

# BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at Northome Community Centre,  
Northolme Road, Belmont

**Present:** Mr. M. Schoffer Chairman  
Mr. A. Bridges  
D. Cook  
Mr. P. Edwards  
Mr. R. Loft  
Ms. G. Powell

**In attendance:** Mrs. E. Kelso Clerk  
1 Member of the public

## 065/11 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors Hubbard, Myatt and Taylor.

Councillors Bridges, Edwards and Powell declared a personal interest in agenda items 8, 9 and 20 as Members of another authority.

## 066/11 Minutes of previous meetings

### (a) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May had been previously circulated. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign these as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

### (b) Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010

Minutes of a parish meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010 had been previously circulated. It was agreed that subject to correction of a typographical error (initialled by the Chairman) that the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

### (c) Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May had been circulated. Subject to corrections as indicated and initialled by the Chairman, it was agreed that the Chairman sign the minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

**067/11 Clerk's Report****(a) Parish Plan Steering Group**

Members noted that the Parish Plan Steering Group is in the process of interpreting the data from the questionnaires sent out before the elections. To that end, the group has agreed to pay for the data to be gathered by the Internal auditor at an agreed cost of £100.00. This is within the budget figure authorised by the Parish Council last year.

**(b) Information signage for Abbey View Park**

It was noted that costs are not yet available for the simple signage proposed for Abbey View Park.

**(c) Weedspray**

It was noted that a partial weedspray had taken place but inclement weather immediately afterwards had prevented its completion. Councillor Edwards would pursue this matter as District Councillor.

**(d) CCTV Installation at Northolme Community Centre**

It was confirmed that NCCA has provided copies of invoices for the installation of the CCTV equipment to the Clerk/RFOs satisfaction.

**(e) Abbey View Park Footpath**

The final section of the footpath across Abbey View Park has now been completed along the route which brings the footpath closer to the brook than the actual CH7 path. An invoice for the originally quoted price of £12,259.54, plus VAT, has been received and was presented for authorisation for payment elsewhere on the agenda.

**(f) Home Farm**

Members were reminded that a developer, Lion Court Homes, has expressed an interest in a development on part of land currently forming part of Home Farm. Developers have provided an update on their discussions with Herefordshire Council planning department and the parks and countryside department and whilst there is no indication of whether an application for planning permission is likely to be forthcoming, if at all, it was noted that Lion Court Homes may request attendance at a forthcoming parish council meeting to explain their proposals further. Should any individual member receive an approach from the developers, this should be referred to the Clerk.

**(g) Repairs and Maintenance**

Councillor Myatt and Councillor Cook have undertaken essential repairs and maintenance to the parish council owned notice boards and the bench in Coppin Rise on a voluntary basis. The work has now been completed and both Councillors Myatt and Cook were thanked for their hard work. All the boards and bench are very much improved.

## 068/11 Report from West Mercia Police/Parish Watch

West Mercia police were not in attendance.

As Parish Watch co-ordinator, Councillor Edwards reported that there had been no incidents reported to him. He noted that he had recently attended a meeting with West Mercia police and representatives from areas reporting anti social behaviour issues aimed at targeting resources where needed in areas with on going problems.

## 069/11 Correspondence

Other than items of correspondence addressed elsewhere on the agenda, the following items of correspondence have been received by the Clerk:

- A Herefordshire Council policy statement on the felling of amenity trees. This is not a new document but will be forwarded to the joint tree wardens for information.
- Information on a budget and finance workshop being run by HALC on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July from 7pm to 9pm at Brockington, at a cost of £25.00. Members were invited to notify the Clerk if they wished to attend.
- As reported in newspapers, Herefordshire Council has published it's proposal to change the mobile library services, home delivery service and the establishment of community libraries. These proposals do not affect residents within Belmont Rural and the library service has confirmed that the branch library at Belmont is to remain although changes have not yet been ruled out.

## 070/11 Payments/Receipts

### (a) Payments

Authority was given to make the following payments:

Herefordshire Council Contribution towards cost of fencing of children's Play area at Northolme, as agreed		£2,000.00
HALC Provision of temporary Clerk to attend and Minute Parish Meeting on 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2010	£100.00	
Parish Councillor training events as agreed	£175.00	
Total payment		£275.00
Amey Wye Valley Limited Footpath D to A on Abbey View Park	£12,259.54	
VAT thereon	£2,451.91	
Total payment		£14,711.45
Information Commissioner Annual Fee for Data Protection Registration		£35.00

Northolme Community Centre Association Room hire for meetings held on 12 <sup>th</sup> May (training event) And Parish Council meetings on 19 <sup>th</sup> May		£37.50
Mr. R. Rose		
Agreed fee for undertaking internal audit fo the year to 31.3.2010	£120.00	
Fee for analysing parish plan data	£100.00	
Total payment		£220.00
Cash		
Reimbursement of petty cash		£177.22

**(b) Receipts**

The Clerk confirmed that the VAT repayment from 2010-2011 has now been received in the amount of £2,762.23.

