

# Belmont Rural Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th October 2012 at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

**Present:** Mr. P. Edwards Chairman  
Mr. A. Bridges  
Mr. K. Baynham Agenda item 4 onwards  
Mr. B. Hubbard  
Mr. R. Loft  
Mr. A. Myatt  
Mr. M. Schoffer

**Apologies:** Mr. D. Cook  
Ms. D. Parish

**In attendance:** Mrs. E. Kelso Clerk  
5 Members of the public

### **134/12 Public Participation**

During the period set aside for public participation, there were no items raised by members of the public present that were not otherwise addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

### **135/12 Apologies and declarations of interest**

Apologies were received from Councillor David Cook and Councillor Des Parish.

Declarations of interest were received as follows:

Name	Nature of Interest	Agenda item
Councillor A. Bridges	Non discloseable pecuniary interest as a Director and Trustee of Northolme Community Centre	8 & 20
Councillor P. Edwards	Discloseable pecuniary interest reference to planning application for property adjacent to home	9
Councillor A. Myatt	Non discloseable pecuniary interest as a resident, Trustee of South Wye Community Association and Director of Northolme Community Centre Association.	10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, & 20

Councillor Bridges also reported that in the light of recent training on the new Code of Conduct, he wished to declare a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 9 for the previous meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**136/12 Casual vacancy**

Mr. D. K. Baynham and Mr. M. McEvilly were present at the meeting; both having indicated a willingness to serve as a parish councillor to fill the casual vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Glenda Powell. Both candidates gave a brief presentation explaining their background and how they felt this would benefit the parish council. A ballot was then held after a brief discussion by members.

After the votes were counted and verified by an independent witness, the Chairman declared Mr. D. K. Baynham had been co-opted to the parish council. Mr. Baynham signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his seat on the Council.

**137/12 Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September had been circulated. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

**138/12 Clerk's Report**

**(a) Play Strategy Review**

Despite assurances that the Play Strategy Review was to be published in October, there is no indication that it is yet available. To date there has been no feedback from Herefordshire Council regarding the request for consideration of the request for some form of ball games area on Abbey View Park.

**(b) Abbey View Park Footpath**

It was noted that following heavy rain at the end of September, part of the footpath alongside the Brook on Abbey View Park East has been washed away when the culvert under the path linking Abbey View Park East with the top of Jubilee Field became blocked and the brook diverted over the top. Since then, this has happened in a further period of heavy rain as the culvert remains blocked despite several requests for Amey to clear it. Until the brook is cleared, repair work would be pointless. A footpath closed notice has been placed at both ends of the CH7 footpath where it crosses Abbey View Park East.

The drainage works referred to in the last meeting has not taken place.

The weed spray appears to have taken place although vegetation at the edge of the path has not yet died back. An invoice for the spray has been received but it was agreed that payment be withheld and Amey be requested to confirm that the spray has taken place and until evidence of vegetation dying back has been seen.

(c) **Coppin Rise Play Area**

Confirmation of the amendments to the design and layout of the proposed Coppin Rise play area has been received from Herefordshire Council indicating an overall price of £14,100.00. The Clerk confirmed that she has made initial enquiries with Awards for All for funding for this project and has submitted an initial application for a maximum grant of £10,000. This, together with the £5,000 already agreed for this project would enable the project to be delivered within budget. A response is expected from Awards for All before the next meeting.

(d) **Litter bins**

As requested at the last meeting, a replacement litter bin has been requested from Amey for the bin in Southolme Road. The litter bin for Abbey View Park East and Jubilee Field should be installed shortly and replacement parts have been ordered and will be delivered to the Belmont Community Centre for safe keeping in their storage. It was agreed that a replacement bin for the one at the end of Sydwall Road should be considered a priority.

(e) **Replacement Shrubs for the Northolme Bed**

Replacement shrubs have been identified and await ordering and delivery before planting.

(f) **Jubilee Field Tree Planting**

Trees have been ordered and arrangements are to be made for the planting during tree planting week in November.

(g) **Engaging Volunteers**

The Clerk has been investigating requirements for engaging volunteers and has been directed to a number of volunteering bodies both nationally and locally for advice. A full report will be prepared for a later meeting due to time constraints for this meeting.

(h) **Website**

Work is progressing on populating the website but a little slowly due to other commitments. E-mango has offered to assist in getting the website into a format reading to go "live" although the work needed to get documents and items to E-mango is unlikely to save much time.

(i) **Belmont Community Centre extension**

Work on the Belmont Community Centre extension is likely to start shortly. The Management Committee has provided an update on the tendering process, a copy of which was provided to Members.

