

**MINUTES OF THE BELBROUGHTON AND FAIRFIELD ANNUAL PARISH
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13TH MARCH 2023, 7.00PM AT BELBROUGHTON
RECREATION CENTRE**

Present: Parish Councillors: S Nock (Chairman), S Danks, S Pawley and S Wilkes.

Clerk: R Mullett

Other attendees – District Cllr. Sherrey and 12 members of the public.

The Parish Council Chairman, S Nock, welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Parish Cllrs. B. Allington, N. Carter, M. Gibbs, R. Knight and A Mabbett.

Apologies received from County and District Cllr. K May and County Cllr. S Webb.

2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 23rd May 2022

The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were approved as an accurate record and the Chairman duly signed them.

3. Annual Reports

Parish Council Reports for 2022/22

Chairman's Report on Parish Council activities: Cllr. Simon Nock

I would start by sadly acknowledging the passing of our Chairman Dr Bob Morgan. Bob was a man whose company I enjoyed very much (especially over a pint in the Club). He is missed. He is a tremendous loss to the Parish Council.

As a consequence, I was elected in July 2022 by my colleague Parish Councillors to be chairman – a position I have endeavoured to fulfil in the best interests of the parish and its residents. It really is a tremendous honour to hold this office and I thank all of you for the support you have given me.

I would also like to thank our former Councillor, Allan Hood, who resigned late last year for his many years of service to the Parish Council, especially for his work and knowledge with regards to our agricultural holdings. Other Councillors who stood down since our last annual meeting are Cllr's Janice Boswell MBE, Stuart Clarke, and Julie Baldwin. I would like to thank these Councillors for their service.

I am most fortunate in having knowledgeable and supportive colleague Parish Councillors. I am confident that as a collective body we have a great understanding of the needs of the Parish, and we all work together to ensure that we meet the needs and requirements of our parishioners to the best of our ability. The parish councillors volunteer their time to support the community they live in and have its best interests at heart.

I would also like to thank our County and District Councillor Shirley Webb and Karen May and District Councillor Margaret Sherrey for being actively engaged in both villages. Let me assure that that all councillors are not like ours! Margaret is not seeking re-election to the District Council in May 2023. She has been a Bromsgrove District Councillor for 20 years, served on every committee and led it. I offer her incredibly special thanks for her service and wish her well in her retirement.

As Parish Councillors we are exceptionally fortunate in having Ruth Mullett as our Acting Clerk. Ruth has over 16 years' experience as a Parish Clerk in Bromsgrove District and her knowledge and expertise in all issues relating to Council matters – whether at County, District or Parish level – is unsurpassed. As Chairman I know that I can rely on her for advice and support on all matters and at any time and for this I express my most sincere thanks.

Village appearance – I would like to thank Greenways for the continued work in grass cutting and general maintenance of the villages. Also, Nigel Williamson our Lengthsman, who has also been very accommodating, fitting in extra bits and pieces of maintenance as they arise. Nigel sadly cannot continue with the extra maintenance work, and we are in the process of recruiting a Maintenance Contractor to conduct this essential work to keep our villages the wonderful places they are to live in.

We have now nearly completed Belbroughton Village Green with the History Society Information Board being installed last week; we are only awaiting County Council to install our heritage lantern. New Christmas lights were purchased this year for the green together with two new benches. I am sure you agree it is a fantastic feature of our village of Belbroughton.

We also purchased two new benches for Silvester's Corner and once we have our Maintenance Man in situ, we will be tidying this area up again to enhance this special feature of Belbroughton. If there are any areas you feel require more maintenance work then please contact our Clerk.

We have continued with our phased programme of lighting column replacements converting the old lighting columns to LED. This is nearly completed, and we have already seen a reduction in our electricity costs.

Speeding remains an issue in both parishes. I am pleased to see the installation of two new vehicle activation signs (VAS) positioned at known speeding 'hot spots.' The Parish Council looking to install another funded sign in Fairfield.

Cllr. Allington together with support of fellow councillors and Bromsgrove District Council continues to organise litter-picks in Belbroughton. We had one only last Sunday. The turnout was utterly amazing. It was good to see Paul Hardcastle, our former Footpath Warden, and his wife Lynne. I take this opportunity to remind residents that the position of Footpath Warden remains vacant. Please contact our clerk for further details. The Fairfield Village Community Association ("FVCA") also organises litter picks in Fairfield with many volunteers helping on the day. Thank you all for your continued support.

A survey of residents in Fairfield Ward was conducted in Spring of 2022. After subsequent discussions, the Parish Council formally agreed the following Statement of Purpose for the Recreation Ground in November 2022.

The Recreation Ground should primarily be a multi-purpose green space for the residents of the Parish for the pursuit of leisure and recreation activities. The Parish Council wishes to ensure that this local recreation space is used and facilitated by and with, local people to ensure it meets the health and well-being needs and outcomes of the local population thereby promoting good health and well-being for residents in the locality of Fairfield which is both sustainable and reduces pollution by emissions or noise. It is recognised that there is a local demand for green spaces for a range of sporting and other activities which may involve both short term and long-term hire arrangements. Use by other organisations is also acknowledged and will be considered on merit and availability.