**(c) Balances**

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£55,818.03
Petty cash:	-£102.22

Current commitments amount to £23,472.17

**072/11 Planning Matters**

One planning application had been received on the day of the meeting. The Clerk will circulate details and respond on behalf of the parish council under delegated powers.

**073/11 Community Transport and Public Transport consultation**

Details of this consultation by Herefordshire Council, which had been provided to Members, is aimed at identifying priorities for bus users and the wider community with a view to informing decisions about future services in the light of budget restrictions. Members noted that early morning and weekend services are currently subsidised by Herefordshire Council and therefore the subject of the current consultation.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that of the unsubsidised services, the Saturday daytime, Saturday evening and Sunday services were to be put forward as priority services and the Clerk was instructed to respond accordingly. It was also noted that as these services originated from or travelled through neighbouring parishes, the parish council could combine with neighbouring parishes in calling for these services to be retained.

During a period of public participation on this subject, it was noted that reducing bus services would almost certainly increase traffic congestion as people would be forced to use individual cars rather than a single bus.

**074/11 To consider response to draft Charter for Town and Parish Councils**

The draft Charter for Town and Parish Councils had been previously circulated. Following clarification of the status of “parish meeting” noted in the opening paragraphs, Members wished the following comments to be brought to HALCs attention:

- Paragraph 2 states that all councils will be encouraged to set up and maintain websites for the communities and to link into partner websites. Members felt this would impose an unnecessary burden on smaller parish councils in particular who lacked the equipment or technical expertise to maintain a website for their parish.
- Comments regarding Quality Council status and the Power of Well Being may not be required as changes brought about through the Localism Bill may lead to a different “quality” status for parish councils.

The clerk was instructed to notify HALC accordingly.

**075/11 To receive reports from HALC Training sessions attended**

Members noted a report from the Chairman on training courses attended recently. Following a brief discussion, it was noted that members did question the value of the training sessions as the individual leading the sessions simply read from printed notes. It was felt that as much could be gained from a copy of the notes rather than attending the course. Feedback was not routinely obtained after these sessions so highlighting these to HALC at the training session was not possible. The Clerk was instructed to provide feedback to HALC.

**076/11 To receive and approve the report from the Annual Internal Audit Review Working Party**

Members noted the report from the Annual Internal Audit Review Working Party and resolved to accept the report and its recommendations. It was further agreed that the Annual Internal Audit Review statement as attached to these minutes be agreed and that the Chairman be authorised to sign the statement on behalf of the Parish Council.

**077/11 To receive and approve Annual Return**

The Clerk explained that the Annual Return is required to be submitted to external auditors, Mazars, and based upon accounting statements as presented and agreed at the last meeting. Going through each of the sections of the Annual Return, Members considered each statement under the Annual Statement of Assurance separately, as per the attached copy. Finally it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk be authorised to sign the Annual Return and supporting statements on behalf of the parish council. The clerk was instructed to forward the Annual Return to the external auditors for their audit.

**078/11 To receive and approve Annual Risk Management Review Report**

It was noted that the working party had met to consider the annual risk management review and a copy of their report had been previously circulated to Members. It was unanimously agreed to accept the report and recommendations contained therein.

**079/11 To approve Annual Report to Residents**

The draft report had been previously provided to Members. It was noted that line spacing required adjustment in places and it was further agreed that text should be right justified to improve presentation. Subject to these amendments, the draft Annual Report was approved.

The method of delivering the report to residents was considered and it was generally agreed that hand delivery was preferred to delivery through the Admag or Hereford Journal as delivery through the local newspaper had not proved particularly effective in the past, albeit that the cost was low. The Clerk was instructed to investigate delivery through the postal service (i.e. delivered by the postman but not necessary as individually addressed mail). It was agreed that an overall budget of £650.00 be approved to cover printing and delivery costs.

**080/11 Review of Parish Council banking arrangements**

It was confirmed that all Members have now attended Royal Bank of Scotland to provide proof of identity so that the revised bank mandate can be accepted by RBS.

