



Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Belmont Rural Parish Council held at Belmont Community Centre, Eastholme Road Belmont HR2 7UQ on Thursday 13th June 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Councillors Present

Cllr Adrian Bridges (Item 7 to 24)
Cllr Aimee Bridges
Cllr Neil Hooper
Cllr Des Parish

In attendance

Tony Ford -Parish Clerk

Members of the public – None

1. Apologies

The Parish Council was informed that Cllr Adrian Bridges would be late, under the circumstances Cllr Neil Hooper took the Chair.

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				Not present	
Cllr Aimee Bridges	√		9.1.3	Trustee South Wye Community Association	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
Cllr Neil Hooper	√		9.2.1	Personal payment	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
			14	Near Residence	Non- Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
				Regarding item 24 Cllr Neil Hooper informed the Parish Council that he no longer had an interest, as he had received correspondence from the Clerk that his quotation was no longer valid	
Cllr Des Parish	√		14	Director Northolme Community Centre.	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

4. Minutes

To receive, approve and sign the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 9th May 2024.

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by Cllr Neil Hooper.

5. Minutes

To receive, approve and sign the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on Tuesday 21st May 2024

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by Cllr Neil Hooper.

6. Public Participation

There were no questions from the public.

Cllr Neil Hooper vacated the Chair, and Cllr Adrian Bridges took the Chair. Cllr Adrian Bridges declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 9.1.3 and was granted dispensation to discuss but not vote on the agenda item.

7. Planning Application (241238)- 53 Wyedean Rise, Belmont, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 7XZ Proposed extension and alterations.

Cllr Neil Hooper had no comments.

Cllr Des Parish had no comments on the actual alteration and expressed the view that the extension was coming forward by the front door, encroaching onto the car parking area, in addition the neighbours had extended their fence to the outer kerb, which meant reversing from the drive could be a problem.

Having considered the matter, the Parish Council resolved to support -subject to there being no loss of parking and no safety issues exiting the drive.

Action – Clerk to inform Herefordshire Council of the Parish Councils decision.

8. Previous Actions

Having considered the update, the following was noted.

- Item 06/2 Online Herefordshire Now Magazine -Closed.

9. Finance

9.1. To authorise payment of invoices as per payment schedule.

Ref	Payee	Amount £	VAT	Detail
1	Colin Warne	690.46	N/a	04-06-24 (396) Handyperson £637.00 Mower fuel reimbursement £53.46.
2	Information Commissioner	40.00	N/a	29-05-24 Data Protection Fee
3	South Wye Community Association	45.00	N/a	31-05-24 (13069) Hall Hire 09-05-24 & 21-05-24

All authorised for payment.

Having declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.1.3 Cllr Aimee Bridges left the room and did not vote or take part in discussion.

Having declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.1.3 Cllr Adrian Bridges having been given dispensation abstained from discussions and voting.

9.2. To note payments made under delegated authority.

Ref	Payee	Amount £	VAT	Detail
1	Neil Hooper	£115.39	N/a	Reimbursement for Website software

This item was noted.

Having declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.2.1 Cllr Neil Hooper left the room and did not vote or take part in discussion.

- 9.3. Receipts. £2,834.91 (£1834.91 VAT refund, £1000.00 – Herefordshire Council Lengthsman refund
9.4. To receive an update on account balances as at 31 May 2024 £156,967.44 (Appendix 1 refers)

10. Internal Audit 2023/24

The Parish Council consider the Internal Audit Report 2023/24 (Appendix 2 refers) and agreed to action the recommendations made.

11. Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Having considered the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24(Appendix 3 refers) in conjunction with the recommendation of the Internal Audit Report the Parish Council agreed **yes** for numbers 1-3 and 5 to 8, **no** to number 4 with 9 being not applicable, Cllr Adrian Bridges and the Clerk was authorised to sign the statement on behalf of the Parish Council.

12. Section 2 – Accounting Statement 2023/24

Having considered and approved the Accounting Statement 2023/24 (Appendix 4 refers) and authorised Cllr Adrian Bridges to sign the statement.

Action The Clerk was authorised to send the required documents to the external auditors and ensure that all publication requirements are met.

13. Public Rights of Way Funding

Having considered correspondence from Herefordshire Council, it was agreed that a Shetland steel stile kit, 2 step meshed and a Dog-way stile gate galvanised steel be submitted to Herefordshire Council.

- Identified as a bespoke item.
- The location was identified as **earplugs.layers.spends**
- The Clerk to get updated costs from Secure a Field

Action Cllr Des Parish to forward a picture of the location to the Clerk.

Action Clerk to submit expression of interest form.

14. Northolme infants Play Area

Having considered the quotation from DCM Surfaces for Mulch installation Cllr Des Parish was asked to get confirmation as to what type of subsurface would be required.

It was agreed that the Handyperson would be asked to complete the prework on the tunnel.

Action Cllr Des Parish to get confirmation from DCM Surfaces as to what sub-base was required.

Action Clerk to order the required items for the tunnel upgrade.

15. Kenilworth Close Play Area

Having considered the quotation from DCM Surfaces for Mulch installation the Parish Council accepted the quotation of £16,720.00 plus VAT. and agreed that the work be carried out at the end of July to allow for the prework on the tunnel at Northolme Infants Play Area to be completed.

Action Cllr Des Parish to inform DCM Surfaces of the outcome of the Parish Councils consideration.

16. Access to bridge on Abbey View East

Having considered the update from the Clerk it was agreed that Cllr Mark Dykes would be asked to arrange a site visit with Bruce Evans from Herefordshire Council.

Action Clerk to ask Cllr Mark Dykes to arrange a site visit with Bruce Evans.

17. Tree work on Wheatridge Road Green and Wyedean Rise

Having considered the quotation for removal of trees and stumps The Parish Council agreed that no action should be taken on the stumps, and to defer a decision on the trees to allow the Clerk to raise the matter with Balfour Beatty.

Action Clerk to raise the matter of the trees with Balfour Beatty.

18. Weed Spray 2023/24

The Parish Council noted that the Clerk under delegated authority 09-05-24 (25) accepted a quote from Colin Warne in the sum of £2048.00 (2023- £1997.00)

19. Grass Cutting Schedule

The Parish Council noted the schedule submitted by Cllr Des Parish, in addition Cllr Des Parish highlighted and asked the Parish Council to consider asking the Handyperson to do the following.

- Not to mow on Southolme Road as requested by Herefordshire Council.
- Not to mow a second path on Abbey View West leading to Morvill Close.
- Not to mow around the Gabions or gas monitoring pods on Abbey View West and Abbey View East
- Regarding Northolme Open Space to mow the bank and strim the culvert.

Cllr Adrian Bridges also highlighted that all areas mowed should have the edges strimmed and blown.

Having considered the matter, the Parish Council agreed that the Handyperson should be made aware of all the matters raised, and actions going forward.

Action Clerk to inform the Handyperson of the matters raised.

Action Clerk to send the schedule to the Handyperson for information.

20. For Information Items

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

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

- Standing Order for Information Commissioner payments

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

Thursday 11th July 2024 pm to be held at Belmont Community Centre

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that due to personal circumstances he would not be able to attend this meeting and recommended that the HALC Clerk cover service be used at a cost of £250.00 plus mileage and VAT, which the Parish Council agreed to .

Action Clerk to make the request to HALC for Clerk Cover.

The Parish Council resolved to go into private session.

23. Clerk Salary

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that he was having a problem with the new log in system introduced by the payroll provider and therefore there was no documents submitted. The Parish Council noted the update.

24. Abbey View East/Jubilee Field Footpath

At the request of Cllr Adrian Bridges this item was deferred until the September 24 meeting. Cllr Des Parish request a copy of the final specification. It was agreed that the Clerk would send the final specification and the email from Balfour Beatty to all councillors for information.

Action Clerk to send to all councillors the final specification.

Action Clerk to circulate related email from Anthony Agate (Balfour Beatty)

Belmont Rural Parish Council

Bank reconciliation at 31-05-24.

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Opening 1st April 2024		17,543.37
Add		
	Receipts	32,834.91
		50,378.28
Less	Payments to 31/05/24	18,655.70
Current Account Balance 31/05/24		31,722.58

Current Account	31/05/2024	31,722.58
Outstanding cheques		
		0.00

BALANCE 31/05/24	31,722.58
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DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	
opening 1st April 2024	125,244.86
Balance	125,244.86

Balance Bank Statement 31/03/24	31/05/2024	125,244.86
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TOTAL	
Current	31,722.58
Deposit	125,244.86
TOTAL at 31/05/24	156,967.44

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Belmont Rural Parish Council

<https://belmontrural-pc.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick 'not covered')			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).		✓	
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 10/06/2024, 11/06/2024, 12/06/2024
Name of person who carried out the internal audit: HALC Audit Services

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: *HALC Audit Services*
Date: 12/06/2024

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		"Yes" means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

13/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

Item 11

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Adrian Burt

Clerk

R. A. Ford

<https://belmont-rural-pc.gov.uk/>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

BELMONT RURAL PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	150,601	133,672	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	60,000	60,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	6,707	1,476	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	13,078	12,541	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	70,558	39,807	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	133,672	142,800	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	133,672	142,800	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	143,122	143,122	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

R. A Ford

Date 03/06/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

13/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

Item 12

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Charmen Bridge