(j) **Speed Limits**

Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges attended a meeting in connection with the experimental speed limit introduced along the A465, and noted that the police had not been supportive of the proposal to retain the speed limit as the basis that there appears to have

been more motorists breaking the new speed limit than previously albeit that overall speeds had reduced. Herefordshire Council now propose a permanent arrangement to include a 50mph limit south of the Clehonger Road together with a 40mph limit from the Clehonger Junction to the Belmont Tesco roundabout. A copy of the letter with map was provided to Members who were requested to forward comments to the Clerk within one week so that a formal response can be made to the proposal on behalf of the Parish Council.

As part of the project, it has been proposed that a new pedestrian crossing be introduced just South of the Ruckhall Lane junction but funding constraints indicate that this would only go ahead if neighbouring parishes contribute towards the estimated £40 - £50,000 cost. It was agreed that this be discussed as an agenda item for the next meeting.

### **139/12 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch**

West Mercia Police were not in attendance at the meeting. Councillor Edwards presented a report on behalf of Parish Watch, noting the following:

- Despite proposals to redevelop parts of The Oval and surrounding areas, the South Wye Police station is to remain in its current location
- In view of the imminent Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night, members were reminded to take care of elderly or vulnerable neighbours and those with pets
- A request has been made to Amey to cut back overgrown trees along the CH7 footpath as some lights are becoming obscured by the growth.

Police action in connection with damage to the cigarette bin at the Belmont Community Centre was also noted.

### **140/12 Correspondence**

The following items of correspondence, not addressed elsewhere on the agenda, had been received since the last meeting.

- (a) Letter from Herefordshire Council regarding the requirement for sandbags and requesting information on Flooding. This has been responded to by the Clerk.
- (b) Confirmation has been received from Herefordshire Council that the latest date for setting the precept for 2013-2014 is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013. Current advice from HALC is that precept setting should not take place early this year as an announcement is due from the Government in December regarding capping of parish councils and it is recommended that parish councils wait for this announcement before agreeing a budget and precept for next year.
- (c) Herefordshire Council are requesting parishes to complete a questionnaire about Neighbourhood Planning to help with assessment of which parishes might consider a neighbourhood plan in the near future and how Herefordshire Council can assist in this process. A copy of the questionnaire was provided to Members with a request to complete it and return it to the Clerk by the end of the week.
- (d) The Boundary Commission's review into Parliamentary Constituencies has been published.

A copy of the link to the website has been provided to Members. One hard copy of the document has been printed should members prefer to read the hard copy.

- (e) The Parish Council has received an invitation to send a representative to a briefing by Western Power Distribution. Events are being held in Nottingham, Birmingham, Cheltenham, Exeter, Cardiff and Bristol on various dates from 6<sup>th</sup> November. It was agreed not to send a representative to this event.

## 141/12 Financial Matters

### (a) Payments

In accordance with Financial Standing Orders, it was noted that since the last meeting two payments have been made, being the Clerk's salary for September and the corresponding Inland Revenue payment.

Approval was given to make the following payments:

Mrs. K. Bridges		
Delivery of Quarterly Newsletter		£120.00
PIP Printing		
Printing of Quarterly Newsletter		£144.00
Northolme Community Centre Association		
Room Hire for September meeting		£25.50
HALC		
Attendance at Chairman's Training by Cllr Myatt in June	£25.00	
VAT Thereon	£5.00	
Total payment:		£30.00
Cash		
Petty Cash Reimbursement		£153.65
South Wye Community Association		
Room hire for training session		£24.00

The following payment is to be withheld pending further discussion with Amey Wye Valley on the weed spray that had taken place:

Amey Wye Valley Limited		
Weedspray on Abbey View Park Paths	£75.00	
VAT thereon	£15.00	
Total payment		£90.00

### (b) Receipts

As indicted at the last meeting, the second half of the annual precept, being £22,500, was received from Herefordshire Council on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

The sum of £5.99 has been received as bank interest for the quarter to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

(c) **Balances**

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£59,489.70
Petty Cash:	(£78.65)

Current budget commitments, excluding routine items such as salary payments but including cheques to be paid as approved above, amount to £28,715.15.

(d) **Other Financial Matters**

As reported at the last meeting, the Parish Council is now taking part in a pilot project for “Real Time Reporting” for PAYE purposes and a first successful submission of the data for this was completed at the end of September.

(e) **Financial Working Party**

At a recent training session held by HALC during which it was recommended that a Financial Working Party be established to oversee the financial management of the parish council. It was proposed that a Financial Working Party be established to oversee matters such as the introduction of controls to enable the Parish Council to use electronic banking when the facility is introduced shortly, reviewing the financial management of the Parish Council, and investigate other financial matters as might arise from time to time. It was noted that such a working party would have no delegated powers but would report to and make recommendations to the Parish Council on financial matters, working in conjunction with the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and/or Internal Auditor. After a brief discussion this was unanimously agreed and Councillors Myatt and Baynham agreed to form the working party with the Clerk.