Following some of the difficulties experienced by Members when attending RBS, members considered whether to remain with Royal Bank of Scotland or to consider moving accounts elsewhere. The Clerk reported that advice from other Clerks recommended Unity Bank, which is part of the Co-op Bank. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that BRPC accounts should remain with Royal Bank of Scotland as the bank had clearly made efforts to rectify the poor customer service Members had experienced recently.

**081/11 Review of Communications Policy**

It was agreed that the Communications Policy as previously circulated to Members be accepted. No amendments were considered necessary.

**082/11 To review and confirm Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme**

It was agreed that the Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme as previously circulated to Members be accepted. No amendments were considered necessary.

## **083/11 Website**

It was noted that proposals in the Localism Bill assumed that parish councils have their own websites but many do not. BRPC forwards its approved Minutes for inclusion on a local website which was set up and is currently maintained by a local volunteer and Members considered whether a website should be set up to be managed solely by the Parish Council. Noting with thanks the current volunteers offer to pass over the website and fund the domain name fee this year, it would be necessary for appropriate software to be purchased and for one or more people to be trained to maintain a site.

There being a number of options open to the Parish Council, it was agreed that a working party be formed to look at the options and implications of setting up a Belmont Rural Parish Council website and that the working party report back to a future parish council meeting with an analysis of the options available, appropriate costs and recommendations. Councillors Powell, Bridges, Schoffer and Cook agreed to form the working party.

## **084/11 Data Protection Registration for Individuals**

Members noted guidance produced by HALC recently in which they state that some Parish Councillors may require individual Data Protection registration and not just rely on the parish council registration. District/Ward Councillors have been guided to obtain individual registration for some years but the role of a District/Ward councillor does differ from a parish councillor as the former is more likely to represent individual residents in matters relating to the District Council's responsibilities. Such individual representation is less likely at parish council level, particularly where correspondence etc. is directed to the Clerk in accordance with BRPCs communications policy. Members were advised that retaining supporting papers from parish council meetings or copies of correspondence could be deemed to be processing data in accordance with the Act, requiring individual registration and shredding or disposing securely of documents relating to parish council business immediately after their use was recommended.

Members were further advised that individual registration was a matter of personal choice for each individual, at a cost of £35.00 each. This cost could not be met from Parish Council funds.

## **085/11 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and Fields in Trust**

Members noted the request for nomination for sites to be considered as potential Fields in Trust in connection with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. It was also noted that Belmont/Haywood Country Park and land at Argyll Rise had been put forward to Hereford City Council. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk be instructed to request whether the public open space at Northolme Road and Sydwall Road were suitable for consideration for Fields in Trust.

**086/11 Parish Matters**

- (a) It was agreed that a request be made to remove two supermarket trolleys from alongside the CH7 footpath by the bridge into Wyedean Rise and alongside the boundary with Hunderton.
- (b) A number of hedges and shrubs are now growing over the footpath and pavements in several places but notably along Whitefriars Road between Flaxley Drive and Sydwall Road. The Clerk was instructed to report this to Herefordshire Council.
- (c) Garden rubbish has been thrown over the fence in Yarlinton Mill. The Clerk was instructed to report this to the enforcement officers at Herefordshire Council as this is considered fly tipping.
- (d) An advertisement in the Hereford Times by the Woodland Trust states that they are looking for sites to plant trees as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. It was agreed that the Clerk write to Parks and Countryside Manager at Herefordshire Council to request consideration of the Woodland Trust scheme to increase planting around the land behind Dorchester Way.
- (e) It was reported that a vehicle has been parking across the gate which provides access to the land behind Dorchester Way, adjacent to number 56. The gate is padlocked and there are no formal parking restrictions at this site. It was noted that the parish council has no powers to enforce parking restrictions but it was agreed that the Clerk bring this to the attention of the parks and countryside manager at Herefordshire Council.
- (f) Concern was expressed at the quality of work undertaken by Herefordshire Council contractors, believed to be Amey, in the ponds area and in particular that sandbags have been left behind the fencing by the dip in the Callow Road. Further concern was expressed at the way eight trees have been reduced in height leaving several metres of trunk. It was agreed that this be referred to Herefordshire Council.
- (g) It was noted that one of the steps at the end of Westholme Road leading to Haywood Lane has worked loose. This is to be reported to Herefordshire Council.

**087/11 Public Participation**

During the final period for public participation, no further items were raised that had not been addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

**088/11 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place at 7:15pm on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 at the Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm.