

**Minutes of the BELBROUGHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Monday 29th
March 2010 in Belbroughton Church Hall**

Present

Parish Councillors James Bradley, Peter Bridge, Tim Cherry, Linda Deeley, Karen Green, Ian Hadley, Lynn Hardcastle, Ann Ince, Trevor Jones, Paul Peacock, Chris Scurrall, Paul Shotton, John Westley and Sue Wright.

Clerk: Katie Limm

District Councillors Janice Boswell, Brian Lewis, Margaret Sherrey

County Councillors Ed Moore; Sheila Blagg

Residents/other attendees Pam Bridge (Parish footpaths warden); and 24 other members of the public who recorded their names on the attendance list.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27 April 2009

The Minutes of the previous Annual parish Meeting were agreed as a fair record.

3. Parish Council Annual Report 2009-10

The Parish Council Chairman, James Bradley, said that copies of the Council's Annual report would be sent to every household in the parish in due course. He highlighted the main events of the year and thanked Committee Chairmen, other Councillors, and the Council's employees for their work on behalf of the Parish.

Reports were presented by Cllr Green, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Cllr Hadley, Chairman of the Planning Committee, and Cllr Ince, Chairman of the Allotments Committee on the Committees work during the year and the main issues arising.

4. Footpaths

Pam Bridge, the Parish footpaths warden, reported on the footpaths within the parish. All paths had been inspected over the year and all were in a useable state. The report noted the considerable improvements that had taken place in the state of the footpaths over the last 40 years. Thanks were recorded to Pam and Peter Bridge for all their hard work to keep the footpaths in such good condition.

5. Parish projects and priorities for 2010/11

Cllr Bradley outlined the potential projects that the Council planned to undertake in the coming year. The Council hoped to make progress on a safer route for walkers along Hackman's Gate Lane but this depended on being able to agree a suitable route with the

landowners. Improvements to the parish meeting room to make it more user friendly and compliant with disability discrimination legislation were being considered. Residents would be consulted about this if the Council planned to spend a significant sum on the room. The Council was also exploring the possible purchase of a mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) to warn drivers if they were exceeding the speed limit.

The Council's priorities for the coming year included improving the parish lighting stock and improving green spaces in the villages.

6. Reports from County and District Councillors

County and District Councillors commented briefly on issues arising during the year. A written report from Cllr Sheila Blagg was also available.

Cllr Janice Boswell mentioned the proposed housing development in Hartle Lane, Belbroughton and said she hoped this would be a real opportunity for the village.

Cllr Moore mentioned the review of speed limits across the County. This should report in 2011. Cllr Blagg said that an additional £15m was available for repairs and improvements to rural roads in 2010/11. In relation to footpaths she had asked the County to prioritise completion of the footpath work in Fairfield in the coming financial year.

Cllr Lewis said that Stoneybridge island had been damaged several times and that the speed of traffic approaching the island was a matter of concern. Cllr Blagg said that the A491 would be looked at in the speed limit review. Cllr Lewis was also concerned about the layby on the A491 being used as a long stay lorry park.

7. Questions/Matters of Interest to Residents

A number of residents voiced concerns about recent developments at Belbroughton Recreation Ground which had resulted in the loss of the older children's play area. The Council was asked why residents had not been consulted and why the Council had allowed the building of a new tennis court to take place. Cllr Bradley explained that the Council did not run the Recreation Centre, this was the responsibility of the Recreation Centre Committee. The Council provides support for the Centre, including some financial support, but it was up to the Committee to make the decisions. Mr Hadfield, the Chairman of the Recreation Centre Committee, spoke to explain the reasons for the Committee's decisions including the need to maintain the viability of the Recreation Centre.

Cllr Bradley said that lessons had been learnt about the importance of consultation on matters affecting the parish. Cllr Hadley, the Council's representative on the Rec. Committee, said that there was general acceptance that things could have been handled differently, but that a positive outcome of recent events had been renewed interest in the Recreation Centre. The Committee was looking for new members and for ideas about how the Rec. could move forward.

The Council's maintenance grant to the Recreation Centre was also raised - Cllr Bradley said that it was the Council's intention to reduce its financial support to Belbroughton Recreation ground in consultation with the Rec. Committee.

Other issues raised were:

- Use of the Council's reserves for parish projects - Cllr Bradley said that the Council's policy had been to invest the reserves and use the income generated for grants and projects. The Council had not ruled out using some of the reserves for worthwhile facilities, but this would reduce future income so it was important to maintain a balance between the present and the future.
- Enforcement of weight restrictions – the point was noted, but the Cllr Bradley said that when this had been raised previously the police had indicated that this was not a high priority for them.
- Residents mentioned the speed of traffic in Heath End Road and Hackman's Gate Lane and suggested that if the Parish Council purchased a VAS it should also be used in these locations.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.