

**Belmont Rural Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting held on
Thursday 2nd August 2012 at
Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont**

Present:	Mr. P. J. Edwards	Chairman
	Mr. A. Bridges	
	Mr. D. Cook	
	Mr. R. Loft	
	Ms. D. Parish	
	Mr. M. Schoffer	
In attendance:	Mrs. E. Kelso	Clerk
	Ms. Y. Tustain	Herefordshire Council – agenda item 11 only
	5 members of the public	

097/12 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were noted from Councillor Andy Myatt and Councillor Brian Hubbard, both on holiday.

Declarations of interest were received as follows:

Councillor Mark Schoffer	Declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 (Minute ref. 110/12) as a member of the Friends of Belmont-Haywood Country Park
Councillor Phil Edwards	Declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 (Minute ref. 110/12) as Member of Herefordshire Council and the South Wye Partnership
Councillor Des Parish	Declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 (Minute ref. 110/12) as a member of the Friends of Belmont-Haywood Country Park
Councillor Adrian Bridges	Declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 as a member of Herefordshire Council and a non pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 (Minute ref. 102/12) in respect of a payment made to a family member for work undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council.

098/12 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th June had been circulated previously. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign these as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

099/12 **Clerk's Report**

(a) Vacancy

The vacancy arising out of the resignation of Councillor Powell had been advertised by the Elections Office and confirmation that no request for an election has been received. Formal notices have been placed on notice boards and it was agreed to formally co-opt a candidate at the September meeting.

(b) Website

Councillor Bridges and the Clerk will travel to Bournemouth for training on the website on Thursday 23rd August. It was agreed to meet the costs of attending this training.

(c) Amey/Grass Cutting

Whilst there has been some improvement in the grass cutting since the last meeting other matters referred to Amey have yet to be addressed. Ward councillors both reported pressing Amey for improvements to the level and standard of service, stressing the importance of maintaining standards.

(d) Coppin Rise Play Area

Detailed proposals for the installation of play equipment had been received from Fran White, but too late to be discussed at the meeting. The matter was therefore deferred for discussion at the meeting in September. In the meantime a copy of the proposal was provided to Members who were requested to pass any comments or queries to the clerk so that these can be addressed at the next meeting.

(e) Sydwall Road Footpath

It was noted that work on this should start within the next two weeks.

(f) Weed spray

Following the weed spray as reported last month, it was noted that most of the parish had a road sweep this week although Yarlington Mill and Coppin Rise have not yet been swept and it was questioned whether the weed spray had covered all areas.

(g) Shrubs in Wheatridge Road

It was noted that a response to a request to Parks and Countryside for additional shrubs in Wheatridge Road to dissuade youngsters from kicking footballs at fences is still awaited. Councillor Edwards agreed to follow this up on receipt of copy correspondence from the Clerk.

(h) Canterbury Close/Tintern Close No Ball Games Sign

Following a report of damage to a vehicle in Canterbury Close, a no ball games sign has been installed by Parks and Countryside Dept. on the area of grass immediately adjacent to the children's play area at the top of Canterbury Close. A member of the public in attendance at the meeting disputed the alleged damage to a vehicle and wished to lodge a complaint that his children were now no longer able to play with a ball on this area of public open space which is very close to their home. He also noted that following installation of the sign, his children had been verbally abused by a householder when they tried to play in the area and police had been called on one occasion because they tried to play there.

The Chairman noted that a promised survey of available non-equipped play areas had been awaited now for nearly two years which was to look at where children were to play if they wanted active rather than equipped play. He also noted that much of the land at that location had only one grass cut each year as it was a habitat for field mice. It was agreed that the Clerk would pass on these concerns to Herefordshire Council.

(i) Footpath from Dorchester Way to Home Farm

Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman met with Andy Middlecote of Amey regarding the drainage of the path from Dorchester Way to Home Farm stile and discussed ways of preventing water running over the lower section of that path. The surface is to be made good and an earth bund created to channel water into the existing drainage ditch rather than over the surface of the path.

During the visit other areas on the original footpath around Abbey View Park were also discussed with reference to drainage issues and we await Amey's proposals to improve drainage there too.

(j) Relief Road Report

As noted at the last meeting, no comments from members were forthcoming on the report into the Relief Road although Ward Councillors noted that they had responded in their District Councillor role.

(k) Annual Return

The Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2012 has been forwarded to Auditors, Mazars. No response has yet been received but the period for electors to view the accounts has now finished and no requests were received by the Clerk.

(l) Annual Report to Residents

This has now been printed and is in the process of being delivered to households, along with the quarterly newsletter produced by Roderick Robinson. The Clerk has had no feedback, positive or negative, from residents.

(m) Wildflowers for Belmont Pools

The Clerk has received details of the proposed plants for the wildflower area at Belmont Pools

and confirmed that the seed requested by Mr. Ryecroft will be delivered to him within the next few days.

