

# Belmont Rural Parish Council

## Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012 At Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

**Present:** Mr. P. Edwards Chairman  
Mr. A. Bridges  
Mr. D. Cook  
Mr. B. Hubbard  
Mr. R. Loft  
Mr. A. Myatt  
Ms. D. Parish  
Mr. M. Schoffer

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

### 113/12 **Public Participation**

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and explained that the initial 15 minutes would be set aside for matters to be raised by those present but that parish council procedures meant that items not on the published agenda could not be decided but could be deferred to the next meeting.

During this period, the following items were raised:

- (a) A resident from Canterbury Close noted that there had been no action following his complaint at the last meeting that a no ball games sign had been erected on the land at the top of Canterbury Close, preventing children from playing there. He disputed the allegation that the sign had come as a result of another resident claiming that a vehicle had been damaged at that location.
- (b) A group of young people complained about the poor state of the small football pitch outside the Northolme Community Centre which was poorly drained and had a very uneven surface with no grass in patches. It is also far too small and not fit for purpose. It was explained that the Parish Council has asked Herefordshire Council if a pitch can be constructed on top of the bank on Abbey View Park and the Northolme Community Centre Association were investigating raising funding for an all weather surface to replace the existing pitch. It was noted that the former school playing field at Belmont Abbey might be available for football but several noted that it was a little too far for the younger boys to go.

Finally, it was alleged that one boy had been injured on the poor surface at Northolme.

114/12

## **Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

There were no apologies. Declarations of Interest were received as attached to these Minutes.

115/12

## **Co-option of New Councillor**

It was noted that one of the three candidates for co-option had written to the Clerk withdrawing as a candidate. Of the other two candidates, none were in attendance at the meeting. As there were no other candidates presenting at the meeting, this item was deferred until the next meeting.

116/12

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August**

Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August had been previously circulated. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

117/12

## **Clerk's Report**

### **(a) Sydwall Road Footpath**

It was noted that the footpath linking Sydwall Road and the Belmont Road had now been completed although some "bedding down" of the surface was now required. During the initial stages of construction the Clerk and Chairman attended the work and discussed drainage options with the contractors, highlighting areas which were dipped and therefore subject to water collection in winter. Gravel drainage was proposed around these areas. It was also suggested that a further section off the main path be directed to a second gateway off the path and this has been added. The piling of soil against a garage was reported and subsequently raked away from the garage by the contractor.

There remains some stones in the grass areas which may impact on the mowing of the area. The Clerk will report this to Amey. Several people using the new footpath have made favourable comments about it.

### **(b) Play Strategy Review**

As requested at the last meeting the Clerk had reminded Herefordshire Council that a review of non equipped play areas is still awaited. Herefordshire Council officers indicated that the formal county-wide play strategy review undertaken earlier this year but concentrating on equipped areas, will form this review which was not as originally agreed by Parks and Countryside officers when the Abbey View Park Management Plan had been agreed.

The Clerk had also requested a revisit of the former understanding that some form of ball games area could not be engineered on Abbey View Park. Parks and Countryside Department has agreed to look into this further.

### **(c) Abbey View Park Footpath**

Proposals for improving drainage on the existing footpaths around Abbey View Park where

water has collected throughout the summer were requested from Amey and an indication has been received that additional drainage will be installed by Amey shortly.

There are also several areas of the original path that are becoming overgrown with grass and the Clerk has requested a spray back of the vegetation to return the path to its original width. A price of £75 has been suggested and accepted although it is not clear whether further remedial work involving cutting back of the grass will be needed which could, perhaps, be undertaken by volunteers. It was noted that the spray could not be undertaken by volunteers as a licence is needed to use the chemicals needed.

(d) **Parish Handyman**

The Clerk has received two responses to the advertisement for a Parish Handyman, both of whom live within the Parish. It is suggested that forthcoming work requirements be split between the two so that a judgement can be made on cost and quality of workmanship.

(e) **Almshouses**

A response from Development Control on whether work now taking place at the Almshouses is within the scope of the existing planning permission is still awaited.

(f) **Experimental 40 mph speed limit on A465**

Ward Councillors Phil Edwards and Adrian Bridges attended this meeting and gave a report confirming that data gathered showed that the experimental speed limit of 40mph had succeeded in slowing speeds on this section of road although actual numbers of vehicles exceeding the (new) limit had risen slightly. The meeting had indicated no objection to the experimental order being extended and a 50mph limit had been rejected by the meeting. With the emphasis on providing safe crossing areas for people to access Belmont Haywood Country Park, a central reservation had originally requested but was not due to be delivered in the near future and a cost of £20,000 had been estimated for this. A speed indicator device was suggested for this location as a worthwhile investment to encourage drivers to reduce their speed.