To start to achieve such a multi-purpose green space, the Parish Council will be implementing a number of steps in the coming months. Other plans have also been agreed and will be implemented as soon as funding and resourcing allow.

Within the next few months, a start will be made on the revamping of the Millennium Garden. Volunteers are being sought to help with this venture and in particular there is a need for a Garden Designer. This activity will be undertaken in conjunction with the FVCA, and it is anticipated that this will form part of the Coronation activities in Fairfield Village. Please contact either the Parish Clerk or the FVCA if you are interested in helping.

Communication – there are several ways in which the Parish Council tries to keep residents in the picture. Agendas of the monthly meetings are posted on the noticeboards together with the minutes on the website. The website is in the process of being updated to make it more user friendly and I would encourage you all the use the website. Additional information from the meetings appears in the parish magazine. Thank you to the volunteers who regularly post these notices on the noticeboard's behalf of the parish council. And of course, the Parish Clerk can be contacted if you have any concerns or inspirational ideas. It was commented to me at the litter-pick that in the past we have had direct communication with parishioners via email. I will ensure that this matter is brought to a future Council Meeting for consideration.

I would end my offering my thanks to the many community groups and volunteers in the Parish who give up their time to benefit their fellow residents.

Finance Report: Cllr. Simon Nock

Cllr. Nock, as Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee, gave the update in Cllr. Mabbett's absence.

ESTIMATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE – YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2023 (SUBJECT TO AUDIT)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Precepted Income | £70,000 (same as last year) |
| Other Income | |
| Lengthsman Scheme | £2,500 (remaining balance after year-end) |
| Rental Income | £15,957.30 (farm tenancies, FVFC & Deli) |
| Cash Investments Interest | £5,487.06 (4 investments are in place with FSCS banks with one to be reinvested) |
| Wayleaves | £570.93 (Npower and National Grid) |
| Total Income | £94,515.29 |
| | |
| Grants Paid | |
| Capital Grants | |
| The Parochial Church Clock | £2,250.00 (help with the churchyard maintenance for the Belbroughton & Fairfield Churches) |
| Belbroughton Recreation Centre | £1,250 |
| Fairfield Village Hall | £750 |
| Belbroughton Church Hall | £750 |
| Minor Grants | |
| Belbroughton United Charities | £305.00 (allotments) |
| Fairfield Village Association | £305.00 (events) |
| Friends for Lunch | £150.00 (new plates, cups, and cutlery) |
| Holy Trinity Church | £1,000.00 (uplift on Capital Grant) |
| Belbroughton History Society | £1,000.00 (information board for Village Green) |
| Belbroughton Cricket Club | £1,000.00 (new netting) |
| Holy Trinity Church | £240.00 (heating costs for coffee morning) |
| Other Notable Expenditure | |
| Lengthsman £4,182 | Dog bin emptying £4,940 |
| Grass mowing £9,030 | Street lighting £15,209.55 |
| Other green space management £6,440 | Staff (incl. N.I., & pension contr.) £17,375 |
| General admin £4,312 | |

The balance sheet as of 28th February 2023 is £528,319.79

Within this land assets are £165,434

Cash deposits £280,313 (which will increase to £331,813 when £51,500 reinvested)

Operational bank account £84,126 (this is increased on last year due to £51,500 investment)

Key Points

- We maintained our precept at £70k.
- The Levy for a Band D property is £56.45, down from £57.68.

- Looking at neighbouring parishes our levy for a Band D property is lower than Clent, Romsley, Hagley & Hunnington.
- Some Parish Council's had very large (Between £11k & £19k) absolute increases in their precept like Hagley, Alvechurch & Wythall.
- We were one of the 7 Parish Council's to maintain or reduce the absolute value of their precept, the other 12 Parish Council's increased theirs. The highest rate of increase was in Wythall by 12.71%, significantly higher than the % increase levied by the County and District Councils.

Planning Report: Cllr. Sue Pawley

Cllr. Pawley thanked her colleagues for their support during the year. The Planning Committee considered 24 planning applications this was down from 41 the previous year.

Recommendations made to the Bromsgrove District Council:

- 19 - No Objection
- 2 – Objections
- 3 - Could not make a decision due to insufficient information

Appeals

- 1 – Allowed
- 2 – Dismissed

The Committee also responded to the County Council on consultations regarding the various quarrying sites in the parish area and on other activities adjacent to some of those sites. Special thanks to Cllr. Syd Danks for his expertise and advice on the local quarry matters. His knowledge and contributions are invaluable.

The Committee meets once a month on the third Monday.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Pawley and her Committee for their work.

County Cllrs. K May and S Webb

Good evening and we hope this email finds you all well.

We are sorry that we are unable to attend in person the meeting of the Parish tonight; we have been asked to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Bromsgrove District Council to discuss matters that cover our Cabinet roles.

We thought we would provide you with a brief overview of the work that is going on beyond our local casework.

