

BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Belmont Rural Parish Council held on
Thursday 28th June 2012 at
Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

Present:	Mr. P. Edwards	Chairman
	Mr. A. Bridges	Agenda item 8 (minute 082/12) onwards
	Mr. B. Hubbard	
	Mr. R. Loft	
	Mr. A. Myatt	
	Ms. D. Parish	
	Mr. M. Schoffer	Agenda item 4 (minute 078/12) onwards
In attendance:	Mrs. E. Kelso	Clerk
	6 members of the public	

075/12 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted from Councillor Cook who was away on holiday.

Declarations of interest were received as follows:

Councillor Phil Edwards	Declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 (minute 089/12) as a member of the steering group for Belmont Haywood Country Park
Councillor Brian Hubbard	Declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (minute 097/12) as his property overlooks the site discussed
Councillor Andy Myatt	Declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (minute 097/12) as his property overlooks the site discussed
Councillor Des Parish	Declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 (minute 089/12) as a member of the Friends of Belmont Haywood Country Park
Councillor Mark Schoffer	Declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 (minute 089/12) as a member of the Friends of Belmont Haywood Country Park

076/12 Declaration of Parish Councillor Vacancy

Members noted that Councillor Powell has resigned as a parish councillor due to ill health and a vacancy has therefore been declared. Members formally thanked Councillor Powell for her work on behalf of the Parish Council and noted that she will continue as a Ward Councillor. The Clerk has advised the elections office of the vacancy and notices have been posted inviting electors to request an election. If no such request (by 10 or more electors) is received, the Parish Council can co-opt someone to fill the vacancy.

077/12 Minutes of the meetings held on 17th May

(a) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th May had been previously circulated to Members. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

(b) Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 17th May had been previously circulated to Members. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

078/12 Clerk's Report

(a) Home Farm

Several Members reported attendance at the exhibition hosted by Lioncourt Homes at Hedley Lodge with reference to that company's proposals for the land at Home Farm. In excess of 160 people were thought to have attended and comments from those who were unable to attend but had forwarded comments by post were outlined at the separate presentation to invited guests after the main exhibition. Of those responding, only two were in favour of the development and the majority of comments related to traffic flows into and out of Hereford City at peak times.

No formal response from the Parish Council was required at this stage.

(b) Website

The Clerk confirmed that the website address as www.belmontrural-pc.gov.uk has been approved by the government. Work is progressing on the site and the Clerk and Councillor Bridges will attend a training session in Bournemouth in the summer.

(c) **Matters referred to Amey**

The Clerk reported that of the list identified at the last meeting:

- The request for information on the installation date for the hard shoulder around the Tesco roundabout has drawn a blank. A planning officer telephoned to ask about the request as it had been referred to him in error. The Clerk is attempting to get someone in Amey to acknowledge the request and respond.
- Cutting back of hedges. Still awaiting action although as birds are still nesting, this is unlikely to be until later in the year.
- Confirmation of minimum width of pavements. Response still awaited.
- Confirmation when shrubs are to be replaced. Response still awaited.
- Grass cutting. A grass cut to a very poor standard took place two weeks ago and was immediately brought to the attention of Amey as substandard work by both the Clerk and the Chairman. After a further e-mail request by the Chairman, strimmers did remedy some of the work and the matter has been referred to Richard Ball, the senior locality officer.

It was agreed that all of the above be referred to Richard Ball.

Councillor Hubbard reported on an unsatisfactory communication with Amey recently when his call was returned by an Apprentice who had little knowledge of the matter complained of and no authority to respond to the complaint.

It was generally agreed that the standard of work generally by Amey was below expectations although noted that preparations for the visit by HM The Queen were taking up resources otherwise available for grounds maintenance work which, coupled with the weather conditions, had resulted in substantial grass and weed growth. Currently, a requested cut of the CH7 footpath which has become so overgrown that it is impassable in places is awaited and the steps down from the Canterbury Close play area have become overgrown with nettles requiring cutting back.

(d) **Neighbourhood Planning**

The Clerk and Chairman reported on the Neighbourhood Planning Training event they had attended in the previous week which has given them a much better understanding of the process of producing a neighbourhood plan. It was agreed that this be subject of an in-house training event before any decision is made with regard to the production of a neighbourhood plan for Belmont Rural.

(e) **Proposed tree removal in Dorchester Way**

Amey has now been formally asked to remove the tree in Dorchester Way. The Clerk has received the comment back from Amey that the work will be done “when resources permit”.

(f) **Coppin Rise play area**

Fran White has kindly agreed to help with the next stage of this project by helping to design and get costings for suitable equipment. This will be presented to the next Parish Council meeting.

(g) **Footpath from Sydwall Road to Belmont Road**

The order has now been placed for this work.

(h) **Update/report from the Jubilee Fun Day**

Members noted a report on the Jubilee Fun Day which, despite the weather, had gone extremely well with an excellent attendance. Members formally thanked everyone who had volunteered for this event which had proved to be memorable for all who had attended.