(g) **Code of Conduct**

The Clerk confirmed her attendance at a training session on the Code of Conduct on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Accordingly the item on the procedure for dealing with planning applications between meetings had been deferred to the next meeting so that questions regarding declarations of interests can be clarified. Some amendment to Standing Orders might also be necessary following the introduction of the new Code of Conduct.

(h) **Local Government Boundary Commission Review**

As instructed at the last meeting a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission had been submitted. A copy is available from the Clerk, if required.

(i) **Kraftimonkies Holiday Club**

The Clerk has received a report and some photographs from Mrs. Watts on the success of the Kraftimonkies Holiday club this year and members noted with thanks a card and cakes

from the group. . An e-mail in praise of the club has also been received and circulated to Members. The report from Mrs. Watts indicates that participants this year have come from a wide area, including Dorchester Way, Holmfirth Close, Forde Lane and Benedict Close in the parish. There were between 16 and 20 children attending each day.

## **118/12 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch Report**

West Mercia Police were not in attendance but Councillor Edwards reported that Sgt. Daniel Pilkington has now assumed Sgt. Chris Payne's role and is supported by PC Roger Bradley and the Community Support Officers. PC Bradley provides a monthly report which is circulated to Parish Councillors.

Few matters had been reported to the police within the parish other than some minor incidents of anti social behaviour around the Northolme Centre. However in neighbouring Parishes, there had been four instances of attempted fires at the Country Park involving trees or straw bales in a neighbouring farm. A Belmont Haywood Country Park Watch scheme had been successfully launched which has been well supported by residents nearby.

## **119/12 Correspondence**

In addition to routine items of correspondence forwarded to Members between meetings, the following had been received:

- (a) A copy letter from a group of 4 households in Dorchester Way regarding youths using footballs in the small equipped children's play area in Dorchester Way and from youths playing football, drinking and other anti social behaviour in that area. The letter is for information only and addressed to the Parks Department of Herefordshire Council and copied to the local policing team as well as BRPC.
- (b) Correspondence has been received from Mrs. Joyce Clare acting on behalf of the Belmont Community Centre and Northolme Community Centre requesting consideration of a grant to both centres to fund training in Food Hygiene for volunteers at both centres to allow both centres to offer activities requiring this training. The e-mail arrived too late for inclusion in the agenda for this meeting and the Clerk has responded that a request for training for specific individuals could not be met by the Parish Council but perhaps a more general funding request to facilitate activities (to include training) could be met if Members wished. This item will be presented to the next meeting.

## **120/12 Payments/Receipts**

### **(a) Payments**

Authority was given to make the following payments:

|   |           |           |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| E-Mango   |           |           |
| Annual charge for the website hosting and Application support                               | £429.25   |           |
| VAT thereon   | £85.85    |           |
| Total payment:  |           | £515.10   |
| Mazars  |           |           |
| Fees in connection with external audit for the year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012       | £285.00   |           |
| VAT thereon   | £57.00    |           |
| Total payment:  |           | £342.00   |
| Amey Wye Valley Limited   |           |           |
| Construction of footpath from Sydwall Road Across the open space to Belmont Road, as Quoted | £6,788.32 |           |
| Vat thereon   | £1,357.66 |           |
| Total payment   |           | £8,145.98 |
| Mrs. E. Kelso   |           |           |
| Travel expenses to attend website training  |           | £78.40    |
| Penguin Printing  |           |           |
| T-Shirts for Kraftimonkies Holiday Club (ref. grant to Kraftimonies)                        |           | £180.00   |
| MAS Seeds Limited   |           |           |
| Grass and wild flower seeds for Belmont Pools area (ref. grant for seeds)                   | £45.00    |           |
| VAT thereon   | £9.00     |           |
| Total payment   |           | £54.00    |
| Cash  |           |           |
| Petty cash reimbursement  |           | £116.65   |
| Northolme Community Centre Association  |           |           |
| Room hire for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug. meeting  | £25.50    |           |
| Rom hire for Kraftimonkies sessions   | £816.00   |           |
| Total payment:  |           | £841.50   |

(b) **Receipts**

A second reimbursement of the payment made to the inland revenue in error by RBS has been received directly from the Inland Revenue. RBS will be reclaiming this back directly on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

(c) **Balances**

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Current account: | £500.00    |
| Deposit account: | £48,975.47 |
| Petty Cash       | (-£41.65)  |

Current commitments, including cheques to be raised at the meeting but excluding budgeted expenditure not yet formally agreed, amount to £37,054.63.

