

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6th March 2014 At Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont

Present: Mr. A. Myatt Chairman
Mr. K. Baynham
Mr. A. Bridges
Mr. P. Edwards
Mr. B. Hubbard
Mr. R. Loft
Ms. D. Parish
Mr. M. Schoffer

In attendance: Mrs. E. Kelso

15/14 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

There were no apologies or requests for dispensation.

Councillor Myatt declared a non-discloseable pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 relating to the proximity of his home to Abbey View Park.

16/14 Public Participation

There were no items raised during the period set aside for public participation.

17/14 Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2014

It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

18/14 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report, as attached to these Minutes, was noted.

Members also noted:

- Particular concern was expressed that yet again on a public website a Ward Member had written an untrue statement about proceedings of the Parish Council in connection with

funding for Belmont Library which Members felt was aimed at bringing the Parish Council into disrepute. It was noted and agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2013 and in particular 142/13 correctly reflected the decision of the Parish Council.

- That the finance working party be authorised to consider the draft Financial Regulations and report back to the full Parish Council with a proposal for consideration.
- That a working party be formed to consider the new draft Standing Orders with a view to adapting these for Belmont Rural purposes and report back to the full Parish Council with a proposal for consideration. The working party to consist of:
 - Councillor A Myatt
 - Councillor A Bridges
 - Councillor M Schoffer
 - Councillor D Parish
 - Clerk

19/14 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch

Members noted the report from the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the press reports with regard to the sentencing of the individual and accomplices responsible for the stabbing which took place on the parish boundary last year.

It was noted that there were no items to report under Parish Watch.

20/14 Information item: Correspondence

In addition to the routine items of correspondence circulated to members, the following items were noted:

- (a) A polling station consultation being carried out by Herefordshire Council.
- (b) Herefordshire Growing Point will be holding a Gardeners' Question Time on Saturday 15th March at the Kindle Centre, from 7pm – 9pm. Tickets cost £15.00 and include refreshments.
- (c) Letter from The South Wye Regeneration Partnership explaining the dissolution of the partnership and new delivery model for future community and regeneration support in South Wye.

21/14 Financial Matters

21.1 To note report from Finance Working Party

The report from the Finance Working Party was noted.

21.2 To authorise payments for March 2014

Authority was given to make the following payments:

HALC		
Subscription	£987.77	
VAT thereon	£197.55	
Training fees:		
Leading Lights	£25.00	
Code of Conduct	£100.00	
VAT thereon	£25.00	
Total payment:		£1,335.32
Petty Cash Reimbursement		£96.65
Mrs. E. Kelso		
Annual Payment for use of home as office		£100.00

Members noted the increasing cost of the HALC subscription which is based upon numbers of electors within the parish, although the value of the links with HALC was recognised.

21.3 Account balances as at date of the meeting

Account balances were noted, as follows:

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£66,541.52
Petty cash	£28.35

It was also noted that current commitments (orders placed but work not yet completed) amount to £3,860.00.

21.4 To authorise change to standing orders

Members approved a change to the standing orders in connection with the Clerk's salary to reflect an underpayment during 2013-2014. It was also noted that a further change to standing order will be required in April to reflect slight change in tax and national insurance collection and payment.

21.5 Annual Risk Review

The Annual Risk review carried out by the Finance Working Party was considered. It was agreed that the Risk Review be adopted.

22/14 Planning Matters

22.1 Planning Applications since the last meeting

There were no planning applications since the last meeting.

22.2 Update on Neighbourhood Development Plan

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meeting scheduled

for 12th March at Belmont Community Centre would be cancelled. A meeting has been set up with representatives from Kirkwells on Friday 28th March with a view to obtaining a quotation for support for our NDP. Several members of the NDP Steering Group will be attending a seminar by Kirkwells on the following Saturday.

23/14 Training

23.1 To receive reports from training attended

Members noted with thanks a report from Councillor Baynham on the “Leading Lights” course for new Parish Councillors that he had attended.

23.2 Requests for training

It was agreed that the Clerk and Councillor Baynham attend the HALC training session “Pressing Buttons”, on electronic banking which is scheduled for Monday 24th March from 7pm – 9pm. The cost is £25.00 + VAT each.

23.3 Other Training Matters

It was agreed that the Clerk formally register for the Certificate in Local Council Administration prior to 1st April when the cost increases from £150.00 to £250.00.

24/14 Ward Councillors Reports

Members noted the reports from Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges on their activities as Ward Councillors since the last meeting.