(n) Jubilee Field Tree Planting

The Clerk has suggested the alternative trees to Amey and is awaiting comments. In the meantime a draft consultation document for the few houses overlooking the proposed planting area has been prepared and Members were asked to forward any comments to the Clerk within the next week .

(o) Belmont Medical Centre Notice Board

Councillor Andy Myatt and Ron Morgan have removed the old board and repaired it successfully so that a replacement board is not required immediately. Total cost of repair has amounted to £136.90 which is considerably cheaper than a replacement board. Both were thanked for working on this project.

(p) Parish Handyman Services

The advertisement for a Parish Handyman was presented to Members with a request for comments/feedback to the clerk within the next week.

(q) Almshouse work

The Clerk has raised the matter of work now taking place on the Almshouses. The Development Control Officer is to investigate and report back.

100/12 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch Report

West Mercia Police were not in attendance at the meeting so Councillor Edwards presented the parish watch report noting that there were few reports during the preceding month. Two tents have been abandoned on Abbey View Park by children/youngsters camping there and the tents would be removed shortly.

101/12 Correspondence – including public participation

The following items of correspondence had been received since the last meeting and were noted:

- (a) A progress report from Belmont Community Centre on work towards the extension to the Centre which BRPC has committed to support with a grant of £7,000 towards the cost.
- (b) A consultation paper on payments by parish and community councils and charter trustees. This document/consultation proposes changing the current requirement for orders for payment by Parish Councils to be signed by two Parish Councillors, enabling Parish Councils to take advantage of electronic payment methods. Members were requested to forward comments or observations on this document to the Clerk by 10th August.
- (c) A letter has been received from Graham Hornsby, Traffic Engineer for Amey, inviting a representative of Belmont Rural to attend a meeting on Friday 17th August on the Experimental

40 mpg Speed Limit on the A465 between the Tesco roundabout and Ruckhall Lane which has been in place since mid December 2011 and is due to expire mid June 2013. It was noted that all Ward Councillors were also invited to the meeting in their Ward role and agreed that Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bridges be authorised to represent the Parish Council at that meeting. In the meantime, the letter and attached data would be circulated and comments/feedback to the Clerk was requested by 10th August.

(d) Period for public participation

During the period set aside for public participation, it was noted that garden rubbish that has been left by the planter in Westholme Road is still there. This has been reported to the enforcement officers but a reminder will be issued.

As noted above a request was received from a resident to remove the “no ball games” sign on the public open space at the top of Canterbury Close. The Clerk will register the family’s concerns with Parks and Countryside.

102/12 Payments/Receipts

(a) Payments

In accordance with financial standing orders, the Clerk reported raising a cheque for £113.02 between meetings to reimburse Councillor Myatt for materials purchased to repair the notice board.

Authorisation was given to make the following payments:

Mrs. K. Bridges		
Delivery of Annual Report & Newsletter		£120.00
ABC Print		
Printing of Annual Report		£278.00
PIP Printing		
Printing of Newsletter		£148.55
Datacenta		
VAT for registration of belmontrural-pc-gov.uk		£25.00
Northolme Community Centre Association		
Room hire for June meeting		£25.50
Cash		
Petty Cash Reimbursement		£135.83
Amey Wye Valley Limited		
Footpath payment deferred from last meeting		
Construction cost	£11,416.68	
VAT thereon	£2,838.34	
Total payment		£13,700.02

(b) Receipts

£6.31 has been received from Royal Bank of Scotland on 30th June representing bank interest for the quarter to 30th June 2012.

(c) Balances

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£64,693.35 – excluding current commitments
Petty cash:	(£60.83)

Current commitments amount to £40,196.90 inclusive of cheques raised at this meeting.

103/12 Planning Matters**(a) Applications received since the last meeting**

Ref:	S121789FH
Site:	13 Green Ash Close, Belmont
Development:	Demolition of existing garage and proposed extension
Comments:	This was agreed that whilst Members had no objections in principle to the proposed development, Herefordshire Council be requested to consider conditioning the applicant to providing an additional car parking space within the property boundary in recognition that an additional bedroom was being created and parking within the garage removed.

(b) Responses sent since last meeting

None

104/12 Code of Conduct

It was unanimously agreed that the model Code of Conduct as attached to these Minutes be adopted by this Parish Council.

Members noted that training is to be made available for Clerks in September as Clerks are to be the first point of contact for queries relating to the application of the Code under the enabling regulations.

105/12 Training

Members noted that the Clerk had attended a preliminary Code of Conduct briefing on 1st August. Giving a brief report, the Clerk noted that the legislation is not clear and advice and guidance was changing as national guidance becomes available. Once the further training for Clerks has taken place, an in house informal training session will be scheduled so that Members can be clear what

their responsibilities are.

Members were also reminded that the Clerk and Councilor Bridges are to attend website training in Bournemouth on 23rd August.

