

**Minutes of the BELBROUGHTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 14th April 2014 in The Church Hall, Belbroughton.**

**Present** : Parish Councillors Karen Green (Chairman), Ian Dalziel, Ann Ince, Trevor Jones, Paul Margetts, Dr Robert Morgan, Dave Roberts, Chris Scurrell, and Paul Shotton Clerk: John Farrell.

District Councillors: Janice Boswell, Brian Lewis, & Margaret Sherrey.

County Councillor: Rachel Jenkins.

Residents/Other attendees Paul and Lynn Hardcastle (Parish footpaths wardens); and members of the public who recorded their names on the attendance list.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors James Bradley, Allan Hood and Alan Mabbett.

County Councillor Sheila Blagg.

**2. Minutes of the 2013 Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 15th April 2013**

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

**3. Reports**

Parish Council Reports for 2013/14.

**Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council Chairman, Karen Green, firstly requested that for improved communication the Parish Council wished to establish an e mail database and for those wishing to receive information they could record their details with the Parish Council this evening.

Copies of the Council's Annual Report would be sent to every household in the parish.

Cllr Green thanked the Fairfield WI for providing refreshments for the meeting.

The year had commenced with the sad passing of Cllr. Nick Hartill. Cllrs. John Kitson, Carol Hine and Scott Macdonald had left the Council, in addition Katie Limm the clerk had retired. Welcomed as new councillors were Paul Margetts and Dr Robert Morgan and the new clerk John Farrell. All past and present were thanked for their contributions to the Council.

A vacancy exists in each of the two wards for a new councillor.

35 meetings had been held with a third of these in Fairfield. The Lengthsman scheme continues with the employee ensuring ditches and gullies adjacent to the highways are kept clear. Two self employed gardeners help maintain the parish green areas. The dog waste bins continue to be emptied. A further 10 grit bins have been installed making 21 in total. The Parish Meeting Room in Belbroughton has been let at £5k p.a. The Parish Council has continued with maintenance grants for parish bodies.

A public meeting was held to discuss the Veolia Incinerator bottom ash facility planning application, the Parish Council remains vigilant on the progress of the application. The collapsed wall in Belbroughton had been restored, its design and materials having to meet Bromsgrove District Council's conservation officer's requirements which included new capping stones.

The Green in Belbroughton is a major issue with the developer of the adjacent land eager to build out new residential properties. She personally expected ongoing public consultation. The Parish Council has made no agreement with the developer and will continue to seek input from residents and from its legal advisers on obtaining the best outcome for parishioners. A boundary dispute has arisen where the Developer appears to have encroached onto the Parish Council land, this matter is with the Parish Council's solicitors.

### **Finance Report**

Cllr. Chris Scurrell, Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee, gave an overview of the Council's finances, its sources of income, capital and other assets. Also highlighting the difference between routine spending funded by the Precept and, projects and grants being funded by rents and the income from investments. He explained that four tenders had been obtained for the Wall repairs in Belbroughton and that the final cost including the emergency repairs in the previous year had come to £39k.

He explained a schedule of income received from investments achieved over the past six years. These investments were regularly reviewed and the Council's prime requirement was security, this and the status of a Parish council meant that the number of investment opportunities was limited.

The Precept request for 2014/15 was £65,000 but the tax benefit support grant would not be paid over to the Parish Council.

**Planning Report** Cllr Ann Ince (Chair of the Planning Committee) gave a brief outline of the work of the Committee, advising that 51 planning applications had been heard, with the Committee recommending approval for 16, approval with conditions for 21 and refusal for 14. The Committee maintains a close watch on the activities and planning applications at the three quarries within the Parish.

**Agricultural Holdings Report** Cllr. Trevor Jones informed that the Parish Council owns 86 acres with 13 separate tenancies on this land which used for growing a range of crops. The tenancies produce a regular income of £6k p.a. which is used to fund Parish Capital Grants and Parish Projects. The land provides a useful buffer in the Green Belt under the Council's control. New documentation in the form of Farm Business Tenancies will be sent to the existing tenants effective from Sept 2014.

### **Reports by District and County Councillors**

District Councillor Cllr. Janice Boswell commented on 14 years as a Cllr. attending the majority of Parish council meetings in that time and praised the work of those involved. She deferred to Cllr. Margaret Sherrey regarding the distribution of funds under the New Homes Bonus, an issue that was to be discussed at Bromsgrove District Council 16<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. Sherrey confirmed that this item was as a result of a petition received, but that the BDC budget had already been approved and any changes could not in practise come into effect until 2015/16.

County Cllr. Rachel Jenkins advised that the Council tax was increasing by 1.94% this year, the Council had to save £100m over the next 4 years from an annual budget of £320m.

Commissioning out of services would continue. There was concern at the level of Adult and Social Services cuts. Hagley library was likely to close unless the Hagley Parish Council could take this over. She advised that volunteer assistant librarians were needed.

The bus review, where a cut of £3m was proposed had been delayed implementation. There remained to be further discussions with bus operators. The 318 service had its peak time services outside the review but its continuation did depend upon the operator feeling that it was a viable route. The 197 service due to end in Feb 2014 will finish now in June.

Highways: The Bradford Lane Belbroughton extended 30mph limit was in place, as were the double yellow line alterations in Nash Lane Belbroughton.