25/14 To receive update report on flood damage and proposals for repairs on Abbey View Park

Members noted that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Councillor Edwards and Clerk met with representatives from Balfour Beatty and Herefordshire Council on 18th February . Initially the meeting had been set up to discuss the revised quotes for the outstanding work on Abbey View Park but the recent storms had resulted in the brook overflowing again and damaging the surface of the footpath.

It was suggested that rather than press ahead with work to fence the culvert and add boulders to the outflow side of the culvert, action to prevent further damage to the public right of way footpath should be considered. Representatives from Balfour Beatty are to look at the options but initial thoughts are that the culvert should be excavated out to the original level of the brook effectively cutting off the footpath link from Abbey View Park to Jubilee Field and the bank around the “pond” built up to prevent further flooding. The footpath can then be reinstated. An option exists to add a separate bridge over the brook either immediately or at a later date. A detailed proposal with costs will be presented to members to consider at a later meeting.

The site visit also considered work to prevent water pooling in other areas of the circular route around Abbey View Park and further proposals, with costs, are being prepared by Balfour Beatty.

A discussion was also held with Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty representatives with regard to the upkeep of Abbey View Park and the content of the Management Plan during which it was reported that had the planned grass cutting taken place, this might have prevented some of the pooling of water on the path. The hazardous nature of the puddles in cold weather was pointed out to those present and acknowledged.

This item will be considered in full at the next meeting.

26/14 Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that following current advice from HALC/NALC, the Annual Parish meeting will be held on a separate day from the Annual Parish Council meeting and will take place on Thursday 29th May at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7.30pm. The meeting will have a Neighbourhood Development Plan theme.

The Annual Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday 1st May as previously agreed.

27/14 Parish Council Emails

Following the Risk Review by the Finance Working Party, it was noted that a security breach by the Parish Council's email provider, Yahoo, last year had resulted in emails being sent out purportedly by the parish council but by an unknown party which had led to an investigation by the Information Commissioners Office into data protection procedures by the Parish Council. The ICO had found that BRPC had complied with all requirements but it was felt that the risk remains that a web based email provider might be vulnerable to further similar issues.

It was suggested that separate email addresses linked to the website address would offer greater security and provide members with a separate email address for parish council business. The proposed cost of the service provided by the website administrators would be £50.00 per year, which would provide ten email addresses for parish councillors and the clerk.

It was agreed to defer a decision on this item pending advice from HALC.

28/14 To consider additional tree planting within the Parish

Members noted that Hereford in Bloom would have a number of very small saplings which might be available to BRPC. After a brief discussion it was agreed to request up to 50 saplings which would be planted alongside the brook or near a water supply until large enough for transplanting to a permanent location. Councillors Hubbard, Edwards, Myatt and Bridges all volunteered to assist with the planting.

29/14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd April at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme

Road, Belmont, starting at 7pm.

1. Litter Bins

Awaiting confirmation that litter bin on Abbey View Park will be emptied by Waste Management.

2. Replacement Bus Shelter

No further action. Clerk to obtain works number from Balfour Beatty

3. Belmont Library

A press release is being prepared by Herefordshire Council with regard to the partnership arrangement between Herefordshire Council, South Wye Community Association and Herefordshire Council.

As Herefordshire Council has suggested it may wish the library to become a Community Library within the next 12 months, it was suggested that a small working party be formed to enter into discussions with Herefordshire Council and consider the implications of such a move. In this connection, the government has commissioned an independent panel to look into England's public library provision which, as part of its remit, will consider the role of community libraries.

**5. Local Audit and Accountability Act
Openness of local government bodies regulations 2014**

Members are aware of the above regulations which include two main provisions which will be of importance to all parish councils:

- Permitting the recording and/or broadcast of meetings of a relevant local authority (i.e. parish and town councils) and
- A requirement that delegated decisions of local authorities, e.g. those decisions delegated to a local council officer, be published and made available to members of the public.

Comments and/or observations on these proposals are to be submitted to HALC no later than 10th March.

6. **New Financial Regulations**

NALC (National Association of Local Councils) will be issuing new model Financial Regulations within the next few weeks which will include, amongst other matters, regulations for electronic banking.

7. **New Model Standing Orders**

At the end of last year NALC published new model Standing Orders for Parish Councils. Again, it is suggested a small working party be formed to consider how the model standing orders should be amended to meet the needs of BRPC with a view to adoption by the full parish council at a later date.