



Belmont Rural Parish Council

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Belmont Rural Parish Council held at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Road Belmont HR2 7UQ on Thursday 10th October 2024 (Postponed 12th September 2024) at 7.30 pm.

Councillors Present

Cllr Adrian Bridges
Cllr Neil Hooper
Cllr Des Parish

In attendance

Tony Ford -Parish Clerk

Members of the public - One

1. Apologies

All Councillors were present

2. Written requests for Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest on agenda items.

Councillor	Yes	No	Agenda Item	Reason	Disclosure
Cllr Adrian Bridges		√			
Cllr Neil Hooper		√			
Cllr Des Parish		√			

4. Minutes

There was no meeting on 11th July 2024 (The Parish Council noted that the minutes for Thursday 14th September 2024 (Postponed 11th July 2024) and Thursday 10th October 2024 (Postponed 12th September 2024) would be approved at the November 2024 meeting.

5. Councillor Vacancy

The Parish Council noted the resignation of Cllr Aimee Bridges and that her last meeting was on 14th September 2024.

Action Clerk to inform Herefordshire Council.

6. Public Participation

There were no questions from the public and the Parish Council noted Cllr Mark Dykes apologies.

7. Bench on Abbey View East

Cllr Des Parish was of the view that the request should have come from the person making the request rather than a third party, the Clerk informed the Parish Council that in view of the circumstances for the request it was likely that the person could not put their mind to it, however if the Parish Council agreed to the request, the requester (SP) would be asked to confirm direct to the Parish Council and pay the agreed cost before the Parish Council progressed the mater.

Cllr Adrian Bridges reminded the Parish Council that the council had a method statement for installation having previously had benches installed in the area. Having considered the request, the Parsh Council was

happy to proceed, and agreed the location on the photograph attached, the Clerk was asked to send a design to PR, with estimated costs for forwarding to the requester.

Action – Clerk to action as agreed.

8. Naming of Un-named Brook

Cllr Des Parish was of the view that may other people do a good job, there was also a few groups doing good work on the Wye, having may brooks/streams unnamed is normal and thought if you named a brook once others could follow, in addition the lady does not live in the parish. If the group wanted to take it further, they should raise the matter with Herefordshire Council, under the circumstances she would not be supporting the request.

Cllr Neil Hooper expressed the view that may people did good deeds across the parish, and they have not made such a request. Cllr Hooper also asked what happened to the data collected.

The Parishioner submitted addition information to the meeting and informed the Parish Council that he had made the request to Herefordshire Council who passed onto the Environment Agency, who passed him back to Herefordshire Council, who passed him onto the Parish Council.

Having considered the matter the Parish Council agreed that the Clerk would write to Herefordshire Council informing them that the request had been considered by the Parish Council, and that it did not have the authority to name the brook and therefore left the matter with them.

Action Parishioner to give the Clerk contact details for Herefordshire Council.

Action Clerk to inform Herefordshire Council of the Parish Councils comments.

9. Planning Application- Three Counties Hotel, Hereford, HR2 7BP(242050)

Application for variation of condition 2 following grant of planning permission 231703 (Demolition of existing hotel and associated structures and erection of Class E foodstore with associated access, parking, servicing, drainage and landscaping)- To increase the store size in order to reflect the current and updated store format of Lidl GB Ltd.

Having considered the matter, the Parish Council resolved to object to the increase in size.

Action Clerk to inform Herefordshire Council.

10. Previous Actions

There was no update.

11. Finance

11.1. The Parish Council noted payments made under delegated authority due to the original meeting being postponed.

Ref	Payee	Amount £	VAT	Detail
1	Colin Warne	694.34	N/a	01-09-24(409) Lengthsman August 2024 (£686.00, Petrol £8.34)
2	Tudors Building Supplies(Hereford) Ltd	297.31	49.55	7058854,7060120- Building Materials - Northolme Infants Play Area.
3	H M Revenue & Customs	253.41	N/a	PAYE P5
4	H M Revenue & Customs	253.61	N/a	PAYE P6
5	HALC	300.00	50.00	02-07-24 (H2234) Internal Audit 2023/24

11.2. The Parish Council noted payments made under delegated authority

Ref	Payee	Amount £	VAT	Detail
1	Kedal Ltd	2,257.20	376.20	31-05-24 (PO43797) – materials Northolme Infants Play Area.
2	DCM Projects Ltd	20,064.00	3,344.00	25-07-24 (21524) Play Area Mulch
3	Colin Warne	490.00	N/a	30-07-24 (402) Lengthsmn– June 2024
4	South Wye Community Association	30.00	N/a	31-07-24 (13100) Hall Hire 11-07-24
5	Tudor Building Supplies (Hereford) Ltd	118.91	19.82	29-07-24 (7058100) Building Materials - Northolme Infants Play Area
6	South Wye Community Association	45.00	N/a	31-05-24 (13069) Hall Hire 09-05-24
7	H M Revenue & Customs	254.35	N/a	PAYE P2

11.3. The Parish Council noted Direct Debits

Ref	Payee	Amount £	VAT	Detail
1	Allstar	75.33	12.55	29-07-24 – Mower Fuel
2	Allstar	44.64	7.44	28-08-24 – Mower Fuel

11.4. Receipts - Nil

11.5. To receive an update on account balances as at 31-08-24- £130,340.35.(Appendix 1 refers)

12. Review of Activities

The Parish Councils review of activities at its meeting identified the following activities.

- **Abbey View East and Jubilee Field Footpath**
- **Playpark improvements**
- **Support service for older people** (The Parish Council was mindful of the cut in the winter fuel payment and that there was likely to be residents in Belmont unable to complete the Pension Credit Application Form and therefore would work with trustees of local Community Centres to develop support in this area. Cllr Adrian Bridges informed the Parish Council that there was a South Wye Community Association Trustee meeting at which he would raise the matter, he also highlighted that there was a close working relationship with Talk Community Hub.)
- **Possible Election fees**
- **Tree Surgery work**

13. Review of Reserves

The Parish Council completed its review of reserves (Appendix 2 refers)

14. Register of Interest Forms

It was noted that currently only Cllr Adrian Bridges and Cllr Aimee Bridges had form on the site, Cllr Des Parish confirmed that she had completed a new form and handed in her form at the council offices in Plough Lane. Cllr Neil Hooper agreed to complete a new form.

15. HomeFarm -Tree Preservation Order

The Parish Council noted TPO 691 Home Farm Belmont Hereford (Provisional) (Appendix 3 refers)

16. Local Drainage Fund

The Parish Council considered and noted correspondence from Herefordshire Council.

17. Lengthsman Scheme 2024/25

The Parish Council considered and noted the correspondence from Herefordshire Council regarding the process for claiming grant.

18. Abbey View East

Having discussed the matter, it was agreed that the Clerk would check the grass cutting schedule to see when the annual cut was due and follow up with Balfour Beatty.

Action Clerk to check the grass cutting schedule to see when the annual cut was due and follow up with Balfour Beatty.

19. Dead trees – Sydwell Drive and Wheatridge Road

Having considered the issue, the Parish Council agreed that the matter be referred to Herefordshire Council

Action Clerk to inform Herefordshire Council.

20. Police Charter

Having considered the matter, the Parish Council agreed the following updates the Police Charter.

1. Criminal Damage - graffiti
2. Anti-Social Driving – on Abbotsmead Road.
3. Drugs- Abbey View East – by the River Wye.

Action Clerk to update the Charter and send to West Mercia Police.

21. Transfer of Domain Name

Having considered correspondence from Besthost, the Parish Council agree to the transfer to Openstrike.

Action Clerk to inform Besthost.

22. HALC Information Corner 22-08-24

The Parish Council considered and noted the contents of HALC Information Corner.

23. For Information Items

The Parish Council noted the Clerks, Report on For Information Items.(No discussion)

24. Matters relayed to the Clerk for agenda items at the next meeting.

- Trees on Coppin Rise Play Area.
- Steps – Northolme/ Abbey View East. (Design to be submitted)
- Brooks in the Parish Cutting Back.

At the request of the Chairman Agenda Item 27 was not treated as confidential and was considered next.

Item 27 Abbey View East/Jubilee Field Footpath

Cllr Adrian Bridges informed the Parish Council that the fees in the report (Appendix 4 refers) should be higher. The Parish Council noted the report.

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that rather than do the project piece meal it would be cheaper to do the whole project, and that the Parish Council should now also consider this option, this would mean getting a professional firm to access the project to confirm if the Parish Councils design would work bearing in mind the flooding issue on some parts of the footpath in addition to the landfill site membrane and if the Parish Council design would not work what other options were open to the Parish Council, the firm would be asked to cost the project which would allow the Parish Council to identify other sources of possible funding.

Having considered the matter, the Parish Council agreed to the Clerk ascertain firms including speaking to Mr Agate at Balfour Beatty to see if he could recommend anyone. It was also agreed that going forward site visits would be arranged with individual firms who showed an interest.

Action Clerk to get names of potential consultants.

25. Confirmation of Date, time, and Location of the next meeting

Thursday **14th November 2024** pm to be held at Belmont Community Centre

The Parish Council resolved to go into closed session

26. Clerks Salary

The Parish Council approved the Clerks Salary August and September and authorised the Chairman to sign payroll records.

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation at 31-08-24

CURRENT ACCOUNT		
Opening 1st April 2024		17,543.37
Add		
	Receipts	32,834.91
		50,378.28
Less		
	Payments to 31/08/24	46,141.49
Current Account Balance 31/08/24		4,236.79
Current Account	30/08/2024	4,236.79
Less		
Outstanding cheques		0.00
BALANCE 31/05/24		4,236.79
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT		
opening 1st April 2024		125,244.86
Interest 30/06/24		858.70
Total Balance 31-08-24		126,103.56
Balance Bank Statement 31/08/24		126,103.56

Review of Reserves 12-09-24

Reserves Policy

1. Introduction

It is essential that authorities have sufficient Reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both its day to day operations and future plans. It is important, however, given that funds are generated from taxation, that such reserves are not excessive.

The need for adequate reserves is reinforced by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which requires local authorities to have regards to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when considering its budget requirement.

2. General Reserves

- The use of this reserve is not restricted, and will be used to meet unexpected expenditure, otherwise there is a chance that the Council could run out of money before the year end.
- A Council should typically hold between 3- and 12-months expenditure as a general reserve. If the general reserve is too low then it may not be enough to cover unexpected expenditure or emergencies, whilst if the general reserve is too high then local electors have paid a tax which is not being used for the benefit of the local community.
- The Council has no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than for reasonable working capital or for specifically earmarked purposes, therefore the year-end general reserve should not be significantly higher than the annual precept.

3. Specific Reserves

- If deemed necessary the council will have 'specific reserves' for specific projects, where money is allocated for a specific purpose/project that due to the level of commitment needed will need a gradual allocation of funds over more than one year.
- Where grants/donations have been received for specific projects/ schemes.
- Where there is a legal requirement.

4. Level of General Reserves

The council's level of general reserves will be **three** months of net revenue expenditure calculated as follows

		£	£
Annual Precept			60,000.00
Less	Total Loan Repayments	00.00	
Less	Amount included in annual Precept for capital projects	00.00	
Less	Amount included in annual Precept for transfer to a specific reserve	00.00	
	Total Deduction		
	Total Net Revenue Expenditure for the Year		60,000
	General Reserves = 3/12 of £60,000		15,000

5. Process

- The council will carry out a review of its reserves
 - as part of the annual budget process.
 - at the yearend particularly if general reserves is more than twice the precept.
 - at mid-year to get assurance that things are going to plan.

- Only the Council can set up a reserve.
- Movement on reserves will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring process.

Reserves Schedule at 12-09-24

Opening 01-04-24	142,788.00
	61,000.00
Add receipts	203,788.00
Less Payments	80,000.00
Estimated Balance 31/03/25	123,788.00

Less Specific Reserves	Agreed	Agreed	Agreed
	10/11/2022	14/09/23	10-10-24
Abbey View East & Jubilee Field Footpath	70,000.00	70,000.00	70,000.00
Play Park Improvements	10,000.00	20,000.00	10,000.00
Fitness & Wellbeing Trail	20,000.00	0.00	0.00
Election Fees	4,500.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Tree Surgery £5,000 less £3,695	1,350.00	10,000.00	3,000.00
Youth Activities	5,000.00	0.00	0.00
Grants & Donations		10,000.00	0.00
Activities for the Elderly			20,000.00
Total Specific reserves	110.850.00	115,000.00	108,000.00
Less Specific Reserves			108,000.00
Estimated General Reserves			15,788.00
General Reserves as per Reserves Policy			-15,225.00
Level of Reserves above Reserves Policy amount			563.00

Please see separate document

Belmont Rural Parish Council 12-09-24
Abbey View East/Jubilee Field Footpath

1. Current Position

At the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 21st May 2024 the Parish Council agreed to register on .Gov.uk Contract Finder.

Following the meeting on 21st May Councillors were informed of the Post meeting-Clerks Comment/Action

Having considered comments made before and when Agenda Item 5 was discussed and bearing in mind that I know the figure in the quotation previously received, which is over £30,000.00 for only part of the whole project. In addition, It is likely that Cllr Des Parish and Cllr Aimee Bridges will have to make the final decision on the matter, they must have the assurance that everything is in order the Parish Council has 100% protection, there is full transparency on the matter, with the risk to council funds being minimised.

Under the circumstances I will be seeking a quote for independent professional support to manage the project from the tender process to completion, to include support on reviewing quotations received, support on completing The JCT Minor Works Building Contract, overseeing the work and signing off the work.

To this end I have contacted Colin Birks (who currently manages building works/projects for most schools in the county and did so for Herefordshire Council) and Anthony Agate (Balfour Beatty Network & Engagement Manager) for a quotation.

Email sent to the Clerk (24-05-24)

Further to our agreement from Tuesday's EGM meeting can you please confirm the registration process has now been completed and when the tender process will close.

I have copied the other Councillors in to this email so they can be kept up to date with the progress, so if required I can get an agreement form them all if we require an additional meeting and when following the tender date closure.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you

Clerks reply (29-05-24)

Adrian

You are correct, however as Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer I have a responsibility to ensure that the administration of the Parish Councils affairs, are carried out satisfactorily and advise the Parish Council accordingly. At present the Parish Council is expected spent a large sum of money well over £30,000.00 we do not have a proper contract in place to protect the interest of the Parish Council, nor do we have any independent over sight.

Bearing in mind I was already accused of not telling the Parish Council that the cost would be over the threshold , I do not know how I could know this without the professional support previously asked for. However If you all are happy to confirm in writing that you will ignore my advice , and that there will be no come back on me personally if things do not go to plan. and as long as I do not have to put my personal details (Address) on the on the site I will proceed with the matter.

2. Going Forward

In view of the likely final costs the Parish Council needs to consider the following.

Budget

Likely cost.

Value for money

Independent Management support.

Contract Arrangements.

3. Budget

The Parish Council has a specific reserve of £70,000.00 for the whole project, however in view of the likely cost , I can confirm that this reserve would have to be increased considerably.

4. Cost

The only quotation previously received amounted to £44,133.00 plus VAT, one can assume that this will be a minimum cost.

5. Value for money.

The Parish Council must consider whether the outlay will represent value for money, and must be mindful of that the whole project cannot be achieved without a substantial outlay of funds in the region of £170,000.00

6. Management of the Contract

In view of the likely cost the Parish Council must have independent professional support to manage the contract, who will give the Parish Council indemnity from any possible risk of loss.

7. Contract Arrangements

To ensure that the Parish Council is protected, the Parish Council must have in place a legally binding contract to ensure that parties to the contract have legally binding responsibilities. Information on the JCT Minor Works Building Contract (Appendix 1 refers)

8. Budget allocation

Project	45,000.00
Contingency	5,000.00
Fees	5,000.00
Total	55,000.00

9. Recommendation

The Parish Council considers the contents of this report.

Tony Ford
Parish Clerk

Minor Works Building Contract

The JCT Minor Works Building Contract is designed for smaller, basic construction projects where the work is of a simple nature. Minor Works Building Contracts are suitable for projects procured via the traditional or conventional method.

Features of projects using the Minor Works Building Contract:

- The employer is responsible for the design, and this is usually supplied to the contractor by the architect or design team working on the employer's behalf. If the appointed contractor is to be responsible for designing specific parts of the works, then a Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design must be used.
- The employer (through its advisers) will also need to provide drawings, a specification, or work schedules to specify the quantity and quality of work at tender stage. When using the Minor Works Building Contract with contractor's design, the employer must also detail the requirements for the parts of the works that the contractor is to be responsible for designing.
- The Minor Works Building Contract is not suitable where the project is complex enough to require bills of quantities, detailed control procedures, or provisions to govern work carried out by named specialists.
- Minor Works Building Contracts are normally administered by the architect or a contract administrator.