**142/12 Planning Matters**

(a) **Applications received**

The following applications have been received since the last meeting:

Reference: S122536/L  
Site: Barwood House, Sydwall Road, Belmont  
Development: Alterations to existing extension comprising replacement windows, new entrance doors, lean to porch, slate roof and internal reordering.  
Comments: Plans have been circulated. Members had no objections to this development. It was noted that Councillor Edwards did not take part in considering this plan or in this meeting, having declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest in this application. Herefordshire Council has been notified of these comments.

Reference: S122529/F  
Site: 21 Northolme Road, Belmont  
Development: Conversion to divide dwelling into one 3 bed house and one 1 bed studio.  
Comments: Members considered this proposed development and expressed concern at the proposed parking arrangements and questioned whether sufficient off

road parking had been provided, noting that parking on the bend of this narrow cul-de-sac would impact on properties further down the road. There were also concerns as increased traffic in this narrow street. The Clerk was instructed to notify Herefordshire Council accordingly.

Reference: S1226096/FH  
Site: 6 Fountains Close, Belmont  
Development: First floor extension over existing garage  
Comments: Members considered this proposal and noted that similar extensions were already in existence in neighbouring properties. There were no objections to these proposals and the Clerk was instructed to notify Herefordshire Council accordingly.

Reference: S122747/O  
Site: Home Far, Belmont  
Development: Outline permission sought for residential development for up to 85 dwellings with access, associated open space, landscaping, infrastructure and parking provision  
Comments: An extension has been requested for this application which represents a large scale development within the parish. It was agreed that consideration of this application be deferred to an extraordinary meeting to be held on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, commencing at 7.30pm. This deferment will enable proper consideration of the application and enable members of the public to make direct representations to the parish council at the Extraordinary meeting..

#### **143/12 Tree planting**

Councillor Hubbard presented his report on proposed tree planting and removals, noting that although in some instances this represented a departure from the previously agreed policy of replacing dead or removed trees with two replacements, he felt some areas were already well provided with appropriate tree planting. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to endorse the recommendations of the tree warden as set out in the separate report.

It was also noted that in their District Councillor role, Councillor Edwards had requested that a tree in Holmfirth Close be pollarded or removed as it was felt to be in appropriate for the location. Similarly, a Poplar tree on the junction of Stanbrook Road and Northolme Road had become overgrown. The Clerk was instructed to request an inspection by Herefordshire Council.

#### **144/12 Delegation of Authority – Roles and Responsibilities**

Members noted that although the Local Government Act requires that decisions of the Parish Council be made in a properly convened Parish Council meeting, some routine decisions could be delegated to either an officer of the Council or a Committee. Further noting that decisions involving expenditure of public funds could not be delegated, Members agreed that the following be adopted as policy of this Parish Council as regards delegation of authority to act:

That in circumstances where legislation permits the delegation of authority to act or make a decision on behalf of Belmont Rural parish Council, any such delegation be made by resolution of the Council as a whole to either an officer of the Council or to a committee of the Council consisting as a minimum of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and one other Parish

Councillor together with the Clerk. No member with a disclosable pecuniary interest in the subject matter to be delegated will be considered eligible to form a commit for such purposes.

#### **145/12 Abbey View Park Signs**

This item was deferred from the last meeting so that a site visit could take place. It was also noted that a letter of objection to the proposal for signs had been received from a household who felt that signs would urbanise the park area.

Following the site visit, and an amendment to the original proposal which was passed, it was agreed to purchase a total of four single double post signs and two traditional wooden signs, plus post inserts, delivery and fitting charge at a total budget not to exceed £2,000.00.

Locations agreed were:

Entrance to Abbey View Park West	Double post sign
2 x Abbey View Park East	Double post signs
Jubilee Field	Double post sign
Abbey View East (gated entrance)	Traditional sign
Jubilee Field (gated entrance)	Traditional sign

Declaring an interest, Councillor Myatt did not take part in the discussion or vote on this agenda item.

#### **146/12 Jubilee Field Wildflower planting**

It was noted that Councillor Edwards abstained from voting on this agenda item and Councillor Myatt, having declared a Discloseable Pecuniary Interest, did not take part in discussions on this agenda item.

Councillor Hubbard reported on a meeting with Amey earlier in the year at which a potential wild flower site had been identified on Jubilee Field. The Clerk provided a map to identify the area which was proposed for planting and reported that Amey has indicated:

- Size of area 480m<sup>2</sup>
- Wetland flower mix to be used
- The cost for the works will be £672 this includes preparation work and supply of wetland wild flower mix.
- Interplant Wetland wildflower perennial plugs to improve success rate which could be undertaken by volunteers.
- Wildflower seeds had been introduced into the spoils of the most recent path across Abbey View Park West towards Home Farm.

