

**Draft Mar 31st**

## **Parish Council Action Plan 2018/9**

### **Overall Role**

1.1 The aim of the Parish Council (PC) is to maintain and improve our area as a place where people want to live and work.

1.2 This will be achieved by making good use of our own resources and by drawing on the skills and commitment of our residents wherever possible. We aim to have a supportive two-way communication with our residents and other stake holders.

### **Section 1: Priorities**

2.1 We have identified four main priorities for the PC's activities in 2018/9, described below. They reflect the views of our residents as identified in the recent PC opinion survey. Further activities are covered in outline in the next section.

#### **Traffic Calming**

3.1 To continue working with WCC Highways and Cllr Webb to ensure that the agreed dropped kerbs and tactile paving in Fairfield are installed. To undertake a review of similar provision in the rest of the parish.

3.2. To continue to press WCC Highways for agreement over the display of speed camera signage in Hartle Lane and Stourbridge Road within the parish.

3.3 The volume, speed and composition of traffic in the parish remain a cause for concern. Various avenues are being explored in order to ameliorate the situation e.g. cooperation from business/residents will be sought over avoiding the use of large HGVs making local deliveries, promoting a social awareness of excessive speed and inconsiderate parking habits.

## Green Spaces

4.1 The green spaces in and around the villages were singled out as a strong reason for people to want to live here. The PC itself owns a variety of pieces of land in each village and [85] acres of agricultural holdings, near Stoneybridge Roundabout. Through our volunteer footpath wardens, to whom we are very grateful, we help to maintain the footpaths in our area.

4.2 We will continue to maintain our own land, through grass-cutting contracts, tree surgery as needed and our two paid (part-time) gardeners, so that it is attractive. We have no plans for significant change but aim to improve planting in certain areas. On Fairfield Recreation Ground we will repair the play area and further assess improvements including a car park extension (dependant upon planning permission being granted).

4.3 We have increased our spend to make improvements to footpaths and bridleways, in collaboration with the County Council who are responsible for Rights of Way, and we are open to suggestions from residents for further improvements.

4.4 The County Council [has recently] made the Order to divert the footpath near Brookfield Farm in Hackmans Gate Lane. The PC promoted this to make it a far safer and pleasanter walk down to the track near the Cricket Club and thence to Belbroughton village. We can now arrange for the new gates etc to be installed, in collaboration with Bill Beckett, the (tenant) farmer and with the consent of Sir Malcolm and Lady Guthrie, the landowners. The new route will be opened as soon as practicable, with due publicity.

## Belbroughton Village Green

5.1 After long delays we expect shortly to sign the legal agreement with the Developers, the owner of the former Jewellery Factory site, to permit him, on payment, to fell certain trees on Belbroughton Village Green and to run drainage across it to the sewer in the High St. [Construction start?]

5.2 His planning permission for the development of [12] new houses on his site requires a re-planting on the Green, in accordance with the BDC Decision,

which the PC will carry out. A community Focus Group has now been set up to develop updated proposals this year for additional planting, in consultation with residents, with the aim of carrying them out next year. These would be subject to the satisfaction of the Conservation officers at the District Council.

### Neighbourhood Planning and Wider Planning Issues

6.1 Last year's survey of public views was designed both to influence future activity by the PC and to provide an initial basis for a Neighbourhood Plan, with full community involvement, if there was sufficient public support. A Steering Group has been set up accordingly. There has recently been a change in the wider Planning scene to place renewed emphasis on new housing and this has affected the way in which Bromsgrove District will carry out its Review of the Green Belt, so as to meet the duty to co-operate mutually with other West Midlands local authorities.

6.2 The aim of the Steering Group, which the PC supports but does not control, [will now be] to prepare an informed response from the community to the Green Belt Review, within its timetable. It will also consider the desirability of a Neighbourhood Plan in the context of these wider developments in the Planning regime, in order to influence the land usage in a sympathetic manner.

### Section 2 : Other Activities

#### Communication

7.1 Review and develop the PC's means of communicating with residents and others by, taking advantage of social media as well as traditional channels and learning any lessons from a pilot project between Barnt Green and Bromsgrove District.

7.2 The purpose is to maximise our ability to keep interested residents informed of the PC's activities and plans, and to take full account of residents' views. It is also to influence other public authorities and others in accordance with the PC's objectives. For the Communications Working Group and the PC as needed. [Any timing targets?]

## Other Planning Issues

8.1 Responses will be made on planning applications, and any other planning issues, to Bromsgrove or others as needed. A watchful eye will continue to be kept on any proposals affecting quarry sites or other potentially detrimental moves. For the PC's Planning Committee, within delegations from the PC.

## Agricultural Holdings

9.1 Contact will be maintained as needed with the PC's tenants of its agricultural holdings, including any rent reviews in accordance with the tenancy agreements .

9.2 The PC [will also consider whether any other changes are desirable in the PC's treatment of the holdings which could support the needs of the community as well as those of the tenants, in the light of prospective changes following Brexit to agricultural support payments.] For Agricultural Holdings Committee, within delegations from the PC.

## Budget and Financial Management

9.1 The annual budget will be managed so as to achieve good value for money and to ensure that, taking one year with another, the PC's spend on recurrent activities is in line with its precept.

9.2 The PC's cash investments, Agricultural Holdings and other rental income will be managed, in accordance with the Investment Strategy. The purpose is to finance Parish Projects (by the PC itself) and grants to parish bodies for the benefit of the whole community, as described below. The Strategy seeks to maintain the real value of cash investments while ensuring the capital is secure, subject to any agreed funding of long-term assets for the community. For Finance Committee, within delegations from the PC.

### Footway Lighting

10.1 Continue to maintain the 80 footway lights owned by the PC and review the need for any improvements to the stock. For the Footway Working Group

### Little Bell Hall Pool, Drayton Rd

11.1 Keep the future of the Pool under review. Agree a scheme for its long-term maintenance, assuming the Pool is not to be re-filled. For LBH Pool Working Group. Scheme to be agreed by [autumn 2018].

### Tidy Parish

12.1 Supply/maintain dog waste bins and a collection service and maintain grit bins, refilled as required, for community use.

12.2 Continue close links with the County Council & Bromsgrove District Council, including conservation and other officers, to ensure as far as possible that the environment over which they have control is maintained as residents would wish.

12.3 Continue with the County Council's Lengthsman scheme for small-scale maintenance of roads and footpaths.

### Maintenance Grants

13.1 Continue to assess and deliver support for: Belbroughton Church Hall, The Parochial Church Council, Belbroughton Recreation Centre & Fairfield Village Hall.

### Grants to Parish Bodies

14.1 Decide on applications from village bodies, normally non-commercial, so as to maximise the benefits to the community from the funds available, for both Major and Minor Grants on an annual basis. [Anything more on timing?]

14.2 The main grant, already approved in principle and to be paid when appropriate, is to Belbroughton Recreation Centre for its Playground Improvement. For Grants Working Group.

### Parish Projects

15.1 Review and develop projects, normally for one-off improvements, for the PC to provide good facilities for the benefit of the whole community.

15.2 The main projects currently are the Brookfield Farm footpath diversion, Fairfield Recreation Ground car park extension, Belbroughton Village Green, all as outlined above). [For updated Parish Project Group?]

### Training and succession

Develop a rolling training programme for all councillors and review methods of attracting new members to the Parish Council, both by the autumn.

### Links

To liaise with adjacent PCs to garner best practice.

To be represented on relevant local bodies.