

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6th February 2014 At Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

Present: Mr. A. Bridges In the Chair
Mr. K. Baynham
Mr. P. Edwards
Mr. B. Hubbard
Mr. R. Loft
Ms. D. Parish
Mr. M. Schoffer

In attendance: Mrs. E. Kelso

05/14 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

Apologies were noted from Councillor Myatt and Councillor Cook.

There were no declarations of interest, and no requests for dispensation.

06/14 Public participation

There were no members of the public in attendance so no matters were raised during this agenda item.

07/14 To approve the Minutes of the previous meetings.

(a) Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2013

These had been circulated to members. Subject to a small amendment, as noted on the Minutes, 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 Extraordinary meeting held on 23rd January 2014

These had been circulated to members. Again, subject to a small amendment as noted on the Minutes, it was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

08/14 Clerk's Report

The Clerks report, as attached to these Minutes, was noted.

Members expressed concern at the level of quotation from Balfour Beatty for work previously agreed with Amey but not carried out prior to their contract end, and the lack of information on the proposed work by Balfour Beatty which might indicate the basis for the quotations. It was noted that despite a request from the Clerk that a representative from Balfour Beatty attend the meeting, no response had been received. Further concern was expressed at the implication from correspondence with Herefordshire Council as landowners, suggested that any work carried out would require a licence and the approval of Balfour Beatty as agents of Herefordshire Council. Attention was drawn to an article in The Hereford Times suggesting that Balfour Beatty would need to approve any work carried out by volunteers. It was agreed that the Clerk:

- Continue to press Balfour Beatty for a formal specification for the work as quoted,
- Clarify the contract requirements with Herefordshire Council as regards work on their land but funded by Belmont Rural Parish Council and
- Write to Herefordshire Council formally to express grave concern at the apparent terms of the contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places that required that company to approve work carried out by an alternative contractor, effectively restricting the choice of contractor or indeed the use of volunteers to carry out improvements to the local environment

Finally members also noted a request from Herefordshire Council Library Service with regard to a press release on the subject of Belmont Library. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be represented on any press release or photograph.

09/14 Report from West Mercia Police/Parish Watch

A member of West Mercia Police was not in attendance, members noted the Parish Watch report from Councillor Edwards. It was also noted that an incident had been reported within the Parish as noted in the police newsletter received by Ward Councillors. It was agreed that the Clerk request a copy of the police newsletter directly from the police.

10/14 Information item: Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were noted:

- (a) Information from St. Michael's Hospice on the Open Garden Scheme for 2014.
- (b) Trevor Swindells, on behalf of Hereford in Bloom, has a large number of saplings from the Woodland Trust and is looking for groups to take them for planting. Noting the possible difficulties in using volunteers to plant any saplings, it was agreed that

this be considered at the next meeting but in the meantime, the Clerk would notify Hereford in Bloom of our possible interest.

- (c) The results of Herefordshire Council's budget consultation were noted.

11/14 Financial Matters

(a) Report from the Finance Working Party

Unfortunately the finance working party was not quorate when it met on Saturday 1st February and the meeting was abandoned. However, members noted the Chairman's informal review of the financial records

(b) To approve schedule of payments

Authority was given to make the following payments:

South Wye Community Association:

Room hire for Neighbourhood Planning Meeting on 8.1.2014
and Extraordinary meeting held 23.1.2014 £21.00

R. G. Howells
Repairs to litter bin and notice board £45.00

Petty Cash reimbursement £114.61

HALC
Payment for reference books – Good Councillor Guide £13.50

(c) To note balances on accounts

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£67,734.33
Petty cash:	£10.39

12/14 Planning Matters

(a) To note planning applications responded to under delegated powers

None

(b) To note planning applications received for permitted development

None

(c) **To note report from Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group**

Notes from the meeting held on 8th January were noted. Members also noted that the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group will be held on 12th March when the potential impact of the closure of Belmont Golf Course will be discussed.

(d) **To approve Terms of Reference for Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group**

It was agreed that the draft terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group as presented to the meeting, be approved.

(e) **Other Planning Matters**

Members noted the Appeal Decision in connection with application for outline permission for land at Home Farm. Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges explained that some costs had been awarded against Herefordshire Council by the Inspector as a result of the lack of evidence provided by Herefordshire Council to the Inspector in connection with the Five Year Housing Supply claims made at the hearing.

13/14 Training

(a) **To approve requests for training**

The following requests for training were approved:

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|-----------------------|---|--|
| • Councillor Myatt: | In the Hot Seat
Neighbourhood Planning | Tues. 25 th Feb.
Sat. 29 th March |
| • Councillor Baynham: | Leading Lights
Neighbourhood Planning | Tues. 18 th Feb
Sat. 29 th March |
| • Councillor Bridges | Neighbourhood Planning | Sat. 29 th March |
| • Clerk | Neighbourhood Planning | Sat. 29 th March |

It was further noted that subject to final confirmation of venue, the date for the in-house Code of Conduct training will be Thursday 20th February.

(b) **To note report from Councillor Bridges on Finance training sessions attended**

Councillor Bridges presented a report on the Finance and Procedures training session he had attended.

14/14 Ward Councillors Reports

Verbal reports from Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges were received.

14/14 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 6th March at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont commencing at 7pm.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.10.

Belmont Rural Parish Council
Meeting held on Thursday 6th February 2013
Clerk's Report

1. Litter Bins

The issues relating to the litter bin in Grantham Close have now been resolved and the bin is being emptied as normal.

2. Replacement Bus Shelter

No further news on this item.

3. Abbey View Park/Jubilee Field Culvert Work

A revised quotation has now been received from Balfour Beatty and will be the subject of a separate agenda item in March. The Clerk has requested further information from Balfour Beatty and in particular has requested a formal specification for the proposed works, to ensure that the quotations are based upon the same understanding as the Parish Council. Unfortunately it was not possible to get clarification in time for this meeting.

Further clarification has also been sought on whether BRPC can engage our own contractors for the work envisaged. Herefordshire Council, as land owners, have indicated that the terms of their contract with Balfour Beatty for the management of public open space might restrict this. The Clerk is to set up a meeting with the Service Delivery Team of Herefordshire Council and representatives from Balfour Beatty with a view to them attending the next parish council meeting.

4. Belmont Library

Herefordshire Council has confirmed that the library opening hours will not now be cut as previously indicated this year. It has been suggested, however, that in line with the requirement for further cost savings, Herefordshire Council may be looking at the Belmont Library becoming a "community library", which means it will be taken over by another body such as a community group or potentially the parish council. No firm proposals have been put forward at this stage.

5. Dorchester Way Tree

The tree outside 56 Dorchester Way, which the parish council requested be removed some 18 months ago has now been removed.

6. Notice board outside Belmont Medical Centre

Following the rain recently the notice board outside the medical centre required some minor repair work which was carried out by the handyman.

7. **Precept**

Herefordshire Council has now confirmed that the gross amount of the requested £50,000 precept will be reduced by £3,351 under the council tax reduction grant scheme for 2014/2015. With 1,333.95 equivalent Band D properties in the parish, the level of Band D council tax for 2014-2015 will be £34.97 compared with £35.37 for 2013/14, i.e. a small reduction.