to discuss this but suggested that the Council should first identify what it wanted to achieve in planning and other matters.
- Dark Lane, Belbroughton - complaints had been received about flooding at the junction of Dark Lane and the bridleway. The lengthsman had indicated that he could not take any effective steps to deal with this. Cllr Moore said that this was a long standing problem and that adjacent landowners needed to create better drainage by reinstating some ditches. He would follow up with the County engineer.

317/12 Parish Council objectives

Nine potential actions for the Council had been suggested at the previous meeting. The Chairman suggested that these should be considered over several meetings. Items considered and agreed were:

- 1) *Suggestion: small problems should be dealt with quickly, for example by a Parish Council handyman.* It was agreed that the Clerk should draw up a list of local people who could undertake particular tasks so that work could be commissioned quickly.
- 2) *Suggestion: accessible footpaths in the parish would make the most difference to people.* The Council could prioritise work on these and use volunteers more. It was agreed that the footpath wardens should be invited to a meeting to discuss this with the Council.

318/12 Monitoring of Chadwich and Wildmoor quarries

This item was deferred until the outcome of the planning application concerning Chadwich Quarry was known.

319/12 Finance issues

Grants

The Finance Committee had reviewed the Council's grants policies. In general the recommendations were that current policies for capital and maintenance grants should continue but with a new category of grant being offered on a trial basis. The Committee suggested that a small additional sum should be available to enable parish bodies to apply for funding for items which did not fit the current criteria for capital grants. Grants could be

made for running costs or one off events but should not be made to the same organisation on a regular basis since the aim should not be to provide long term support.

Other recommendations were that:

- applications from PTAs should not be excluded in principle but that all applications should continue to be considered on their merits;
- the phasing out of the external maintenance grant to Belbroughton Rec. should be considered as part of the budget process for 2013/14.

The Council endorsed the Finance Committee's recommendations.

Expenses

The Council agreed that Councillors should be able to claim travel expenses at the approved rates for travel to meetings on Parish Council business, including Parish Council meetings. It was also agreed that the principle of the Chairman's allowance for small discretionary items should continue but that a new description should be adopted since the funds were not an allowance paid to the Chairman.

Council's investments

The Council agreed the Finance Committee's recommendation that the Committee should review the investment with the Henderson (formerly Gartmore) Multi-Manager fund and provide further advice to the Council.

320/12 Fairfield Recreation Ground

The Council noted the Rospa report on the children's play area. It was agreed that a repair kit for the damaged surface and tools to tighten the loose bolts should be purchased. Cllr Roberts offered to help with this repair. It was agreed that the Council should review the inspection arrangements at a future meeting.

It was agreed that Fairfield Villa Football Club should be asked to fund the planting of a new tree - probably a reasonably mature fruit tree costing around £250-£300- to replace the one removed adjacent to the Club House. A liaison meeting with the Club should be arranged in the New Year.

321/12 Parish Projects

The Clerk outlined the proposals suggested at a site meeting with the County Highways liaison engineer for improving the ***footpath from Belbroughton Rec. to the school:***

- Removal of the current top layer of tarmac and resurfacing of about 40 metres of path between the access from the Glebe and the school. A channel should be created on the left hand side to improve drainage.
- Tree roots that are pushing up the tarmac and causing pooling should be excavated and removed - with the District tree officer's approval.
- 2 areas of the left hand bank should be reinforced with boards and posts topped with turf to help hold back soil whilst still enabling water to drain

Two quotes had been obtained from County approved contractors for this work. The Council agreed the lower quote from R S Taylor Services. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements to have this work done as soon as practicable, including writing to the adjoining landowner and tenant and seeking formal approval from the County Council.

Cllr Bradley presented the preliminary report of the **Belbroughton Village Green** working group. He said that timing of some of the suggested improvements was uncertain because of the uncertain timing of the Hartle Lane housing development. However the group was developing the ideas as far as possible and would be meeting the Bromsgrove tree officer to discuss planting and landscaping. A further report would be made to the Council in the New Year with a suggested timetable for action if possible. There would need to be consultation with residents when the ideas were firmed up.

The Finance Committee's proposals for tidying Belbroughton village centre were approved.

The Clerk had written to the County Council seeking advice about the process and prospects for closing **a footpath on the farmland adjacent to Hackmans' Gate Lane** in order to create the new footpath proposed by the Parish Council.

322/12 Meetings in 2013

The Council agreed dates for meetings in 2013 (list appended to the Minutes). The date agreed for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held in Fairfield was 15th April. The Parish Council New Year dinner would be held on 14th January.

Meeting venues were discussed. The room at Belbroughton Rec. was considered a good venue. The acoustics had been difficult at Fairfield School and the Barton Room was noisy- however, on balance, of these 2 venues the Barton Room was preferred. In order to have some meetings in both villages it was agreed that meetings for the first six months of 2013 would be divided between the Rec. and Barton Room by 2:1 (meetings in December & January in Belbroughton Rec.; February Barton Room; March & April B. Rec.; May Barton Room).

323/12 Councillors' Items

District Cllr Brian Lewis said that

- the Belbroughton Conservation Area appraisal had been approved by the District Council.
- the unauthorised signs on the Stourbridge Road were being discussed by the District and County Council but action had not yet been agreed.
- The footways along Heath End Road and the Stourbridge Road were very narrow and action was needed to clear them.

Cllr Mabbett had received a copy of a petition from residents of Yew Tree Lane about the state of the road surface - for the next agenda

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Signed.....Chairman