(i) **Weed spray**

It was noted that a weed spray had taken place throughout the Parish but followed immediately by rain. However, weeds do now seem to be dying although some areas seem a bit more resistant. It was suggested that Westholme Road and Silver Fir Close might have been missed. This will be reported to Amey.

079/12 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch

A representative from West Mercia Police was not in attendance but a report had been provided by PC Roger Bradley indicating that instances of anti social behaviour remained low and mainly related to under age drinking.

It was noted that there had been a minor incident at Belmont Community Centre when an individual had tried to rip a bin off the wall. Police had attended within 15 minutes of being called on the non-emergency number.

080/12 Correspondence

In addition to routine items passed to Councillors since the last meeting or items which are the subject of a separate agenda item, the following had been received since the last meeting:

- (a) A letter has been received from Mrs. Ross who lives in Wheatridge Road, complaining that youngsters are playing football on the grassed area adjacent to her house and she, and her neighbour, have suffered damaged fencing as a result. Some years ago she had a similar problem in front of her house and Herefordshire Council planted thorny bushes to deter the football games. She has asked if the same can be done this time. This has been passed to Rob Hemblade and a response is awaited.
- (b) A similar issue has arisen around the grassed area between Tintern Close and Canterbury Close where cars were being damaged by footballs. A former agreement not to cut the grass there helped but contractors have recently cut the grass again and the problem has returned. A “no ball games” sign has been ordered by Herefordshire council.

For both incidents (a) and (b), Rob Hemblade has been reminded that Herefordshire Council Parks department were to conduct a review of the informal play spaces around the parish which will highlight, and perhaps help identify, a solution to the lack of informal play space. In response to a comment by a member of the public, it was noted that an engineering survey some years ago found the former landfill site of Abbey View Park was unsuitable for sports pitches. It was suggested that a review of this take place in the light of more up to date engineering practices.

Finally it was noted that there is a football pitch at Belmont Abbey which might be available to local residents.

- (c) Information on the park and share and park and cycle scheme being launched by Herefordshire Council as part of their transport initiative has been received. These schemes propose parking provision outside the city where those travelling in by car can park and then car share, or cycle into the city. It was agreed that the Herefordshire Council officer responsible for this scheme be invited to speak to the August parish council meeting.

081/12 Payments/Receipts

(a) Payments

Authority was given to make the following payments:

Northolme Community Centre Association	
Room hire for May meetings	£29.75

HALC

Training fee for Clerk to attend Power of Competence Training	£25.00
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Information Commissioners Office Renewal of Data Protection Registration	£35.00
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Mr. R. Rose Fee for Annual Internal Audit Service	£120.00
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Datacenta Hosting Fee to register web address – 2 years	£125.00
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Cash Petty Cash reimbursement	£87.33
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A further item for payment for Amey Wye Valley Limited in respect of the construction of the footpath section from Dorchester Way to the gate to Home Farm in the amount of £13,700.02 (inc. VAT) was deferred on the grounds that some drainage issues remain unresolved. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk request a site visit to highlight these issues before releasing payment although the Clerk advised that there was no provision in the agreement with Amey to withhold payment.

(b) Receipts

The sum of £283.95 has been received from Royal Bank of Scotland in reimbursement of the double payment of tax and national insurance as reported at the last meeting.

(c) Balances

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£65,939.24
Petty Cash:	(£12.33)

Balances exclude cheques to be raised at this meeting, totalling £14,122.10

(d) Other financial matters

- Budget commitments: total budget commitments (but not yet invoiced) now amount to £25,989, excluding cheques raised at this meeting.

- As reported at the last meeting, HMRC has indicated that they believe an overpayment of tax has been made for the year 2011/2012 which the Clerk believes is incorrect. The Clerk has written to the Inland Revenue but has not yet received a response.

082/12 Planning Matters

(a) Planning Applications

Two applications have been received since the last meeting in respect of a proposal by Tesco Stores Ltd to remove 9 car parking spaces and replace with a hand car wash/valeting service. Plans have been reviewed by Members who expressed several reservations about the proposal. The Clerk has notified Herefordshire Council accordingly.

(b) Planning Application Procedures

Having recently attending a HALC training event on planning applications the Clerk is proposing a slight change to the procedure for planning applications received between meetings and will present this for Members consideration at the next meeting.

(c) Relief Road

The report into the Relief Road report has been published and the link has been e-mailed to Members. The report is over 200 pages long so hasn't been printed. Members were encouraged to review the report and forward comments, if wished, to the Clerk.

083/12 Code of Conduct

Members noted that the Localism Act effectively abolished the former Code of Conduct but required local authorities to adopt their own Code, based upon guidelines issued by the Government, no later than 1st July. Parishes are expected to, but not obliged to, adopt a Code which is consistent with the Code adopted by the principal authority in order to standardise regulations locally and ensure that the Local Monitoring Officer is able to offer guidance and to adjudicate on matters referred to him/her. Enabling regulations have been awaited from the Government for many months and have finally been produced in mid June, offering local authorities little opportunity to ensure the revised code is adopted by 1st July.

