

# **Belmont Rural**

## **Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. M. Schoffer	Chairman
	Mr. A. Bridges	
	Mr. D. Cook	
	Mr. P. Edwards	
	Mr. B. Hubbard	
	Mr. R. Loft	
	Mr. A. Myatt	
	Ms. G. Powell	
	Mr. S. Taylor	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mrs. E. Kelso	Clerk
	Dr. David Nicholson	Herefordshire Council
	Councillor Russell Hamilton	Herefordshire Council
	17 members of the public	

### **122/11                      Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Edwards, Powell and Bridges declared a personal interest in agenda item 9, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Briefing, as members of another local authority – Herefordshire Council. Councillor Bridges also declared a personal interest in agenda item 12, Commemorative Benches, as a director of Northolme Community Centre Association. Councillor Myatt declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 13 and 14, both in connection with Belmont Community Centre, as a director/treasurer of South Wye Community Association.

### **123/11                      Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September have been previously circulated. Subject to an amendment to reflect that Councillor Bridges declared an interest in an agenda item which had not been previously recorded, it was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

It was formally agreed that Agenda Item 9, Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Briefing be discussed as the next agenda item so that members of the public from the parish of Clehonger who had attended for this item only, could leave the meeting at the end of this agenda item. Discussions under this item are recorded in Minute reference 130/11 below.

**(a) Fencing of the Playbuilder site at Northolme**

It was reported at the last meeting that this would take place in mid October. Amey has advised that work should start no later than 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The fencing is currently being held by Parks and Countryside Department.

**(b) Election costs**

Herefordshire Council has now amended the provisional notice of election costs. The charge for the uncontested election last May has now been set at £105.72

**(c) PC Iris**

An electronic highways defect reporting system, PC Iris, is now live. It will produce reports on outstanding highways defects and allow defects to be automatically reported to Amey.

**(d) Abbey View Park**

Following the last meeting, the grass in Abbey View Park has been cut as promised by Amey. The Clerk has received several positive comments from nearby residents who have viewed the grass cutting as an improvement. There has also been one letter of complaint from a resident in Oulton Avenue who expressed a preference for the unmowed grass. The Clerk has responded by outlining the proposals for the management of that land.

The “no dog fouling” signs have been ordered and are expected to be delivered shortly.

**(e) Christmas Carol Concert**

A donation of £500 towards the staging of a Christmas Carol Concert at Northolme Community Centre was agreed earlier in the year. The organisers of the concert have now requested payment of the donation

**(f) Salt Bins**

The Clerk has received confirmation from Amey that one salt bin has been allocated to the Parish this year for installation on the bus route in Dorchester Way.

**(g) 2012-2011 Precept**

In previous years the deadline for setting the precept for the next financial year has been end December. The Clerk has been advised that this has been delayed this year to allow for further consultation and negotiation between Parishes and Herefordshire Council with regard to payment for certain services and to allow those parishes who have indicated a commitment to participatory budgeting this year, to consult with their public. As a result, the deadline for submitting precept requests has been extended to end January 2012. It was agreed however that the precept discussion meeting remain set for December as originally planned but the final figure

be agreed or confirmed at the January meeting to allow for any adjustments that may be required.

(h) **Litter bins**

The Clerk is currently holding one spare litter bin for installation at a location at the top end of Abbey View Park, as discussed at the last meeting. It was agreed that a bin be located by the two Dorchester Way entrances to Abbey View Park that currently do not have bins nearby and a second spare be purchase to meet this need. It was further noted that although some individuals do not act responsibly no matter how many bins are provided, the majority of residents do appear to use the bins as evidenced by how full they are each week prior to emptying.

(i) **Planning**

Herefordshire council has now announced that electronic notifications of planning applications will start this month and for the next 12 months, a paper copy can also be provided by Planning Services, if requested. Thereafter, there are proposals to only offer paper copies at a charge to the parish council.

The Clerk reported that the agreed laptop will now need to be purchased to facilitate viewing of applications at meetings in future.

## **125/11 Report from West Mercia Police/Parish Watch**

West Mercia police were not in attendance at this meeting and did not provide a report.

