

Barnt Green Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting

held at 80 Hewell Road, Barnt Green on Monday 31 March 2014 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Rosemary Briggs, Robert Cholmondeley, Alun Davies, Kaye Elderton, Edwin Gumbley, Charles Hotham, John Jagger (Chair) and Susan Whitehand.

In attendance: Paul MacLachlan (Executive Officer), County Councillor Peter McDonald and District Cllr Stuart Dudley.

The following documents will be appended to the signed minutes:

- the Agenda;
- the following enclosures:
 - A: report of planning applications received and decisions taken under delegated powers;
 - B: draft minutes of the Resources Committee dated 19 March 2014;
 - C: dates for 2014/15 Parish Council meetings (as amended);
 - D: agenda for Annual Parish Meeting;
 - E: report of the Responsible Finance Officer.

134/13 Apologies

Apologies were received from District Councillor Richard Deeming.

135/13 Declarations of Interest

The requirement to keep the Register of Interests was noted.

Parish Council dispensations dated 26 November 2012 apply.

Cllr John Jagger declared an interest in application 14/0130 due to the close proximity of the house to his own home.

No other interests were declared by Parish Council Members.

No dispensations were sought.

136/13 Co-option of new councillors

The Chair welcomed Rosemary Briggs and Robert Cholmondeley to the meeting and invited them to say a few words about themselves.

Rosemary and Robert left the meeting to allow councillors to consider their election. The Chair invited nominations.

It was proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Whitehand that Rosemary Briggs be co-opted onto Barnt Green Parish Council.

The vote was carried unanimously.

It was proposed by Cllr Elderton and seconded by Cllr Gumbley that Robert Cholmondeley be co-opted onto Barnt Green Parish Council.

The vote was carried unanimously.

Mrs Briggs and Mr Cholmondeley returned to the room and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and a further declaration confirming that they:

- (a) were eligible to stand as a parish councillor in Barnt Green;
- (b) accepted the Parish Council's code of conduct; and,
- (c) would, within 28 days, submit their declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests to the Monitoring Officer.

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The Chair welcomed Councillor Briggs and Councillor Cholmondeley to the Parish Council.

137/13 Minutes of the last meeting

It was noted that in the third paragraph of item 132/13 the words 'had been asked to meet with Gill Harvey,' be amended to 'would be meeting with Jill Harvey,'. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting dated 24 February 2014, as amended, were approved and signed by the Chair.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting, thanked two parishioners and one local landowner for attending and invited questions or comments. A question was asked about the future determination of the green belt to which Parish, District and County Councillors responded. There being no further matters raised, the Chairman reconvened the meeting. One parishioner and the local landowner left the meeting.

138/13 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on a successful Sports Relief Mile and on a discussion at the recent Bromsgrove CALC meeting regarding the way in which the District Council had decided to allocate the element of the central government support grant intended for Parish Councils.

139/13 District Councillors' and County Councillor's Question and Answer Session

The Chair asked District Councillors to comment on:

- (i) the District Council's decision to pass on the support intended for Parish Councils to all District Councillors, even those not representing parish areas, in the form of a discretionary grant;
- (ii) the wisdom of this in a year leading up to District Council elections;
- (iii) whether councillors attending the meeting at which this decision was taken had been given prior notice of the agenda item.

District Councillors replied that the funds had not been specifically ring-fenced for Parish Councils by central government, that Councillors had considered the decision to distribute funds evenly across the District to be fair and that the decision had the support of the majority of District Councillors. District Cllr Dudley was asked to notify the Parish Council of the voting figures.

The Chair commented on the fact that the District Council had decided to retain centrally all the money arising from the New Homes Bonus. The Chair referred to Wychavon District Council and their decision to:

- (i) share the benefits arising from the NHB between the local authority and the local communities in which the development was due to take place;
- (ii) encourage local communities to take a positive lead on how they would wish the monies to be spent within local areas.

The Chair commented that the New Homes Bonus might, for example, help fund lifts at Barnt Green station.

District Councillors were asked to vote to change the District Council's policy on New Homes Bonus when debated by the District Council on 16 April and to agree to share the New Homes Bonus with those local communities bearing the impact of development in their area.

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County Cllr McDonald indicated that he had met with the Deputy Leader of the County Council who had offered assurances that trains to and from Worcester would call at Barnt Green station every 20 minutes during peak periods.

Cllr Dudley drew attention to Network Rail's failure to deliver on their promise to reinstate the original stonework to a bridge in Finstall and recommended that further assurances be sought. Cllr McDonald agreed to follow this up.

Cllrs McDonald and Dudley left the meeting.

140/13 Planning

Cllrs considered the report (Enclosure A) on planning applications received and decisions taken by the District Council.

Application 14/0130 was not discussed.

It was agreed that the Planning Authority be asked to require that contractors working on applications 14/0073 and 14/0189 should not obstruct traffic and should make good any damage arising to trees and neighbouring properties.

It was agreed that Councillors should pass their comments regarding applications 14/0073, 14/0076 and 14/0189 to Cllr Whitehand.

141/13 Environment

The Executive Officer confirmed that he would be contacting 'Where Next?' to supply the Parish Council's hanging baskets and re-stock the village planters.

The Executive Officer was asked to contact the District Council regarding the litter that accumulates regularly on Bittell Farm Road and on Blackwell Road near the motorway bridge.

142/13 Resources Committee

The draft minutes of the Resources Committee (Enclosure B) were received.

The Parish Council noted that Total Football had written indicating that they would not be using the field at Parker's Piece. It was agreed that the Parish Council should still seek legal advice on the matter.

The Parish Council agreed that the recommendations arising from the ROSPA reports on Millennium Park and Parker's Piece be actioned, as appropriate, by Cllr Gumbley and the Executive Officer.

143/13 Community

Cllr Hotham reported on a successful Sports Relief Mile event which had attracted 251 entrants. Cllr Hotham proposed, and it was agreed, that the Parish Council should pass the organization of future events to the Barnt Green Chuggers and that the Parish Council offer a measure of financial support.

144/13 Governance

(i) The dates of Parish Council meetings and Parish Council committee meetings were discussed and amended (Enclosure C);

(ii) The draft agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting (Enclosure D) was agreed. It was further agreed that councillors should forward questions to be put to District and County Councillors to Cllr Jagger.

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145/13 Finance

It was agreed that the reports of the Responsible Finance Officer for March 2014 (Enclosure E) be received and that any outstanding payments be made.

It was further agreed that Cllrs Cholmondeley, Hotham and Jagger be invited to review the financial records and to make the checks necessary to complete the Parish Council Statement contained within the Annual Return.

146/13 Decisions taken since last meeting

Cllrs noted the new rates quoted by BT the consequent decision to retain BT as the Parish Council telephone and broadband provider.

147/13 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

- (i) Cllr Jagger referred to his earlier comments at 138/13 and 139/13 regarding the Bromsgrove CALC meeting. There were no other meeting reports.
- (ii) It was agreed that Cllrs Jagger and Whitehand attend the Parish Conference at County Hall on 30 April 2014;
- (iii) It was agreed that the Communications Working Group meet at 7.00pm on Wednesday 16 April. Councillors Elderton, Gumbley and Whitehand confirmed attendance. The Executive Officer was asked to reissue the invitation to all councilors in view of the changed date;
- (iv) The Executive Officer was asked to invite councillors to a Governance Working Group meeting to consider recent legislative changes and to assess their impact on the Parish Council's procedures, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
- (v) Cllr Elderton gave a brief oral report of a meeting with the Executive Officer to review the risks associated with the Parish Council's publications. It was agreed that a written report be submitted to the Chair for initial review and considered at an appropriate future meeting;
- (vi) It was agreed to promote the Parish Council's plans to commemorate the outbreak of WW1 more vigorously;
- (vii) Councillors agreed that the draft letter to local estate agents drawing their attention to the importance of correctly identifying whether a house falls within the Barnt Green parish boundary be sent;
- (viii) The following additional future agenda items were identified:
 - (a) Community Walk (Cllr Gumbley);
 - (b) Heritage Assets (Cllr Whitehand).

148/13 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

7.00pm on Monday 28 April 2014 at the Parish Office was agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.12pm.

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Chairman

28 April 2014