

BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on 4th April 2013 At Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont

Present: Mr. P. Edwards Chairman
Mr. K. Baynham
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
PC Roger Bradley
PCSO Kevin Powell
3 members of the public

042/13 Public Participation

There were no items raised under public participation.

043/13 Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

There were no apologies or requests for dispensation. Declarations of interest were made as follows:

Name	Nature of Interest	Agenda item
Councillor A. Bridges	Non disclosable pecuniary interest as a Director and Trustee of Northolme Community Centre and in connection with payment to Mrs. K. Bridges	8 & 9
Councillor A. Myatt	Non disclosable pecuniary interest as a Trustee of South Wye Community Association and Director of Northolme Community Centre Association. Non disclosable pecuniary interest as resident overlooking Jubilee Field	8, 9, 14, 15 & 16.
Councillor D. Parish	Non disclosable pecuniary interest as Director of Northolme Community Centre Association	8 & 9

044/13 Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2013

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February had been circulated. It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

045/13 Clerk's Report

(a) Salt Bins

The Clerk has received correspondence from two residents of Coppin Rise regarding the item from the last meeting whereby a request was made for the salt bin in Coppin Rise to be moved to Silver Fir Close. Residents were unhappy at the request for the bin to be moved, citing the incline on Coppin Rise requiring a salt bin. Whilst members acknowledge there is a slight incline in Coppin Rise, it was felt that there was a greater need in Silver Fir Close where the steep slope ending in Belmont Pools had caused severe problems for residents. At the time of the request to Amey to move the salt bin, it had been indicated that no additional bins were available. However, Amey had found an additional bin.

(b) Grass Cutting

Members noted that the promised grass cut at the end of March could not take place due to the weather. Amey has confirmed its intention to cut the grass as soon as possible in early April and to complete the wild flower sowing at the same time.

(c) Abbey View Park Signs

The signs have now been installed.

(d) Southolme Road Litter Bin

This has now been installed and the cheque has been released to Amey. It was noted however that the bin had not been emptied and the Clerk was instructed to request it be emptied along with the other bins in the area.

(e) Herefordshire County Diamond Award

No names were put forward for consideration for this award from Belmont Rural.

(f) Replacement shrubs for Westholme Road planter

Councillor Hubbard noted that due to the weather, no progress had been made on this item but would be completed within the next few weeks.

046/13 West Mercia Police/Parish Watch Report

Representatives from West Mercia Police in attendance at the meeting outlined the events earlier in the week that led to two stabbing incidents, one of which was on the path linking Golden Post with the Parish. Those responsible had been arrested quickly and police were thanked for their swift response to these events.

Also noted were two burglaries that had taken place in March where again the perpetrator had been arrested.

Members were reminded of the local police Twitter account which could provide information on events occurring locally.

047/13 Report from the Finance Working Party

Members noted the report from the Finance Working Party which had met on 19th March, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes.

The Clerk provided an update on the Annual External Audit which is being carried out by new auditors, Grant Thornton this year. The audit date has been set for 17th June which means that the period when the Annual Return and supporting documents must be available for public inspection will start on 17th May. This brings forward the date when accounts must be finalised by some considerable amount this year.

048/13 Information item: Correspondence

Other than routine items or items which are the subject of a separate agenda item, the following items were noted:

- a local policing plan from West Mercia Police. Comments on the plan are invited and should be forwarded to the Clerk.
- A Neighbourhood Planning event will be held at the Town Hall on 25th April at 6pm, entitled “Neighbourhood Planning, a year on”. Members wishing to attend, were instructed to notify the Clerk so that a place can be reserved.
- Background information on Herefordshire Council’s financial status has been passed to Members by Councillor Adrian Bridges in his Ward Councillor role.

049/13 Financial Matters

(a) Payments/Receipts

Approval was given to make the following payments:

Mrs. K. Bridges		
Distribution of quarterly newsletter		£120.00
Northolme Community Centre Association		
Room hire for February meeting		£25.50
R.G. Howells		
Repairs to notice board at Belmont Centre	£78.69	
Survey and repairs to litter bins	£58.50	
Total payment:		£137.19

South Wye Community Association		
Grant as agreed for computer equipment	£732.00	
Grant as agreed for film/photo club	£850.00	
Total payment:		£1,582.00
Herefordshire Association of Local Councils		
Subscription for 2013-2014	£718.27	
VAT thereon	£143.65	
Total payment:		£861.92
Herefordshire Association of Local Councils		
Training fees for Fun with Finance seminar		
2 delegates	£50.00	
Training fee for RTI seminar 1 delegate	£10.00	
VAT thereon	£12.00	
Total Payment:		£72.00
PIP Printing		
Printing of Quarterly Newsletter		£144.00
Cash		
Petty Cash Reimbursement		£90.65

(b) Receipts

None since the last meeting

(c) Balances

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£32,168.91
Petty Cash:	£34.35

Current commitments, including cheques raised at this meeting amount to: £4,021.26.