It was noted that litter in Wheatridge Road was causing concern and local police were increasing patrols within the area.

Members noted that the telephone number for non-emergency calls to the police will change to 101. Calls cost 15p per call, regardless of length.

Finally it was noted that a burglary had been reported in Dorchester Way with thieves gaining entrance through a rear window. Car keys and a vehicle were stolen. It is understood that MOD police are dealing with this incident.

## **126/11 Correspondence**

The following items of correspondence have been received since the last meeting:

- Letter from Northolme Community Centre Association advising that the hourly rate for hiring the hall will increase to £9.00 per hour with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December and £10.00 per hour for parties.
- Letter from Natalia Silver at Herefordshire Council advising that a questionnaire will be delivered to all households in the County during the weeks commencing 31<sup>st</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> November regarding the demand for high speed broadband service in Herefordshire. The questionnaire will be accompanied by a leaflet explaining the benefits of high speed broadband.

- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has issued guidance notes on the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. This Code of Practice requires larger councils with a gross annual income or expenditure of at least £200,000, all principal authorities and other bodies such as the police, fire and rescue and National Park authorities in England, to publish data on expenditure over £500, on salaries of senior officers which are in excess of £58,200, organisations charts, contracts, grants to the voluntary sector, assets owned and other financial information. BRPC will not be required to comply with this Code of Practice.
- The Festival Housing Group, one of the providers of social housing in Herefordshire, has provided a copy of their Annual Report and Accounts. A copy is available from the Clerk
- Herefordshire Council has advised of an Active Travel Day to be held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November from 10am to 3pm at Whitecross School which will provide an opportunity to find out about walking and cycling in Herefordshire.
- A letter has been received from Stan Gyford regarding a campaign to oppose proposed parking charges at Queenswood Country Park.
- The Local Government Boundary Commission has indicated that it wishes to conduct a further electoral review of Herefordshire beginning in February 2012 with the aim of improving electoral equality and to ensure as far as possible that all Ward Councillors have a similar number of electors. Parish Councils are invited to a meeting at 7pm on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at Brockington about how they can contribute and comment on the proposals. It was noted that this might offer an opportunity to change the Ward name from Belmont as it is a cause for some confusion amongst residents as to the difference between the Unitary Authority Ward and Belmont Rural parish.
- Similarly, the Boundary Commission for England is to review Parliamentary constituencies in England in 2013 and are currently consulting on proposals until 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Details are available on the Boundary Commission for England's website.
- Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire NHS are to undertake a series of budget consultation events throughout Herefordshire. These events are part of the "participatory budgeting" system being adopted whereby members of the public are able to question and influence budgetary decisions. There is an event for Hereford which is being held at Whitecross School on 21<sup>st</sup> November from 18.30 – 20.30. An option to take part electronically is being developed but details are not yet available. It was noted that Belmont Ward Councillors have requested an additional meeting/consultation take place in South Wye.

## 127/11                      **Payments/Receipts**

### **(a)      Payments**

Authority was given to make the following payments:

Mrs. C. Watts Donation as agreed	£100.00
It was noted that receipts for the agreed toys have yet to be provided to the Clerk so the cheque will be withheld pending receipt of the requested evidence of expenditure	
Northolme Community Centre Association Donation towards Christmas Carol Concert	£500.00
Dore Community Transport Donation as agreed	£100.00
Herefordshire Council Election Charges	£105.72
Northolme Community Centre Association Room hire for September meeting	£22.50
Cash Petty Cash reimbursement	£82.24

### **(b)      Receipts**

The sum of £4.53 in bank interest was received on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

### **(c)      Balances**

Current account:	£500.00
Deposit account:	£56,978.02
Petty Cash:	(£7.24)

Current commitments (including cheques noted above) amount to £7,410.46

## 128/11                      **Planning Matters**

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

None

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

Ref:                      DMS111636/F and DMS111637/L  
Site:                      Chapel and Almshouses, Wenlock Close, Belmont  
Development:          Refurbishment of interior. Re-instatement of chimneys.  
                                 Construction of basement extension to provide new lounge and

dining area. Replacement of windows and doors. Hard landscaping and landscaping of grounds.

