

Belmont Rural

Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th December 2011 At Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

Present: Mr. M. Schoffer Chairman
Mr. A. Bridges
Mr. D. Cook
Mr. P. Edwards
Mr. B. Hubbard
Mr. R. Loft
Mr. A. Myatt
Ms. G. Powell
Mr. S. Taylor

In attendance: Mrs. E. Kelso Clerk
2 members of the public

140/11 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No apologies expected.

Councillor Myatt declared an interest with regard to the request for funding from Newton Farm Community Association for the Santa's Grotto at Belmont Community Centre. Minute 150/11 refers.

141/11 Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November have been previously circulated. An amendment reflecting a declaration of interest by Councillor Bridges was agreed and the Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

142/11 Clerk's Report

(a) Fencing of the Playbuilder site at Northolme

The fencing has now been completed although some making good of the grass damaged by machinery is still needed. Grass in the land off Forde Lane has also been damaged as equipment was held there whilst work was continuing.

(b) **Abbey View Park**

The “no dog fouling” signs are still to be received. Clerk has requested an update on delivery from Herefordshire Council.

(c) **Christmas Carol Concert**

Members noted that the Christmas Carol Concert at the Northolme Centre had taken place and been attended by approximately 80 people. The proceedings were also broadcast live on Hereford Hospital Radio. This had been an excellent evening and it was hoped that it would become a regular annual event.

(d) **Salt bins**

As reported at the last meeting, one salt bin has been allocated to the Parish and has been installed by Amey in Dorchester Way.

(e) **Litter bins**

The additional litter bin has now been received and is awaiting installation.

(f) **Laptop**

The laptop authorised last year has now been purchased. It was agreed not to continue with a maintenance contract at a cost of £12.00 per month but to seek an alternative maintenance contract with a local supplier.

(g) **Parks and Countryside Matters**

It was noted that shrubs damaged last year have yet to be replaced. The Clerk is to ascertain when replacement is due.

The Clerk advised that Herefordshire Council/Amey has a volunteer engagement policy which will apply to the use of volunteers to help with maintenance of local public open spaces. The Clerk will discuss the use of volunteers with the officer concerned.

(h) **ID Badges for Councillors**

The Clerk is preparing ID badges for councillors and these will be available shortly

(i) **Hard edging to Tesco roundabout**

It is not yet clear when the hard edging to the Tesco roundabout will be constructed.

143/11

Report from West Mercia Police/Parish Watch

West Mercia police were not in attendance at the meeting. It was noted that a new Community Support Officer, Sam Cox, had joined Jason Merrick to cover the South Wye area including the Belmont Rural Parish.

Few incidents were reported to police/parish watch since the last meeting with the exception of the vandalism of the Northolme Community Centre sign. Individuals responsible had been caught on CCTV at the Centre and police are dealing with the matter.

Councillor Edwards reported that the South Wye Safer and Stronger Communities Group were supporting a glass art project with local young people which will highlight the dangers of smashed glass in the public areas. The Project is currently looking for photographs of injuries to dogs from broken glass as part of the project work.

144/11 Correspondence

- (a) The Clerk has received thank you letters from Citizens Advice Bureau and Dore Community Transport in connection with the donations agreed at the last meeting.
- (b) A request has been made by Lioncourt Homes to attend the January Parish Council meeting to brief Parish Councillors on Lioncourt Homes proposals with regard to development of 100 houses on part of Home Farm.

It was agreed that a copy of the agenda for that meeting would be placed on notice boards earlier than usual, and delivered to homes potentially affected by the proposed development, so that those members of the public who might be interested in the development can arrange to attend the meeting.

- (c) The draft charter between HALC, Local Councils and Herefordshire Council has been re-drafted (the original having been consulted upon earlier this year) and there is now a second opportunity to put forward observations. Members were asked to forward comments /observations to the Clerk no later than 31st December.