(d) VAT

The Clerk has submitted the annual VAT reclaim amounting to £5,422.42.

050/13 Planning Matters

(a) Applications received since the last meeting

Ref:	130360
Site:	22 Holmfirth Close, Belmont
Development:	Proposed extension to firm additional accommodation
Comments:	Plans have been circulated and a site visit held by the planning working party. Members expressed concern that the proposed development would bring the building line too close to neighbouring properties and have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of those properties. It was also noted that a proposal to pave the grassed area in front of the house might result in the loss of a tree and a request was made to retain the tree. Finally, a question was raised about the ownership of

a strip of land at the front of the property which appears to be footpath. The applicant had indicated an intention to pave this area which might result in a much narrower access to neighbouring properties than currently available. A revised site plan is now available online showing this pavement as being retained. The clerk has discussed this application with the planning officer who has indicated that the application is likely to be granted.

(b) Notification of decisions since the last meeting

Ref: 123439
Site: Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont
Development: Extension and installation of solar panels
Comments: Approved with conditions

Ref: 130049
Site: 8 Northolme Road, Belmont
Development: Construction of a single storey extension
Comments: Approved with conditions.

(c) Other Planning Matters

Members noted that applicants have appealed against the refusal of permission for the development at Home Farm and Belmont Rural Parish Council may, if it wishes, be represented at the Inquiry. Dates for this are under discussion but are likely to be in July. Previous documentation sent by to the planning authority in connection with this application will form part of the Inquiry so representation is not required unless further comments/observations are to be put forward. It was agreed that the Clerk remind Members of the content of the letter of objection so that other items can be highlighted if appropriate. In particular, Members were reminded to consider items that could be included if permission is granted and were advised to consider the terms of the possible s106 agreement, a draft of which was provided to Members. Due to possible changes in legislation with regard to section 106 agreements, one option to be considered was to ensure that an agreed S106 agreement be rolled forward when the Community Infrastructure Levy is introduced.

051/13 Core Strategy consultation

Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy document has been circulated amongst Members with a request for feedback so that a consensus response can be formulated. It was agreed that comments be provided to the Clerk within the next week.

052/13 Coppin Rise Play Area Update

It was noted that a closed top litter bin is still awaited for this site and confirmation that the boulders are not too close to the fencing will be required before the formal opening of the play area.

053/13 Neighbourhood Planning

The report from the initial meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group was noted.

054/13 South Wye Partnership

Members noted the paper prepared by Nina Bridges on the future of the South Wye Partnership. It was generally felt that there was insufficient information on achievements or future proposals to make a decision on whether to provide funding to support this partnership. The Clerk was instructed to seek further information for consideration at the next meeting.

055/13 Community Right to Bid – Identification of land/property to be designated as being of Community Interest

Members noted that under the Community Right to Bid, property not in the ownership of Belmont Rural Parish Council could be identified as beneficial to the community on a register kept for this purpose by Herefordshire Council. If that property is placed on the open market for sale, BRPC would be informed and have the option to indicate whether it wished to purchase that property at the market value.

After some discussion, the following were identified as appropriate for this register:

- Northolme Community Centre and car park
- Belmont Community Centre and car park
- Abbey View Park East
- Abbey View Park West
- Jubilee Field
- River access from Northolme Play area

The Clerk was instructed to make the necessary arrangements to include these on the appropriate register.

056/13 To consider proposals to complete work on the area linking Abbey View Park East with Jubilee Field

- (a) **Installation of bird mouth fencing along the linking section (former pathway) at a cost of £1,283.36 (plus VAT).**

Members considered the quote provided by Amey and were concerned at the cost. The clerk was instructed to see further advice from Amey on the specification of the work suggested. It was also noted that an alternative might be to build up boulders on the outflow side of the slope, thus reducing the need for fencing to one side only.