Comments: Plans were circulated. Members wished to stress the importance of ensuring any materials used within the development are in keeping with the original building and the need to ensure that the proposed design does not result in (former) landfill gasses entering the property. Members also recommended that a further bat survey is carried out if the development does not commence within 12 months, as recommended by Natural England.

**(c) Planning Decisions received since the last meeting**

Ref: DMS111879/FH  
Site: 5 Romsey Drive, Belmont  
Development: Proposed conservatory to rear of property  
Comments: Approved with conditions

Ref: DMS112326/FH  
Site: 29 Holmfirth Close, Belmont  
Development: Proposed first floor extension  
Comments: Approved with conditions.

**129/11 Training**

Members who have attended training and/or advisory sessions since the last meeting to delivered a short report on the training received.

- Neighbourhood Planning – 02/11/2011

The Clerk and three Members attended a briefing on neighbourhood planning given by HALC/Herefordshire Council at The Three Counties Hotel. Neighbourhood Plans provide supplementary planning guidance to the Local Development Framework and BRPC will need to consider whether to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan in the future. It was agreed to consider this at a future date when protocols and regulations have been announced.

- HALC AGM

Councillor Powell reported on the HALC AGM, noting in particular the proposal to increase subscriptions and training costs in the forthcoming year.

**130/11 Local Development Framework - Core Strategy Briefing**

Dr. David Nicholson and Councillor Russell Hamilton presented a brief update on the Local Development Framework proposals, concentrating in particular on the draft proposals for the Western Relief Road and an update on developer interest in Home Farm and it's impact on the identified housing need within Herefordshire in the plan period.

It was noted that although Hereford is still expected to remain as the main focus for new development to support regeneration, lower number of houses are now being proposed

than previously suggested. Interest had been expressed in part of Home Farm but initial indications suggested that the ancient parkland nature of the proposed site would make this site unsuitable for housing development to the extent proposed.

Opening the meeting to questions from the floor, members of the public expressed considerable concern at the proposed Western Relief Road and the uncertain route published on the Herefordshire Council website and provided by the Forward Planning Team to this meeting. Multiple options within the “corridor” proposed could indicate a route through existing local housing or very near to it and through Belmont Golf Course. Members of the public also expressed concern that the proposals, which had originally been drawn up along a route as close to the City as possible and linking with the current Rotherwas Access Road, would result in an unacceptable deterioration in air quality both locally and within the City and an increase in local noise levels. It was further noted that it was likely to be some time before a definitive route for this road would be identified.

On the close of the public participation period for this agenda item, it was agreed that Members should submit further comment on the proposals to the Clerk within the next week so that a draft response to the consultation can be prepared by the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council.

## **131/11                      Budget Review**

The Clerk presented the review of expenditure to date against budget and a revised forecast of expenditure for this financial year. Current projections, based on known decisions/proposals indicate reserves in the region of £35,000 this financial year, a slight reduction on last year.

In response to a query with regard to recommended reserve levels, it was noted that there are differing views on an appropriate level of reserves for parish councils ranging from an amount to cover operating costs as a minimum to an amount equivalent to a full year’s annual precept. Parish Councils are empowered to build reserves to meet a specific future project/capital cost and this should be indicated in the Annual Accounts.

Members noted the review as presented by the Clerk and raised no further questions.

## **132/11                      Clerks Terms and Conditions of Employment**

In accordance with the Clerks Contract, this item was discussed without members of the public present.

The Clerk reported that as a result of changes in procedures and regulations and frequent briefings and updates from Herefordshire Council regarding working with Parish Councils, the Clerk was working an average 19.68 hours per week, compared with her contractual hours of 15 per week, and does not claim overtime for hours worked in excess of 15.

After some discussion, it was agreed by 8 votes for and one abstention, that the Clerks salary be increased to reflect a working week of 21 hours, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011. No change to the scale rate was considered appropriate at this stage.