145/11 Payments/Receipts

(a) Payments

Authority was given to make the following payments:

Mrs. E. Kelso

Reimbursement of purchase cost of Laptop +
Software

Laptop	£446.33	
Maintenance for one month	£10.00	
Microsoft Office Professional	£33.53	
VAT thereon:	£97.58	
Total payment:		£587.39

HALC

Fee for training session attended by
The Clerk

£25.00

Society of Local Council Clerks
Annual Subscription

£140.00

Cash	
Petty Cash reimbursement	£115.06

(b) Receipts

None since the last meeting.

(c) Balances

Current Account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£55,276.90
Petty Cash:	(£40.03)

Note: Deposit account balance includes agreed commitments of: £13,667.42 so available balance is £41,609.48

146/11 Planning Matters**(a) Applications received**

The following application has been received since the last meeting:

Ref: DMS/113060/F
 Site: 6 The Meadows, Belmont
 Development: Re-submission of refused application DMS/11433/F
 Proposed extension and alterations to existing garage and formation of self contained annex
 Comments: Members have reviewed this application and had no objections in principle but felt the earlier issues of loss of privacy to neighbouring properties had not been address with the new plans. Observations have been passed to Herefordshire Council accordingly.

(b) Notification of planning decision

Herefordshire Council has advised that the following planning application has been approved, with conditions:

Ref: DMS/112006/F
 Site: 35 Wyedean Rise, Belmont
 Development: Sub division of existing dwelling into 2 separate dwellings and extension
 Comments: Approved with conditions.

A copy of the decision notification and attached conditions was provided to Members at the meeting. It was noted that District Councillors objected to this application and had requested that it be considered at a planning committee rather than as an officer decision.

(c) **Other planning matters**

The clerk submitted observations on the revised LDF as indicated at the last meeting. A copy of the letter was provided to Members.

Members also noted potential implications for parish and town councils in connection with planning matters contained in the Localism Act, a copy of which was been provided to Members for further information.

147/11 Report from Website Working Party

Members noted two reports from the working party and reviewed a quotation received from E-Mango, an organisation that had provided website hosting to a number of other parish councils, including Ledbury Town Council. The quotation was felt to be too expensive and further quotes are to be sought by the Clerk.

It was further noted that the proposal for a “.gov.uk” domain meant that a simple free web hosting would not be possible as a registered provider was required to apply for the domain name.

148/11 Training

(a) **Reports from Members who have attended training sessions**

- **Budget briefings**

Members noted a report on the Herefordshire Council briefings that had taken place as part of the Participatory Budgeting system and in particular noted proposals for changes in funding for social care.

- **Finance**

The Clerk gave a brief report on a training evening she had attended on the subject of Finance, noting that Belmont Rural systems and procedures comply with current recommended practice.

(b) **Update on Localism Act and potential training requirements**

The Clerk presented a report on implications within the Localism Act relating to the Power of Competence and members noted that the criteria to achieve power of competence could be met by this Parish Council with the exception of the requirement that the Clerk be a holder of the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

The Clerk estimated that a time commitment of some 100 hours (over a period of some two years) and a cost in the region of £500 (including training course costs) would be required to complete the CiLCA portfolio, and indicated a willingness to undertake the work. It was agreed that the Clerk should be supported to complete this qualification with a view to applying for Power of Competence in due course.

149/11 Precept for 2012-2013

(a) Draft Operating Budget

Details of a provisional operating budget for 2012-2013 was presented to Members, who raised no questions. It was agreed that the draft operating budget as attached to these Minutes be agreed and that this be included in future discussions on the Precept requirement for 2012/2013.

(b) Projects

Members were invited to consider projects and other potential expenditure to form the remainder of the precept request for 2012/2013, to be agreed at the meeting to be held on 19th January. Suggestions at the meeting included:

- Additional shrub planting
- Extension of the footpath from Sydwall Road to the Belmont Road
- Footpath around Abbey View Park West
- One or two small items of play equipment on the Coppin Rise play area
- Wild flower meadow/wetland on Abbey View Park East
- Play equipment for public open space in Wheatridge Road
- Improvements to the kick about area at Northholme.