- (b) **Supply and installation of boulders to complete the “waterfall” side of the path to secure the soil at that location, at a cost of £619.37.**

This item was deferred pending a revised quotation to include items discussed under (a) above.

- (c) **Installation of new path across linking section to the gate to Jubilee Field at a cost of £2,858.46.**

Noting that this quotation was for the path to be extended to the gate to Jubilee Field, it was proposed by Councillor Parish and seconded by Councillor Edwards that this quotation be accepted. The resolution was passed with 5 votes for and 4 against. Councillor Hubbard asked that his vote against the resolution be recorded.

- (d) **Information Board**

Members noted a suggestion that an information board be installed documenting the history of Abbey View Park. It was agreed that the Clerk be instructed to investigate this further with a view to a project being presented for consideration at a later meeting.

057/13 To consider proposals for repairs to existing pathways around Abbey View Park East

Members expressed concern that a quoted cost of £1,109.35 had been given to effect repairs to the existing pathways around Abbey View Park East when some of the damage had been caused by contractors not acknowledging advice given about water pooling when the original specification had been raised. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, one additional Councillor and the Clerk be authorised to clarify exactly what is proposed for this work and to agree a reduced cost.

058/13 To report on work on Northolme playing field

Members noted that following the commitment by Herefordshire Council in January to make the kick about area a priority, the Clerk had been pressing for plans to improve the area and in particular to address the drainage issues. Despite a reluctance on Herefordshire Council's part to discuss the area, it had been agreed at the end of February that a review of the area would be conducted by a drainage expert, the cost of which would come from the limited maintenance budget held by Amey to maintain play areas. However, whilst waiting for dates for an on site meeting, Amey/Herefordshire Council met with a local resident and Councillor Glenda Vaughan-Powell on site and agreed that the maintenance budget would instead be used to re-seed the goal mouth area only. This work has been carried out and was followed by flooding and snow so it remains to be seen if the partial repairs have been effective.

After much discussion, the Clerk has obtained agreement from Herefordshire Council to look again at the drainage issue so dates for the site meeting are still awaited and there has been a commitment to fund this feasibility study by Herefordshire Council.

059/13 To consider request for a grant from Citizens Advice Bureaux

It was agreed that a donation of £300.00 be granted to Citizens Advice Bureaux in recognition of the value of the work of that organisation for members of the community.

060/13 Training

(a) To consider requests for training

It was agreed that Councillor Andy Myatt attend a seminar on assessing Rural Housing Needs which is scheduled for Wednesday 17th April. There is no charge for this seminar.

Members noted that Councillor Myatt and the Clerk recently attended “Fun with Finance” by HALC on 25th March.

(b) Reports from training sessions

- Hereford Locality Meeting – 27th February.

Attended by Councillor Parish and the Clerk, it was noted that the main theme to this session was addressing speed issues. One of the points arising out of the session covered the psychology of drivers speed and how most drivers adjusted their speed according to their surroundings rather than specifically as a reaction to a sign indicating a speed limit. This suggests that creating a visual change in the local environment could lead to a reduction in driver speed. It was suggested that perhaps a “welcome to Belmont” sign might be as effective at reducing traffic speed as a speed limit sign. It was agreed to consider this further at a later date.

- Fun with Finance – 25th March. Attended by Councillor Myatt and the Clerk and included a presentation by NALC’s finance expert, Peter Lacy. Councillor Myatt and the Clerk gave a brief report on this session, concentrating in particular on the impact of the change in Government funding for council tax benefit as it relates to precept setting.

061/13 To convene the Annual Parish Meeting

After a brief discussion on the merits of holding the Annual Parish Meeting on a separate day from the Annual Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting for 2013 be held on Thursday 16th May 2013 at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 18.30, to be followed immediately by the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting will primarily be to provide an opportunity for local organisations working within the Parish to present residents with a report on their activities during the year.

062/13 Parish Matters

- (a) Members noted a report from Councillor Myatt on progress of the building work at the Belmont Community Centre, including a formal invitation to Members to attend the opening of the extension on 8th May.
- (b) Councillor Bridges gave a verbal report on his activities as a Ward Councillor since the last meeting, including pressing for repairs to potholes and an update on the installation of white light LED lights along Abbotsmead and Northolme Roads.