(d) **Other Financial Matters**

- **External Audit**

The external audit has been received from Mazars with no comments which are required to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council. A notice of the completion of audit will be placed on notice boards shortly.

The Chairman asked that thanks to the Clerk for professionally presenting accounts for audit be recorded.

The Audit Commission has confirmed that with effect from year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Grant Thornton has been appointed as external auditor for Belmont Rural Parish Council. The new fees scale for 2012-2013 suggests an external audit fee of £300.00 (in addition to the internal audit fee) for current projected expenditure.

- **PAYE**

The Parish Council has been asked to move to Real Time Reporting for PAYE purposes by the Inland Revenue as a pilot employer with effect from the September payroll. This has involved a separate audit of PAYE systems and records and new software from the Inland Revenue in order to complete Real Time Reporting. The new system will remove the need for the annual PAYE report although it does now require a specific submission to the Inland Revenue on a set date each month. All employers will be moving to Real Time Reporting within the next two years.

- **Precept**

The second instalment of the precept for this financial year of £22,500.00 will be received on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

## 121/12 **Planning Matters**

(a) **Applications received since the last meeting**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Ref:         | S121985/F  |
| Site:        | Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Avenue, Belmont  |
| Development: | Amendments to approved side extension to the existing Community Centre   |
| Comments:    | Plans have been circulated. Members had no objections to the proposals. Herefordshire Council has advised that permission has been granted for this application. |

Ref: S122243/FH  
Site: 1 Arundel close, Belmont  
Development: Erect and move fence within property boundary  
Comments: This application was discussed at the meeting and it was confirmed that the land proposed to be enclosed did belong to the applicant. Planning permission is required because of the proposed height of the fencing and it was anticipated that the application will be decided by the planning committee rather than a delegated officer decision.

Members expressed concern at the visual impact of the proposed fencing as indicated by the submitted plans and the support posts already installed. The existing fencing is lower than that proposed but includes a section at the top which is open trellis and therefore has much less of an impact than the proposed close boarded fence. Concern was expressed at the impact on neighbouring properties, particularly those opposite the proposed fencing, who had previously enjoyed an area with trees and shrubs which have now been removed. Concern was also expressed at the impact on vehicles driving along Broadholme Road as the location of the proposed fencing – adjacent to the footpath – would restrict the view towards the end of the road where children were known to congregate and play.

Members questioned the proposal to enclose a gas venting gabion into private property which, it was understood, would need to be accessible to public services and although it had been noted that the applicant had indicated that access to the gabion would be retained, it was questioned whether this would be enforceable if the applicant were to sell the property. It was also noted that an attempt has clearly been made to excavate the gabion, presumably by the applicant.

Finally it was noted that there had been no application from the neighbouring property which also owned half of the green space proposed to be fenced. Members felt it would be inappropriate to fence half of the space, if any were to be fence.

The Clerk was instructed to advise Herefordshire Council of these concerns.

**(b) Observations passed to Herefordshire Council since the last meeting**

None other than those noted above.

**(c) Other planning matters**

It was noted that the application by Tesco for a car wash facility in the main car park has been withdrawn.

**122/12 Coppin Rise Play area**

Details of the proposed equipment and layout of the Coppin Rise Play area had been circulated to Members and the Clerk reported that feedback from Members had indicated that the proposal was a little larger than original envisaged or had been suggested to local residents. It was agreed to suggest to Parks and Countryside Department that the larger climbing unit be removed and that the proposed swing set be a double swing rather than a single swing seat, of a size suitable for toddlers. It was also suggested that the whole plan be moved further back on the plan that originally suggested, away from the road.

After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk be authorised to progress this item and to investigate alternative funding sources for this project.

### **123/12            Budget Review**

Members noted the report from the Clerk on expenditure to date against budgeted expenditure indicating that if current expenditure plans are met, reserves in the region of £29,000 will be carried forward in 2013.

It was further noted that an operating budget for 2013-2014 would be put forward for agreement at the October meeting with a view to finalising the precept request for 2013-2014 in December.

### **124/12            Litter Bins**

This agenda item was originally intended to propose additional litter bins for the Northolme Community Centre car park but members noted that these were no longer required.

Councillor Edwards however noted that in addition to the two litter bins currently awaiting installation on Abbey View Park, several bins now require repairs with either the tops or liner sections having been damaged over the months, now requiring replacement. A total of six tops and six liners were now required.

It was also noted that an additional litter bin has been requested for Eastholme Avenue, adjacent to the electricity sub station.

Finally it was noted that the bin in Southolme Road had been dismantled and should be replaced by a larger more substantial bin such as the square design more commonly used by Herefordshire Council in city locations.