The Clerk explained that such projects would not necessarily have to be funded exclusively through the Precept but that grant funding might be available to meet some or all of the cost. It would also be possible to start to build a capital projects reserve over a period of years to meet agreed identified projects, particularly as it was unlikely that the precept would meet the full cost of some of the potential projects in one financial year. The purpose of discussion at this stage was merely to ensure sufficient funding was requested through the precept request for 2012/2013 and not to agree specific projects now.

Further discussion on this topic will take place at the meeting to be held on 19th January.

150/11 Request for funding – Newton Farm Community Association

Members noted that although this application had been received on the day of the last meeting, as this was not an agenda item for that meeting, discussion had to be deferred to this meeting.

Mr. John Newman, in attendance at the meeting, presented the funding application and noted that one weekend session for Santa's grotto had already taken place and some 340 children had attended out of an anticipated 450 for the two sessions combined. An estimated 40 – 50% of those attending were thought to be from the Parish. This request for funding was to cover the cost of gifts and the staging of a Santa's Grotto being held at

Belmont Community Centre. The grotto is free for local children although donations from parents/carers are welcome.

During the discussions on this item, it was further noted that as one session had already taken place, any offer of funding could only be for the forthcoming session as retrospective funding is not permitted under the Parish Council's financial regulations. Finally it was unanimously agreed to offer a grant of £300.00 towards the additional gifts required for Saturday 17th December.

151/11 Quarterly newsletter

(a) Format

Members discussed the format for the quarterly newsletter, prepared by volunteer Roderick Robinson as a digest of Parish Council Meeting minutes from the previous three months. It was noted that some interest had been shown by local organisations and individuals to include information on events and activities within the parish in the newsletter. However, whilst such additional reporting might be possible once the parish council website is up and running, the newsletter in its present format is a valuable method of ensuring local people are aware of the work of the parish council. It was therefore agreed that the current format should be continued in the immediate future.

The next issue of the newsletter is scheduled to be distributed in December/January. It was further agreed that as far as possible it should be hand delivered to households rather than distributed through the Admag.

(b) Parish Plan Questionnaire results

Members noted that the Parish Plan Steering Group recommends that a digest of the results of the parish plan questionnaire be provided to residents. It is suggested that as the quarterly newsletter is due in the New Year, a second page could be added this quarter to include these results, thus reducing delivery costs.

A draft of the questionnaire results prepared by the Clerk was considered and it was agreed that the draft be printed and distributed with the newsletter.

152/11 Parish Matters

- (a) Councillor Edwards presented a report on his activities as a district councillor, as attached to these minutes.
- (b) Councillor Bridges reported that a district councillor he proposed conducting a survey amongst residents about the levels of street lighting within the Parish with a view to considering a reduction in street lighting between 11pm and 6am to reduce lighting costs within the County.
- (c) Councillor Bridges reported that he is to take part in a working group for the Enterprise Zone in Hereford with particular reference to transport for Hereford.

- (d) Councillor Hubbard requested that the road and paths outside 54 Dorchester Way be swept of the conifer needles that have dropped . The needles are damaging the grass verge and making the pathway particularly slippery. Roots from the same tree are also now damaging the pavement.
- (e) Concern was expressed that a household in Chichester close has moved a fence towards the pavement. The clerk was authorised to make enquiries on the ownership of this land.
- (f) The pavement outside no. 6 Cranborne Close is cracking around a BT cover. The clerk will report this to Amey.
- (g) It was noted that the damaged fencing around Tesco has now been removed.
- (h) The Clerk is to request a road sweep on the steps from the footpath in Westholme Road leading to Haywood Lane as they have become slippery with leaves.
- (i) Councillor Powell reported that she had arranged and paid for a Children's Christmas Party and thanked Belmont Community Centre for providing the venue free of charge.

153/11 Public participation

During the final period for public participation, a question was asked regarding plans for celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee next June. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

154/11 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19th January at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7.15pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.