

BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 27th June 2013 at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont

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

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

086/13 Public Participation

There were no matters raised by Members of the public during the initial period of public participation.

087/13 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

Apologies were noted from Councillor Schoffer.

There were no requests for dispensation.

The following declarations of interest were made:

Name	Nature of Interest	Agenda item/Minute ref.
Councillor A. Bridges	Non disclosable pecuniary interest as a Director and Trustee of Northolme Community Centre	9 - 094/13
Councillor D. Parish	Non disclosable pecuniary interest as Director of Northolme Community Centre Association	9 – 094/13
Councillor A. Myatt	Non disclosable pecuniary interest. Agenda item refers to land adjacent to home	13 – 098/13

088/13 Minutes of the meetings held on 16th May 2013

It was agreed that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th May 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a true record of proceedings at the meeting.

Subject to two small amendments which were agreed, it was agreed that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 16th May be signed by the Chairman as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

089/13 To consider the Clerk's report

The Clerk's report was noted, as follows:

(a) Grass Cutting

There has been no response to date to the Clerk's request for re-consideration of the agreed Management Plan for the Abbey View Park area on the basis that the spring cut is unlikely to be possible, give the ground conditions of the former landfill area.

(b) Coppin Rise Play Area

A report from the inspector is awaited for this site.

(c) South Wye Partnership

No further developments in connection with this item.

(d) Northolme Kickabout Area

As noted at the last meeting, further seeding has taken place but again, very little has taken. The Clerk has received no response to the suggestion that the area be re-turfed.

(e) Kraftimonkies Easter Holiday Club

The requested report into the Easter Kraftimonkies Holiday Club has been received and indicates that of the 40 children attending, there were children from 4 addresses (out of 15 addresses) from within the Parish. It was confirmed that the cheque for the room hire grant could be released.

(f) Home Farm Development

A reminder that the Appeal Hearing for the Home Farm development is due to start on 23rd July. The venue has been confirmed as the Shire Hall for the first two days (23rd and 24th July) and the Town Hall for the last day and any required subsequent days.

(g) Annual Return

The Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2013 has been sent to the external auditor, Grant Thornton . During the period when members of the public can inspect the accounts, no requests for inspection were received.

(h) Shrubs for the Westholme Road Planter

The Planter has now been refurbished thanks to the voluntary efforts of Councillor Hubbard at a total cost of £51.43.

090/13 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch Report

West Mercia Police were unable to attend the meeting. A report from the Parish Watch co-ordinator was noted advising that there were no reports of anti social behaviour from within the Parish but some minor incidents were reported outside the parish on the edge of the Belmont Pools area.

091/13 To note the report from the Finance Working party

The report from the Finance Working Party was noted with no matters brought forward for further discussion.

092/13 Information item: Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were noted:

- A request for funding for the Kraftimonkies Holiday Club during the summer. This will be presented to the next meeting in August for consideration.
- A request for funding for the South Wye Drug and Alcohol Forum. This will be presented for consideration to the next meeting in August.
- A letter has been received from the website hosting company requesting that future payments be made electronically. The clerk has written explaining that the parish council has no authority to pay electronically at present and this has been accepted by the company.
- A complaint has been received from the administrator of the Belmont Voice website regarding the decision to remove the link to that website from our website. The complainant has been advised that the parish council may choose which sites to link to and the decision is considered final in accordance with the formal agreed policy on website content.

093/13 To consider renewal of the Data Protection Registration

It was agreed to renew the Data Protection Registration at an annual cost of £35.00.

094/13 Financial matters**(a) To approve payments to be made for June 2013**

The following payments were noted as made since the last meeting, although approved at the meeting held on 16th May:

Date: 25th May 2013
 Payee: The Broker Network
 Amount: £604.20
 Item: Insurance premium for 2013-2014 as agreed at meeting held 16.05.2013

Date: 29th May 2013
 Payee: Mr. B. Hubbard
 Amount: £49.42 (+£2.00 petty cash)
 Item: Items for Westholme Road Planter, as agreed at meeting held 16.05.2013

The following payments were approved for payment:

Northholme Community Centre Association Room hire for May meetings held 16.05.2013		£25.50
Herefordshire Council Charge for Big Lottery workshop 19.06.2013		£5.00
HALC CiLCA training 01.06.2013	£50.00	
VAT	£10.00	
Total		£60.00
NCCA Agreed grant payment for Belmont Fun Day		£750.00
Petty Cash reimbursement		£86.90
Information Commissioners Office Renewal of Data Protection Registration		£35.00

(b) To note balances as at the date of the meeting

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£56,005.08
Petty Cash:	£38.10

(c) To confirm the membership of the Finance Working Party for 2013-2014

It was agreed that the current members of the Finance Working Party would continue for a further period of one year.

095/13 Planning Matters

(a) To consider applications received since the last meeting

None

(b) To note decisions made by Herefordshire Council since the last meeting

None

(c) To consider implications of decision by Herefordshire Council not to notify neighbouring properties of a planning application

Noting the Planning Authority's decision not to notify neighbouring properties of a planning application, it was agreed that Members would notify immediate neighbouring properties of applications on an informal basis when considering the Parish Council response to any application. It was further agreed that the Clerk write to the Planning Authority to request that out of date planning notices be removed from lampposts once the period of consultation has ended to avoid confusion and ensure new notices were clearly evident.

096/13 To receive report on proposals on speed limits for A465 at Belmont

The verbal report from Councillor Bridges on proposals for permanent speed limits on the A465, Belmont Road, was noted.

097/13 Neighbourhood Planning – update on progress

It was noted that Members of the Public would be approached with a view to forming a steering group for this project at the Belmont Fun Day on 20th July.

098/13 To consider proposals to complete the work on the area linking Abbey view Park East with Jubilee Field by installing boulders

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

099/13 Training**(a) To consider requests for training**

It was agreed that Councillor Myatt attend the free HVOSS Training and the Clerk be authorised to attend the next two HALC training events in preparation for the CiLCA at a cost of £50.00 per event.

(b) To consider reports from training sessions attended

Members noted the report from Councillor Parish on the funding workshop she attended and a report from the Clerk on the CiLCA workshop attended on Roles and Responsibilities, and law.

100/13 Annual Review of Communications policy

The Communications policy, as attached to these Minutes was approved.

101/13 To approve the Annual Parish Report

The Clerk presented the draft Annual Parish Report. Subject to a small amendment, the content was formally agreed. It was further agreed that the report be printed and delivered to all households within the Parish at an agreed total cost of £400.

102/13 To consider sponsorship of Tesco roundabout

Members noted the request by the Hereford in Bloom committee that the Tesco roundabout be sponsored by a business, some of the proceeds of which would be remitted to Belmont Rural Parish. Noting the importance of the roundabout as a link between the rural countryside and the City, it was agreed that the rural nature of the roundabout should be retained although additional planting of wildflowers and/or spring bulbs such as crocus would be acceptable. Subject to this, it was agreed to support this request. The Clerk was instructed to notify Hereford in Bloom accordingly and to note the future re-configuration of the roundabout that has been planned to reduce damage to the edge by heavy goods vehicles.

103/13 To approve draft Complaints Policy

The Complaints Policy as attached to these Minutes was approved.

104/13 To consider purchase of Local Council Administration 9th Edition

It was agreed to purchase the latest edition of Local Administration at a cost not to exceed £60.00,

105/13 Parish Matters

(a) Members noted a verbal report from Councillor Bridges as Ward Member for the Belmont

Ward of Herefordshire Council.

- (b) Concern was expressed at an overhanging tree on the walkway between Yarlinton Mill and the Medical Centre. The Clerk will respond to this under delegated powers.

106/13 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8th August at the Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Avenue, Belmont, commencing at 7pm.

107/13 Public Participation

During the final period for public participation the following items were noted:

- Several hedges are overhanging footpaths throughout the parish, impeding those with wheelchairs or pushchairs and endangering anyone with a visual impairment. It was noted these should be passed to the Clerk to pass to Herefordshire Council under delegated powers.
- The need for a deep water sign by the culvert under Jubilee Field was raised.