- (c) It was reported that damage by water to the approach to the footbridge from Abbey View East to Jubilee Field had left a deep 'V' on the ground which makes it difficult for walkers. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Councillor and Clerk be authorised to address this with Amey when discussing repairs to the footpaths on Abbey View East.
- (d) It was noted that the passageway between the Medical Centre and Yarlington Mill has finally been swept.
- (e) Some damage to the bench near to the Parish Map has been noted. The Clerk was instructed to request a quotation for repair from the Parish Handyman.
- (f) Councillor Edwards gave a report on activities as a Ward Councillor since the last meeting, as attached to these Minutes.

063/13 Date of next meeting

The next Parish Council meeting – the Annual Parish Council meeting - will be held on Thursday 16th May, at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing on completion of the Annual Parish Meeting.

064/13 Confidential Item

In accordance with Standing Orders, this item was considered without Members of the public in attendance.

Members discussed a libellous statement made on a public website by a Herefordshire Council Councillor. It was agreed:

- That legal advice be sought from or with the help of HALC as to remedies that might be available to the Parish Council, and
- That a formal letter be sent to the said Councillor demanding that the libellous statement be removed from the public website within a specified time period and a formal apology on said website be published, and
- That a formal complaint be made to the Local Standards Board in accordance with procedures for breach of the Code of Conduct.

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

APPENDIX 1

Ward Councillor Phil Edwards

Report to Belmont Rural Parish Council

04.04.2013

1. **A465 Belmont Main Road** to the City has serious surface break up & sinking under & adjacent to the great Western Way over bridge City side of The Oval at Newton Farm, Belmont.
2. **A465 Belmont Main Road** to the City has surface sinking and potholes on the Oval Newton farm Housing to Hunderton Housing Area Pedestrian Crossing.
3. **Abbotsmead Road access to Belmont Tesco** (37,000 vehicles per week) mini-roundabout has potholes which appear dangerous to cycles and motor-cycles.
4. **Abbotsmead Road access to Belmont Tesco Load Bay** continues to suffer for very poor temporary repaired surface within the anti-skid surface area where the pedestrian crossing is present.
5. **Westholme RD** Belmont has sinking highway drain surrounds opposite No 4 Westholme Rd.
6. **Southolme rd to waterfield Rd** mini-roundabout has (again) serious potholes developed since the last attempt to fill by ‘ apparent throwing tarmac off the back of a truck’ a few weeks ago.
7. **Waterfield Road potholes just round the corner from Carwardine green,** to the rear of Newton cottages area.
8. **And finally, as a Herefordshire Council Member attempting to promote ‘safe cycling within the City’ I am becoming increasingly concerned of the general state of our City Highways & Cycleways, noting many appear somewhat ‘unsafe’ to actually cycle on!**

Parish Matters- Cllr AM Myatt
Submission to Belmont Rural Parish Council
Thursday 4 April 2013

Belmont Centre News

On behalf of the South Wye Community Association I am pleased to report that we are in receipt of the Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 December 2012 and anticipate that these will be approved by the Management Committee at its next meeting on Tuesday 9 April. A copy of the signed Statements will be submitted to BRPC as soon as it is available.

Work is progressing well with the Belmont Community Centre main room extension and it should be completed by Friday 12 April, though the floor covering and blinds will be fitted the following week. The Official Opening is on Wednesday 8 May and members of the Parish Council are cordially invited to attend.

The Association has received a further communication from our neighbour, concerning her erroneous claim to the Association's land. It was dated 8 March 2013. This followed our letter dated 12 December 2012 saying categorically she had no claim to our property. As our neighbour's letter totally lacked any substance, our solicitor advised we ignore it. The Clerk has a copy of our neighbour's latest missive.

We have not received any contrary communication from Herefordshire Council and believe Belmont Library is safe for another twelve months. However we have been notified by the council that the 20% discretionary council tax relief that the South Wye Community Association and other charities receive on their properties is being reviewed during the course of this financial year, with an inference that the Belmont Centre may have to pay some part of a business rate in tax year 2014/15. This would be most unhelpful and could threaten the centre's financial viability.

Meanwhile we are pleased to advise the Parish Council that we have received a support grant of £968 from the Street Foundation / HR Smith Ltd. This is intended to finance the room rental charges of the Tots Group and Community Cafe for at least the next six months. Further, two new volunteers have joined the Belmont Centre group and we look forward to their help and assistance in the coming months. We hope to fully utilise their knowledge and expertise to increase the activities we can offer to the local community.