After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk be authorised to purchase six tops, six liners, one full bin from the usual supplier Swintex, and to request supply of a county design square bin from Amey for Southolme Road. A budget of £1,500 was agreed for this project, to include installation.

### **125/12            Purchase of replacement shrubs for the Northolme Bed**

It was agreed to purchase 15/16 shrubs to replace those that have died in the bed at junction of Northolme Road and the Tesco roundabout. A budget of £200 was set for this project with shrub species to be agreed by the Chairman, Clerk and Councillor Hubbard.

### **126/12            Jubilee Field Tree Planting**

The Clerk reported that the neighbourhood consultation has been completed with no objections to the proposal to plant six additional trees on Jubilee Field in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee plus an additional four trees to replace those damaged or lost on Jubilee Field area. Amey has indicated a total purchase cost in the region of £650 for the trees to be supplied in November. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the project should go ahead with a total budget of £650 to

include tree stakes and ties. The Clerk was authorised to make the necessary arrangements.

### **127/12 Abbey View Park Signs**

This project envisaged the purchase and installation of signs around Abbey View Park and Jubilee Field with a proposed budget in the region of £2,000 - £2,500. A range of types of name sign and location was proposed. It was agreed to defer this agenda item to the next meeting so that a site visit could be arranged for Members to consider type and location.

### **128/12 Training**

It was noted that the HALC training calendar for the autumn has just been published. Councillor Myatt has indicated that he would like to attend three courses and the Clerk would like to attend at least two in preparation for submission of the CiLCA portfolio. It was agreed to support Councillor Myatt and the Clerk to attend these training events.

### **129/12 Encouraging Volunteers**

It was noted that for several projects currently under review by the Parish Council, volunteers might make a real difference to the work and using volunteers might help generate a sense of community and ownership of the local environment. The Clerk reminded members that volunteering is seen as a real alternative to paid work and a means of providing work experience for those looking for work. Volunteers are legally entitled to safe systems of work etc. so should/must be covered by employer liability insurance as a minimum, should be provided with appropriate tools (if required) and are entitled to reimbursement of legitimate expenses incurred whilst volunteering.

It was agreed that the Clerk investigate this further and request assistance from the Parish Council Liaison Office at Herefordshire Council.

### **130/12 Website**

The Clerk and Councillor Bridges reported on their training session with E-Mango in Bournemouth and presented a report from the Website Steering Group recommending the broad content of the website, to include the following:

- Home page with information about the Parish
- Map of the Parish
- Information on the Council including photographs and contact details of Parish Councillors
- Meeting dates
- The latest agenda
- Past Minutes of meetings
- Details of current planning applications within the Parish
- Links to Parish Council and Herefordshire Council public consultations
- The Annual Report and Annual Return
- Information on the Code of Conduct
- Contact information

Photograph gallery from around the Parish  
Links to other organisations such as the Community Centres  
A feedback form for members of the public to give feedback on the website.

It was agreed to support and adopt the recommendations of the Steering Group regarding website content and noted that a tentative “live” date of January 2013.

### **131/12           Footpath Maintenance**

As requested at the last meeting, the Clerk had requested a spray back of vegetation along the footpaths around Abbey View Park as in places this had narrowed the path considerably. A quote of £75.00 had been received and this was agreed by those present although it was noted that some cutting back of the vegetation is likely to be needed in places. In response to a question from a member of the public in attendance, members noted that this was one activity that could not be assigned to a volunteer as a licence and appropriate public liability insurance is required to use the chemicals used for weed spraying.

### **132/12           Parish Matters**

(a) Members noted that Belmont Community Centre has been successful in seeking planning permission for changes to the agreed plans for the Centre’s extension. Contractors are to be appointed in mid October.

(b) The Tree Warden reported that a survey of trees within the parish had identified that two trees have died in Coppin Rise and two others need to be replaced.

In response to a question raised, it was noted that Herefordshire Council policy is not to cut back trees or remove branches unless there was a safety reason to do so. Cutting back trees that overhang private gardens or that block light was against Herefordshire Council policy.

(c) Councillor Bridges presented his Ward Councillor report.

(d) Councillor Edwards presented his Ward Councillor report.

(e) It was noted that there appears to be subsidence around a drain in Haywood Lane and it was suggested that a vehicle had been damaged by it. Amey are aware of this and will be effective repairs.

(f) It was noted that the current electrical cable replacement works within the parish was likely to take some three months. Multiple contractors were involved in the project with the result that periods of apparent inactivity were noticeable as contractors to complete different sections of the work were engaged.

(g) A request had been made for a bench within the toddler play area at the Northolme Centre. Councillor Parish reported that she had asked SHARP to donate a bench.

133/12

**Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7pm.

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