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

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Communications Policy

AIMS

This policy is intended to:

- Establish clear channels of communication between the Parish Council and residents, local and national groups, agencies, Herefordshire Council and others.
- Ensure that residents are provided with information on the work of the Parish Council and other important matters in a timely manner to encourage citizenship and involvement in Parish matters and generate informed comment.

INTRODUCTION

Belmont Rural Parish Council was created in April 2000 having previously formed part of the Parish of Clehonger. The Parish boundaries consist of the River Wye to the North, Newton Brook to the South and East and Ruckhall Lane to the West. The A465T divides the Northern and Southern areas of the Parish. There are approximately 1650 houses within the Parish boundaries.

Legislation sets out a number of circumstances when a Parish Council must provide information to residents and the manner in which that information is made available. For example there is a statutory requirement for a notice to be displayed within the Parish explaining Parishioners rights with regard to the annual external audit of Parish Council accounts. Where legislation conflicts with any element of this policy, statutory requirements will prevail.

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

It is the policy of the Parish Council to use a range of methods of communication with Parishioners and outside bodies. This may include, but are not limited to:

- Parish Council meetings
- Public meetings
- Correspondence
- Telephone calls
- E-mail
- Notice boards
- Newsletters, reports and information sheets
- Advertising
- Website

Parish Council Meetings

1. Dates for Parish Council meetings for the forthcoming year will be agreed at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May each year, and will take place approximately every six weeks unless agreed otherwise. All meetings will be open to Members of the public.
2. Notices will be placed on notice boards and on the website no later than three clear days prior to each meeting to advise members of the public of the date, time and venue of each meeting.
3. Meetings will take place in a public venue which is fully accessible to those with disabilities within the Parish, wherever possible.
4. The Parish Council reserves the right to exclude members of the public from all or part of a meeting, as permitted by law, but as a general principle will not do so unless there are substantial grounds for using this power. The Chairman may exclude an individual from all or part of a meeting if that individual's behaviour is inconsistent with the good conduct of the meeting.
5. At least one period within the meeting will be set aside for members of the public to raise matters of interest. This period of public participation will last no longer than fifteen minutes unless the Parish Council resolves otherwise. Matters raised by members of the public during these sessions must be noted and carried forward to the next meeting.
6. Items to be raised at Parish Council meetings must be notified to the Clerk no later than ten days prior to the meeting date so that the item can be included in the meeting Agenda.
7. Draft Minutes of meeting will be placed on the parish council website as soon as possible after the date of the meeting, clearly marked "draft" to indicate that the Minutes have not yet been adopted by the Parish Council. Printed copies of ~~Approved~~ Minutes of Parish Council meetings will be available to members of the public at a nominal charge to cover photocopying costs.

Parish Meetings

1. At least one Parish Meeting will be held each year and known as the Annual Parish Meeting. Voluntary and Community Groups operating within the Parish will be invited to report to members of the public on their work, at this meeting.
2. The Parish Council may convene other Parish Meetings to discuss items of particular importance to Parishioners, and must do so if six or more electors request such a meeting to discuss an identified topic.

Correspondence

1. All items of correspondence to the Parish Council must be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

2. All items of correspondence from the Parish Council must, unless agreed otherwise by the Parish Council, be prepared and signed by the Parish Clerk. In this instance, correspondence includes e-mails, texts messages and other electronic forms of communication.
3. All items of correspondence received will be either circulated to members of the Parish Council or brought before the next available meeting. Where a reply is expected, an acknowledgement will be sent within five working days of receipt and a full reply sent as soon as practicable following a meeting.

E-mail

1. The Clerk will maintain an e-mail account solely for Parish Council business and ensure it is monitored on a daily basis.
2. All correspondence received by e-mail will be responded to by e-mail unless otherwise directed.
3. E-mail correspondence is the preferred method of written communication where facilities exist as receipt is almost instantaneous. Hard copies of e-mail correspondence will be made for those who do not have access to e-mail.

Telephone calls

1. Contact telephone numbers for Parish Councillors and the Clerk will be displayed on notice boards.
2. A telephone answering machine will be used for messages outside normal working hours and any messages will normally be responded to on the next working day.