She had used £1400 from her divisional fund to assist the Belbroughton Primary School with tablet purchases. She was on the Fire Authority Committee where cuts proposed had been put on hold.

She is also on the Childrens Services scrutiny panel.

A written report from Cllr Sheila Blagg was available at the meeting.

**Questions:**

Many in the audience asked would there be a further public consultation on the future of The Green in Belbroughton? The Parish Council Chairman felt there should be a meeting and also advised that the Parish Council had not agreed to any changes to The Green. She also advised that the trees on the Parish Council land could not be removed without the Parish Council's agreement which had not been granted and if such removal took place without an agreement then it would be an illegal act by the Developer.

What progress had there been on producing a Neighbourhood Plan ? The Parish Clerk advised that the Parish Council had held a meeting with an officer from the District Council and were advised that the timescale to produce a plan would be approximately 2 years and costly and also it would not be a worthwhile exercise to commence anyway until the 'Bromsgrove Plan' itself had been agreed by National Govt and adopted. District Cllr. Sherrey concurred with this advising that the 'Bromsgrove Plan' had just been made available for public viewing, pending submission to London.

Why is there no P.A.C.T. meetings set up in Fairfield ? District Cllr. Lewis advised that attempted earlier meetings had resulted in very minimal public interest and as such did not progress.

#### **4. Footpaths** – report by the Parish Footpath wardens who are volunteers.

Paul Hardcastle presented a report on the footpath wardens' activities during the previous year. He advised of the maintenance programme taking up 67 hours, links to Duke of Edinburgh scheme involving replacing and extend steps plus general repairs to stiles and additional waymarker posts and Community Payback operated in conjunction with the County Council and the landowner to work on the path to Hurst Farm and pavement clearance from Bradford House to the school. The step flight between Hill Farm and Hockley Brook Lane has been improved. In 2014 along with general maintenance the extension to the path and drainage on Hurst Farm Path is planned with assistance from Community Payback. Also planned is an 'Improvement Programme Status' for Breach House to Cricket Club path – with WCC Contractors

Cllr Green thanked the footpath wardens for the many hours of voluntary work they put in on behalf of the parish.

#### **5. Parish Organisations**

Representatives of the following parish organisations spoke briefly and answered questions about their organisation's activities.

**Belbroughton Recreation Centre:** Annette Adey advised of the facilities at the Centre including the Hall, the Jubilee Room, The Field, the Children's play area and, the Tennis Club. She mentioned the wide range of activities including dance classes, kick boxing, pilates, and laughter yoga! held in the Hall. There are also bridge evenings in the Jubilee Room. Information is available on the Rec's own website and notice boards. She welcomed the involvement of groups who ran the Scarecrow weekend and the beer festival. There will be a dog show 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Sadly there has been a spate of vandalism and sought information on the youths involved.

**Fairfield WI-** Ann Griffiths advised that it would be the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Produce Show this year and that this involved a full years planning. It was the main fundraiser of the year and did encourage people from outside the village to be involved.

**Belbroughton History Society** – John Penlington advised that the Society founded in 1970 had 135 members with regular attendance of 60 at meetings. A visit is planned to the National Memorial Arboretum in July. Again a 12<sup>th</sup> Night event will be held next January and there are intentions to erect a number of plaques in the village.

**Fairfield Village Hall Management Committee** - Regrettably the representative was unable to attend due to illness. The following note had been left with the Parish Council clerk " We had a very good year last year with improving the floor and installing the gas fitting new central heating also a new disabled ramp for the Barton room. This year we are at the moment having a new kitchen fitted and improvements in the ladies toilets. All this has been made possible by the Parish Council for which we give you our thanks. We do hope in the near future to improve the roads in to the village hall also get new insulation installed.

**Belbroughton Scarecrow Committee** Roger Adey advised that the weekend last September had raised £36k with the church, the Recreation Centre and the School benefitting. In addition other charities present at the weekend had raised for their benefit a further approximately £6k. The Committee arranging this year's event meets on the second Thursday monthly at the Jubilee Room Belbroughton Recreation Centre. He praised the past and future commitment of the Kidderminster Air Cadets who have 20 cadets available to assist the weekends and mentioned that this year they would also be present on the weekend after the event to help clear away litter etc. as needed.

## **6. Open Forum**

Issues raised were:

Further concerns over The Green Belbroughton, and desire to protect this from development and need for public discussion. The Parish Council chairman repeated that consultations should occur and that no agreement is in place with the Developer.

The Belbroughton Recreation Centre was itself a First World War memorial and thus the Rec Committee may wish to approach relevant linked grant awarding bodies for financial assistance.

The Veolia /Ballast Phoenix activities at the quarry site where raised where a permit application had been submitted. The Parish Council Chairman advised that the Parish Council would keep a close watch would respond appropriately.

District Cllr. Lewis advised that Bromsgrove District Council planning dept. had been slow actioning cases due to short staff but agency people had been brought in. Enforcements were being considered at Wildmoor quarry. He felt the height of the landfill at the Veolia quarry site was well above the permitted level and had concern at the proposed Incinerator Bottom Ash facility due to the waterlogging presently seen at the site. He had requested the financial business case ( from BDC) regarding the Parkside School move but had not received a satisfactory response. He felt that Birmingham may request Bromsgrove to assist with its need to build 33k new houses.

The Meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.