106/12 Presentation on Park & Share and Park & Cycle Scheme

Ms. Yvonne Tunstain, representing Herefordshire Council, explained the Destination Hereford project which promotes sustainable travel, car sharing, cycling and walking. The Park and Share and Park and Cycle scheme aims at identifying car parking facilities where people living outside Hereford could park their vehicles outside the City and either meet up and share a car into the City Centre or perhaps cycle or use public transport into the City. Two car parking spaces have been identified at the Northolme Community Centre and were already being used by people who then cycle into Hereford.

Members noted ongoing requests to improve the cycle routes into Hereford as current surfaces have potholes and improvement to the CH7 footway towards Belmont Abbey is currently prioritised as third in line for work which will potentially facilitate park and cycle from the NHS Trust Headquarters into Hereford and promote cycling as a route for NHS staff working at Belmont Abbey.

Whilst no other potential car parking was identified within the parish, it was noted that a new car park linked to the Country Park would shortly be available off Waterfield Road and a rarely used car park by the football pitches at the top of Newton Farm might be an option as the Shaw Cycleway is alongside.

Finally members noted that improvements to public transport and the bus service in particular should be a priority to encourage residents not to drive into Hereford City.

107/12 Proposed amendment to policy on public participation at meetings

Following a request at an earlier meeting for the period for public participation to be brought forward, Members noted and agreed that the current practice for allowing public participation on each relevant agenda item as the meeting progresses would be continued.

Noting that items not on the agenda could not be debated at a meeting under Local Government Law, members considered options for when members of the public could raise additional items. After some debate it was agreed (with one abstention) that a period of no more than fifteen (15) minutes would be set aside at the start of each meeting when members of the public could raise items of concern which are not related to agenda items. This would enable those members of the public to leave after this session if they wished. It was noted that for contentious items this would require the Chairman to strictly control this period. It was further agreed that the Clerk would prepare a notice for the notice boards to explain this change and that this procedure would be reviewed in six months.

108/12 Amendment to procedure for dealing with planning applications between meetings

Members noted that this amendment to the procedure for dealing with planning applications has come as a result of new guidelines issued by the National Association of Local Councils and also as a result of changes from the Localism Act with regard to declarations of interest. It was agreed that a decision on the amendments should be deferred until further clarification has been received on the application of the Code of Conduct.

109/12 Local Government Boundary Commission Review

This item was introduced by Councillor Edwards as one of the Ward councillors, explaining that the Boundary Commission had indicated support of Herefordshire Council's indication that the council size could be reduced from 58 members down to 54 and the next stage of the review entailed ward shape and sizes across the county.

The draft mapping proposals, as provided to Members, had been rejected by Herefordshire Council but further consultation was now taking place and concerns had been expressed that adoption of a purely numerical based warding ignored the unique characters of existing communities some of which stood to be split by the new ward boundaries. The proposals envisaged generally single member wards with the result that Belmont Rural would be a single ward, albeit that the ward total would exceed the recommended 2,630 electorate currently and would substantially exceed this figure if the proposed development on Home Farm land were to go ahead.

In discussing these proposals, Members noted that some wards had particular characteristics that benefited from a multi member team and ensured that if a ward councillor were unable to respond to an issue due to absence or ill health for example, another ward member would be sufficiently familiar with the area to provide additional cover or support and this would be lost if all wards were single member wards. It was also felt that inadequate consideration had been given to community identities where natural boundaries resulted in a larger than recommended numbers within the ward. Furthermore, in some wards, facilities and services were accessible and well used by residents from more than one ward.

The Clerk was instructed to draft observations accordingly.

110/12 Footpath at Belmont Pools

Members noted a request from Herefordshire Council/Amey for funding to improve the access to Belmont Pools at the end of Westholme Road by removing the current steps and replacing these with a sloped access. The project had originally been identified last year and a provisional budget allocation of £5,000 had been agreed at the time. A detailed costing now indicated a cost of £6,772.90 and a formal request for funding for this has now been received.

Noting that the gate beyond the current steps is not scheduled for replacement as part of this project but may be the subject of separate funding at a later date, and noting that there would appear to be an apparent requirement for the gate or steps to be closed whilst works progress, it was proposed by Councillor Parish and seconded by Councillor Bridges that this request for funding be agreed. The resolution was carried and the Clerk was instructed to notify Herefordshire Council

accordingly.

111/12 Parish Matters

- (a) The poor state of maintenance around the parish was commented upon with weed growth, potholes in the roads and litter particularly in the Yarlinton Mill/Coppin Rise area.
- (b) Councillor Bridges presented his report on his work as a Ward Councillor, as attached to these Minutes.
- (c) Councillor Edwards also presented his report on his work as a Ward Councillor, as attached to these Minutes.
- (d) It was noted that the road in Haywood Lane seems to be subsiding again, adjacent to the new posts by Belmont Pools. Councillor Edwards agreed to take this up.

112/12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 13th September 2012 at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7pm with public participation.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21.55.