

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council held in Belbroughton Recreation Centre on Monday 1st October 2012

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

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk; County Councillor Ed Moore, District Councillor Janice Boswell, and one member of the public also attended.

279/12 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Bradley, Mabbett, Scurrall, and Shotton. District Councillor Brian Lewis also sent his apologies.

280/12 Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

281/12 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September were approved

282/12 Reports

Chairman's report

Cllr Green noted that a recent CALC training bulletin had indicated that bespoke training could be arranged for parish councils to cover items of interest to them. She suggested that the Clerk should explore with CALC what they could offer.

The Chairman reminded members of the Council that reports from Committees were for information not for discussion. Decisions made by Committees under delegated powers should not be discussed again. Any issues which required consideration by the full Council would be placed on a Council agenda.

Planning meeting on 17th September

The Council noted the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting.

Finance meeting on 17th September

The Council noted the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

Clerk's report

- The Clerk mentioned the CALC AGM on 10th October, Cllr Scurrall was attending, and the Community First AGM on 14th November.
- James Callaghan who inspected the meeting room on Hartle Lane and did gardening work in Belbroughton would be unavailable for the next 6 weeks. Belbroughton Councillors were asked to inspect the room on a rota basis.
- PC Lord would be attending the November Council meeting.
- Rural Rides had asked the Clerk to circulate a questionnaire about use of local transport services. Copies were also available in the doctor's surgery in Belbroughton.

283/12 Parish Council objectives

This item arose from the decision in July not to pursue a Council split at present. As a consequence various suggestions had been made about changes to the way the Council operates, for example different Committees and a change of name to include Fairfield. The Chairman had suggested that the key questions were what the Council wanted to achieve and what it could not already do with its present structures that Councillors would like to do.

The following suggestions were made:

- 1) The Council should ask residents and groups in the parish what it could do to help them. The Council did not necessarily know what people wanted. It should talk more to individuals and groups. The next Annual Parish Meeting could be used to ask what would really make a difference in the parish.
- 2) Small problems should be dealt with quickly, for example by a Parish Council handyman.
- 3) But the Council should be aware that one person's solution might not suit others.
- 4) The Council does not need to do everything itself. It should be more responsive to offers of help from residents. In general the Council should do more to encourage and facilitate volunteering.
- 5) Parish Council facilities and services should be used more to support village events like the Scarecrow Weekend
- 6) Groups of Councillors or individuals could take a special interest in specific issues; they could explore or monitor these on behalf of the Council and report back as necessary
- 7) Individual Councillors could be nominated to follow things up and get things moving quickly
- 8) The Council should market itself better to residents and demonstrate value for money
- 9) It was suggested that having accessible footpaths in the parish would make the most difference to people- many were overgrown. The Council could prioritise work on these and use volunteers more

It was agreed that the Council would evaluate these ideas at its next meeting and consider how to take them forward.

284/12 Parish Projects

The Clerk and Cllr Hartill had met the County liaison engineer and a contractor to discuss the footpath from Belbroughton Rec. to the school. Measures to improve the worst stretch of path had been suggested, including resurfacing it with a slight gradient towards the school and reinforcing the bank with a retaining membrane impregnated with grass seed to allow drainage but prevent soil erosion. Quotes for this were being obtained. The District's tree officer would have to be consulted about removal of some tree roots and adjoining landowners would need to be approached. The Council agreed that the Clerk should pursue the measures outlined and bring a full proposal with costings back to the full Council for approval at the November meeting. In the meantime the Clerk was to ask if the County Council could arrange a further clean-up of the path.

An update on the other parish project ideas identified at the previous meeting had been circulated. A number were in hand or further information was awaited. The lengthsman would shortly be painting the railings at Dark Lane, Belbroughton. The Clerk was asked to explore whether the lengthsman would be able to offer more hours to the Council and if so what additional tasks he thought needed to be done around the parish. The Council could consider paying for extra hours over and above those funded by the County Council.

285/12 Hagley housing proposals (planning reference 12/0593)

The Council considered the Cala homes proposals for 175 new houses plus office space in Hagley. The Council recognised the concerns about the impact on local services, particularly the schools in Hagley, and on local roads. The Council also recognised the wider issues about meeting housing needs in the district and the potential pressure on other areas, including the Green Belt, if areas already identified for development are not used.

It was agreed that the Council should ask the District Council to ensure that the impact of the proposed development on local roads and schools is taken fully into account in determining the application and that they should be able to demonstrate that this has been done. If the development is approved, it was suggested that the Parish Council should monitor and seek to reduce the impact of increased traffic on local roads.

The Council decided that it would not contribute to the costs of planning consultants employed by Hagley Parish Council to help them to oppose the Cala Homes application. It would be difficult to justify the expenditure as being of direct benefit to residents of Belbroughton Parish.

286/12 Tree work

The Council considered the temporary Tree Protection Order imposed for Dark Lane, Belbroughton. It agreed that it had no objection to this Order being made permanent.

The Clerk reported that the tree adjacent to the Club House at Fairfield Recreation Ground had been removed despite a request from the Council that the Football Club should take no further action until the Council had considered this. This amounted to criminal damage and was a breach of the Club's lease. A quote obtained by the District's tree officer to replace the tree like for like amounted to just under £3,500. The Council agreed that the Clerk should write a firm letter to the Club about this and should indicate that the Council was considering what costs the Club might be asked to bear. The Council considered that there should be a penalty but asked Fairfield Councillors to consider what they would like for the recreation ground and report back to the next Council meeting.

The Council agreed a quote of £90 for the hedge on Fairfield Rec. entrance drive to be trimmed.

287/12 Belbroughton Recreation Ground Skatepark

Cllr Macdonald reported that the Recreation Ground Committee had considered the outcome of the skate park trial and had agreed that it should be retained. The residents who had complained about noise levels had attended the meeting and were reasonably content with the work done to reduce the noise. Cllr Green asked Cllr MacDonald to congratulate the Committee on handling this issue well.

The Council agreed to pay the additional costs of about £600 incurred by the Rec. to insure the skate park for the first year.

288/12 Fairfield parking restrictions

A petition signed by 70 residents opposing the proposed parking restrictions outside the Fairfield Post Office had been submitted to the County Council. The County had indicated that the proposals were now being considered by the Chief Constable.

The Council agreed to await the Chief Constable's response and, if the measures were implemented, to consider pressing for adequate monitoring and feedback on their impact.

An Email from Julian Turner, WCC traffic engineer, had referred to a number of people having been "misled by a person's opinion/view". The Clerk was asked to query what this meant and who was being referred to in this context.

289/12 Council Newsletter

A draft of the Council's autumn newsletter had been circulated. It was agreed that the item about splitting the Council should be put first in the newsletter but that it should not refer to a casting vote or exaggerated costs. There should be a reference to the fact that the Minutes

of the relevant meeting were on the Council's website. The Clerk was asked to redraft as agreed and to circulate again before having the newsletter printed by the District Council.

290/12 Street lights

Cllr Kitson said that the street lighting working group had met recently to consider the work agreed by the Council in the light of the County Council's new maintenance contract. Further information had been sought about what the contract covered. In the meantime:

- 1) the group had considered the 2 unadopted lights in the parish – one at Belbroughton Rec. and one at Fiveways junction, Woodfield Lane. If the Council wanted to add these to the contract with WCC the County would require a condition report and that the lights were brought up to scratch before they would take them on. The group had concluded that since the light at the Rec. was on private ground and therefore a Rec. responsibility it should not be adopted by the PC at this stage. If it failed the Council could discuss action with the Rec. Committee. However, the group recommended that the Council should adopt the light at Fiveways since this lit an important junction. The Council agreed this recommendation.

- 2) the working group had also considered the electricity supply to the box on the village green Belbroughton which powers the sockets used for Christmas tree lights. Npower had suggested that to save costs the fuse could be removed from the box after Christmas and reinstalled in December each year. There was no charge for this but Npower would require a safety certificate from an electrician before reinstalling the fuse. The group recommended that the supply contract with Npower should be renewed from 21 October whilst the option of having the fuse removed was explored. Solar powered lights could also be considered. This was agreed by the Council.

291/12 Councillors' expenses

The Council asked the Finance Committee to consider the Council's policy for payment of Councillors' expenses and to report back with recommendations.

292/12 General Power of Competence

The Council noted the requirements for the Council to be able to exercise this power. These included a requirement for the Clerk to undertake training and obtain an additional qualification. The Council agreed that the Clerk should undertake the necessary training.

293/12 Councillors' Items

Cllr Roberts said that the wall in Church Green that had been repaired recently had collapsed again- Clerk to contact the builder.

Cllr Hood asked the Council to consider at a future meeting setting up monitoring arrangements for activities at Chadwich and Wildmoor Quarries.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Signed.....Chairman