Members questioned the statement that wild flowers seeds had been introduced to the edges of the new path as none of the preparation work indicated when this had been discussed had been seen to take place. The Clerk was instructed to challenge this statement. It was also noted that the original budget of £100 had been allocated to the area along the path across Abbey View West rather than Jubilee Field and an overall cost of £672 was felt to be unrealistic for the work envisaged.

A decision was deferred pending further clarification from Amey.

**147/12 Support for Belmont Community Centre’s Application for a Community Technology Grant**

It was agreed to ratify a letter sent by the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council supporting Belmont Community Centre’s application for a Community Technology Grant for the purpose of computer equipment for use by the public at the Centre. The request for support had been received after the last meeting and a response was required between meetings to meeting funding deadlines.

**148/12 Training**

- (a) Councillor Myatt attended an “Enlightened” course by HALC. It was noted that a report on this training is to be circulated to Members.
- (b) The Clerk noted that she had attended a Code of Conduct training session for Clerks and a Finance training session which had also been attended by Councillor Myatt.
- (c) Councillor Schoffer recently attended the HALC AGM
- (d) Members noted the following forthcoming Training sessions by HALC:
  - Saturday November 3<sup>rd</sup> – HINTs Procedures and Finance
  - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November – “Footsteps” – Rights of Way
  - Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November – General Power of Competence
  - Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November – Planning and Community Action
  - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November – Right to Challenge and local assets
  - 6<sup>th</sup> December – Risk Management and Insurance

**150/12 Members Allowances**

Members noted that when the Parish Council had first been formed in 2000, a decision had been taken not to pay Members Allowances. As this was considered some time ago, a review of that decision was due. After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed to confirm the policy not to pay allowances to Members other than to reimburse travel and other expenditure incurred when on approved parish council business.

**151/12 Funding request – Dore Community Transport**

Following a request from Dore Community Transport, it was agreed to make a donation of £100.00 for this year. It was also suggested that as the service is available to residents of Belmont Rural, a notice to that effect be put on noticeboards.

**152/12 Funding Request – Grant towards Santa’s Grotto 2012**

Members considered a request from Newton Farm Community Association for a grant of £500 towards the cost of providing a Santas Grotto for local children at Belmont Community Centre this year. Last year a grant of £350 had been given.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to defer a decision pending further information from the applicants with regard to how funding had been spent last year , what the funding will be used for this year and what other funding sources had been approached. The Clerk was instructed to make the necessary enquiries.

**153/12 Funding request – Belmont Community Centre Community Café**

It was unanimously agreed to offer a grant of £200.00 towards the cost of running a Community Café at Belmont Community Centre. Declaring a non pecuniary interest in this agenda item, Councillor Myatt abstained from voting on this matter.

**154/12 Funding request – Northolme Community Centre Christmas Carol Concert**

It was agreed to provide a grant of £450.00 towards the cost of running the Christmas Carol Concert at Northolme Community Centre on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

**155/12 Parish Matters**

- (a) Members noted that building work had now begun on the extension to Belmont Community Centre
- (b) Councillor Bridges provided a report into his work as a District Councillor since the last meeting, noting in particular ongoing difficulties in getting repairs and maintenance work completed by Amey
- (c) Shrubs around the Belmont Pools area and in particular the blackberry adjacent to the new entrance and steps require cutting back.
- (d) Concern was expressed at the poor state of the gabions on Abbey View Park. The Clerk was instructed to report this to Bruce Chartres at Herefordshire Council.
- (e) It was noted that the wooden foot bridges across the Withy Brook leading from Abbey View Park to Jubilee Field is very slippery when wet and it was suggested that wire netting could be stapled to the bridge to improve the grip. It was also suggested that bark or a similar surface could be used to make the walkway to the bridge more accessible as it had become very muddy when the brook overflowed in September. In connection with this, concern was expressed at the delay in clearing the culvert under the path between Jubilee Field and Abbey View Park which had led to the flooding and damage to the footpath. The Clerk was instructed to Amey and Herefordshire Council to address these issues.
- (f) Councillor Edwards provided a report into his work as District Councillor since the last meeting.

**156/12            Convening the Extraordinary Meeting**

It was unanimously agreed to convene an Extraordinary meeting for the sole purpose of discussing the Parish Council response to an application received by Herefordshire Council for outline planning permission for up to 85 dwellings on land at Home Farm. The meeting will take place on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at 7.30pm at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont. The Clerk agreed to attend at the Centre for one hour before the meeting so that Members and members of the public can view the planning application pack.

It was further agreed to deliver a copy of the notice of meeting (including link reference to Herefordshire Council's planning response site) to every household in the Parish so that members of the public are to be made aware of the meeting if they wish to attend and put forward their views. The flyer is to be delivered by Members as far as possible.

**157/12            Date of next meeting**

Notwithstanding the extraordinary meeting, the next full parish council meeting will take place on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7pm.

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