Herefordshire Council issued it's own draft on 26th June so there was no time for members to consider this before the meeting. It was agreed that this be presented to the August meeting for consideration.

Government regulations issued in June also laid down the principles for the Declaration of Financial Interests, details of which have been forwarded to Members recently. The revised

regulations indicate that failure to complete and return a Register of Financial Interests form by 1st July will be a criminal offence.

085/12 Training

Members ratified the attendance of the Clerk at the HALC Power of Competence Training and Councillor Myatt attending the “In the Hot Seat” training session for Chairmen. A report on the training sessions attended would be prepared and circulated to Members.

086/12 Communications Policy

Members reviewed the Communications Policy noting and agreeing the Clerk’s minor amendment relating to the payment for copies of documents requested by members of the public. It was agreed that a new section on dealing with the media be added to the policy. The Clerk will prepare a draft for consideration at a later date.

087/12 Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012

(a) Internal Audit Report

Members noted the Internal Audit report conducted by Mr. Ray Rose, indicating no adverse comments and no matters identified that the auditor felt should be brought to the attention of the Parish Council.

(b) Adoption of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012

The Clerk presented the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012, which had been previously circulated to Members. No questions were raised and it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk be authorised to sign the accounts on behalf of the Parish Council.

088/12 Annual Return

The Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2012 had been provided to Members. The Statements of Assurance were considered individually and responses confirmed as per the attached copy.

It was agreed that the Annual Return represented fairly the financial affairs of the Parish Council and that Chairman and Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer be authorised to sign the Return for the year ended 31st March 2012 on behalf of the Parish Council.

089/12 Annual Report to Residents

The Clerk presented the draft Annual Report to Residents for the year ended 31st March 2012, the content of which was agreed. It was further agreed that arrangements be made for the Report to be printed and distributed to all households within the Parish and a maximum budget of £500.00 be agreed for this.

090/12 Wildflower Request – Belmont Pools

A request from Mr. Ryecroft of Westholme Road for £75.00 towards the cost of wildflower seeds and plants for an area adjacent to Westholme Road by Belmont Pools was noted. Mr. Ryecroft had confirmed that he had approached Herefordshire Council and gained permission for himself and two volunteers to plant and maintain the small plot. After a brief discussion the request was agreed but noting that donations/grants cannot be made to an individual, it was agreed that the plants/seeds be purchased by the Parish Council and given to Mr. Ryecroft to plant. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements.

091/12 Pride of Herefordshire Awards

It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would nominate Beryl Brown for a Pride of Herefordshire Award for her work on behalf of the two Community Centres over many years and in particular for the arrangements she makes each year for the children's Christmas party.

092/12 Jubilee Field Tree planting

Members noted the suggested species provided by Amey for the additional trees proposed for Jubilee Field and agreed to request reconsideration of the inclusion of Damson in view of the potential for anti social behaviour with the fruit. Suggested alternatives would be forwarded to the Clerk for further discussions with Amey. In the meantime, noting that some 10 trees are required, it was agreed that a budget of £600.00 be put aside for the purchase of trees.

It had been previously agreed that properties overlooking the field be consulted prior to planting. The Clerk will now prepare the consultation document for distribution over the summer with a view to autumn planting.

Finally Councillor Myatt reminded Members that he had previously agreed to donate £100.00 towards the cost of additional trees and that these can be planted at the same time as the additional trees on Jubilee Field.

093/12 Notice Board – Belmont Medical Centre

The notice board by the Belmont Medical Centre is in a poor state of repair. Removal was suggested but as this is a well place board which is in a high traffic area replacement was suggested.

It was agreed that the board should be taken down immediately and the Clerk would research a suitable replacement for consideration at the next meeting. It was further agreed that a preferred contractor for repairs and maintenance and/or minor works around the Parish should be sought. The Clerk was authorised to advertise on notice boards for a handyman but in the meantime to approach a builder used before, Neil Carter, to install any new board purchased.

094/12 Parish Matters

- (a) It was agreed that consideration be given to moving the period for public participation to the beginning of the meeting. So that members of the public who want to raise items can do so and then leave if they wish. One suggestion was that public participation be included in the agenda item “correspondence”. The Clerk will research this and report back to the next meeting.
- (b) It was noted that fly tipping is continuing in Westholme Road. This will again be reported to the Enforcement Team of Herefordshire Council.
- (c) It was noted that on occasions the notice board doors for the board in Westholme road were found to be open. This is to be monitored.
- (d) Councillor Bridges presented his Ward Member report, as attached to these Minutes.
- (e) Councillor Edwards presented his Ward Member report as attached to these Minutes.

095/12 Public Participation

During the final period for public participation, the following items were raised:

- A query was raised as to where the proposed new development on land currently forming part of Home Farm would take place, and
- Concern was expressed at work taking place on the former Almshouses which are listed. It was agreed that the Clerk approach the Development Control officer to ascertain whether the work was within the previously agreed specification for this site.

096/12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 2nd August at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, commencing at 7pm.