Notice boards

1. Parish notice boards will be provided by the Parish Council at locations to be agreed within the Parish boundary.
2. The following items will be displayed in Parish notice boards:
 - Any statutory notice, for example accounts, election notices etc.
 - Parish Councillor and Clerk contact details
 - Parish Council meeting notices
 - Parish Council meeting dates for the forthcoming year
 - Other Parish Council information notices
 - Herefordshire Council information notices
 - Notices by voluntary/community organisations
 - Any other items at the discretion of the Clerk and/or Chairman.
3. Where space is at a premium, the above is in order of preference.

Newsletters, reports and information sheets

1. The Parish Council aims to publish a newsletter/information sheet at least four times per year to give Parishioners information on the work of the Parish Council. Such newsletters will be delivered to each household within the Parish. A budget will be agreed at the precept meeting each year to cover the cost of production and distribution of these newsletters.
2. Ad hoc newsletters will be used whenever there are matters which the Parish Council feels should be brought to the attention of Parishioners.
3. An annual report and accounts will be prepared each year to include details of Parish Council income and expenditure for the previous financial year. The Annual Report will be delivered to all households within the parish and will appear on the website
5. All newsletters, reports and information sheets must be approved by the Parish Council before printing and distribution unless the Parish Council resolves otherwise.

Advertising

1. The Parish Council reserves the right to use advertising where necessary but will normally only use paid advertising where other methods of communication are inappropriate.
2. No advertising will be placed without the prior approval of the Parish Council.

Requests for Information

1. Members of the public have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act, to request access to information in accordance with the Parish Council's adopted Publication Scheme, a copy of which is attached to this policy. It is not necessary for the Freedom of Information Act to be quoted when making a request for information under the Act.
2. All requests for information must be passed to the Clerk or in the Clerk's absence, the Chairman.
3. Where a member of the public requests access to Parish Council documents, arrangements will be made for those documents to be made available at a time and place to suit all parties. At least one Parish Councillor will attend in addition to the Clerk and/or Chairman.
4. A nominal charge will be levied for copies of documents, to cover photocopying costs.
5. All requests for information will be reported to the next available Parish Council meeting.
6. The Parish Council will maintain registration with the Information Commissioners Office and adhere to all recommended practices with regard to data protection.

Website

1. The Parish Council will maintain a website with information about the parish council and activities within the parish.
2. The Clerk will be responsible for maintaining and updating the website on a day to day basis.
3. At least one other parish councillor, as authorised by the Parish Council, will have access to the Website in order to upload or maintain the content in order to ensure that it can be updated when the Clerk is not available.
4. The website content will be agreed by the Parish Council from time to time.
5. Urgent items not identified within the usual content may be agreed by the Clerk, Chairman, Vice Chairman and one other Parish Councillor between meetings and reported to the full Council for agreement at the next available meeting.

Approved by Belmont Rural Parish Council
and updated/amended at a meeting held
on Thursday 27th June 2013

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

Belmont Rural Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- complaints against councillors. Complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members and, if a complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will be referred to the Standards Committee of Herefordshire Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer of Herefordshire Council.
- Complaints involving financial irregularity should be dealt with in accordance with procedures under s.16 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. Local electors have a statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts and details of how that right can be exercised will be advertised on notice boards and the Council website each year at the appropriate time. Further information is available from the Clerk.
- Complaints involving criminal activity should be referred to the police and will be referred to the police by the Council where appropriate.

Procedure

1. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed.
2. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings, although you should be aware that Parish Council procedures require that any items raised in the first instance during the public participation section be deferred to the next meeting so that the matter can be investigated before a decision is made.
3. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the

date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.

4. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.
5. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
6. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.
7. The Clerk or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or members of the Council.
8. The Council will consider all complaints during a meeting and may do so without members of the public in attendance in accordance with the Council's standing orders. You will be invited to attend the meeting and may bring a representative if you so wish. You may be invited to give a statement outlining your complaint and may be asked further questions by Members.

At the meeting the Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by you and/or Members. You and the Clerk may then be asked to leave the room while the matter is discussed and a decision taken.

9. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint. (In exceptional cases the twenty working days timescale may have to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.)

Agreed by Belmont Rural Parish Council
At a meeting held on 27th June 2013