**133/11**

### **Commemorative benches**

Members noted that following the installation of two commemorative benches last year on Abbey View Park, a further two requests have been passed to Herefordshire Council for further benches on Abbey View Park. Herefordshire Council policy is to purchase and install benches which can be dedicated in memory of an individual upon payment of a donation by the requestors; the donation being equivalent to the cost of the bench. With regard to the request for two additional benches, Members noted that results of the Parish Plan survey indicated that residents were in favour of benches on Abbey View Park.

Friends and family of the late Eric Burford are currently fund raising to cover the cost of a bench at an agreed location adjacent to the toddler play area at Northolme. It was proposed by Councillor Edwards and seconded by Councillor Hubbard that an amount of up to £300.00 be provided to Herefordshire Council towards the cost of a bench at this location in the event that the fund raising failed to raise sufficient funds to cover the cost of the bench. The resolution was agreed and the Clerk was instructed to notify Herefordshire Council accordingly.

**134/11**

### **Application for funding – Belmont Community Centre – Window blinds**

Members considered an application for funding from Belmont Community Centre towards the cost of new blinds for the larger new windows on the top floor of the Belmont Centre. After presenting this item and answering Members questions, Councillor Andy Myatt, declaring a prejudicial interest in this agenda item, left the room

After a brief debate, it was agreed that Belmont Rural Parish Council will purchase the proposed blinds for the Belmont Centre up to a maximum value of £500.00 and donate the blinds to Belmont Community Centre.

Councillor Myatt then returned to the meeting.

**135/11**

### **Application for funding – Belmont Community Centre – Main Room Extension**

Councillor Andy Myatt declared a prejudicial interest in this agenda item and after introducing the item and responding to questions from Members, left the room.

Members noted that Belmont Community Centre had planning permission to extend the main room at the Community Centre and was actively seeking funding to meet the estimated cost. Initial approaches suggested that the Veolia Trust might consider an application but would want to see some commitment for funding from another source first. Belmont Community Centre therefore requested consideration of a grant of up to £7,000 towards the cost of this project.

It was unanimously agreed to offer a grant of £7,000 towards the cost of the room extension at Belmont Community Centre, such funding to be retained by the Parish Council until such time as the building work commences or funds are required by the Community Centre for this project.

Councillor Myatt then returned to the meeting.

### **136/11                      Application for funding – Citizens Advice Bureaux**

It was proposed by Councillor Brian Hubbard and seconded by Councillor David Cook that a donation of £250.00 be made to Citizens Advice Bureaux. The resolution was carried unanimously.

### **137/11                      Parish Matters**

- It was noted that the parish notice board in Dorchester Way is damaged. Councillor Myatt volunteered to attempt a repair.
- Councillor Myatt reported that some minor incidents of anti social behaviour had been reported to police at the Belmont Centre.
- Members were reminded of the Christmas Carol Concert at the Northolme Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> December. Donations of raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated by the organising committee.
- It was agreed that ID badges would be issued to Parish Councillors.
- The Clerk was instructed to follow up on several matters with Parks and Countryside Department including the proposal to use voluntary help with local maintenance projects and the replacement of trees and shrubs that had died last year.
- It was noted that there was no further progress to report on the installation of additional hard edges to the Tesco roundabout.
- A free wildplay session for children will be held at the Northolme Centre on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December, starting at 11am.
- The Clerk was instructed to report potholes on the roundabout junction between Waterfield Road and Southolme Road.
- Councillor Powell has reported an abandoned Tesco trolley in Yarlington Mill.
- Councillor Edwards provided a report into his activities as a District Councillor, including:
  - Reporting a defective street light in Shellingham Way
  - Litter picking Withy Brook whilst free of flowing water
  - Inspected the brook course between Belmont and Clehonger
  - Arranged Ward Member meeting with Quality Control Manager of Amey Herefordshire
  - Participated in Belmont Haywood Country Park Community Meeting
  - Requesting brown signs – Ducks Crossing Road
  - Responded to County Scrutiny Review of Planning System
  - Responded to County Strategic Planning Future of Herefordshire
  - Notified homes on Western edge of the Parish of County Planning Officers attendance at meeting

**138/11                      Public participation**

There were no further matters raised by members of the public present.

**139/11                      Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December at Northolme Community Centre, Northolme Road, Belmont, commencing at 7.15pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9.55pm