The Government's provisional settlement for Worcestershire County Council ("WCC") was published on 19th December 2022. Overall, we saw an increase in our funding of £26.3 million, with a 12.3% increase in our Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), and an extra £19.5 million specific grant investment in Adult and Children's social care.

Since the January report was considered by Cabinet, the Government announced that the value of the increase in the core schools' budget is expected to be c£14 million, which is welcomed. It is however noted that at the time of writing this report, that the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant for Worcestershire has not yet been confirmed.

The WCC's Corporate Plan priorities remain.

- to champion Open for Business,
- support Children & Families,
- protect The Environment and
- promote Health & Wellbeing.

To that end to ensure we can continue to maintain our current services and commitments WCC agreed a 2.94% uplift in Council Tax, plus a 2% uplift in our Adult Social Care levy. This will also mean that alongside investment in Children's & Adults social care to protect the most vulnerable, WCC can maintain its capital commitments to invest in the economy, environment, highways, and extra school places as well as enabling an extra £5.5 million to ensure that the recent cost of inflation does not affect the level of deliverability of the Capital programme.

WCC has agreed to invest £3.5 million from Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24 to support Public Transport as it recovers from the pandemic. This is on top of the £1.5 million commitment made in 2022/23. Further work will be carried out over the next 15 months to explore how this can also be met with greater community transport options, such as in Bromsgrove with Demand Response Transport. The proposals also see a continuation of the capital programme set by WCC last February as well as new Government funded schemes, such as the A38 in Bromsgrove.

The promotion of Health and Wellbeing is a key priority of WCC. We both play key roles in the delivery of this priority.

Cllr. May, Chairs the **Health, and Wellbeing Board** as part of her cabinet role and Cllr. Webb, Chairs the **Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Adult Social Care**.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is required to develop a strategy including a vision and priorities for improving the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in Worcestershire. A formal public consultation was carried out in May 2022 to gather the views of residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure that the strategy is driven by the needs and experiences of those who live and work in Worcestershire. The survey received 1,627 responses, which were carefully reviewed, and shaped the final strategy ambitions and outcomes.

For the 2022 to 2032 Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board identified good mental health and wellbeing as the main priority, supported by action in areas that we all need to 'Be Well in Worcestershire'.

The strategy outlines the Health and Wellbeing Board's commitment to improving mental health and wellbeing, supporting people to live well in good health for as long as possible, particularly those who have poorer health outcomes. The Health and Wellbeing Board champions collective action to ensure children have the best start in

life, young people will have hope and aspiration for the future, and residents live longer, more independent lives in good health, with fewer people going on to need care and support, which is vital to supporting good mental health and wellbeing.

Download: [Worcestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 to 2032 \(PDF\)](#)

Please do contact us if we can help with any issues:

Cllr Karen May covering the County Council area for Belbroughton:
kmay@worcestershire.gov.uk

Cllr Shirley Webb covering the County Council area for Fairfield
Swebb2@worcestershire.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

District Cllr. K May

Key Points:

Bromsgrove District Council bid for and were awarded 14.5 million pounds of **Levelling up** money. The money was awarded for the clean-up of the Windsor Street site which includes the old fire station and prepare the land for a future planning application. A sizeable proportion of the funds is allocated to the redevelopment of the former market hall site near Waitrose. Currently, there is a consultation regarding a Community Hub proposal together with an upmarket office building. These sites are defined as brownfield sites and have been awaiting re-development for several years. The funds cannot be reallocated to other projects. There is a strict criterion as to how the funds must be spent. The Community Hub is an opportunity for groups of all ages to meet and develop a network of connectivity. This is so important for our young people through to our older generation. This development will act as a catalyst to increase the viability, vitality, and vibrancy of the town centre and for wider investment in Bromsgrove. Attracting more people to the town centre and high street means increased footfall. This will make Bromsgrove Town Centre a more desirable place for private investment, such as filling empty shop units, as well as creating a quality offer for residents and visitors to work, live and spend their free time here.

There is a clear demand for upmarket office in Bromsgrove as demonstrated by the recent GJS Dillon Worcestershire Commercial Property Market Report 2023.

“Bromsgrove remains popular with SMEs and owner occupiers, as shown by the high number of transactions. Premium space is sought after...Having good modern office stock should place Bromsgrove in a strong position....”

We all love The Artrix and would like to see it bought back to life. I have reached out to The Holding Trust who are the body that has legal control of the building and requested a meeting with them so that I can push for a business plan to come forward. When a business plan is made available then the Council and partners can look at how we all can aid this site which is crucial to the Creative Economy of Bromsgrove District.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you for your support over the past four years; it is much appreciated.

District Cllr. M. Sherrey

Environmental Report - We are finally preparing to begin grass cutting across the district. This year we are in a better position than previous years to provide a more consistent standard throughout the season.

We are working to pull back some of the delays we have had with sweeping due to staffing issues and breakdowns. The larger sweepers will be working closer to the Place Teams to allow paths and roads to be swept at the same time where possible. The new regime will improve sweeping times in places like Bradford Lane and enable better communication with residents.

We are redesigning our fly tipping notices and adopting a more digital approach to the issue of penalty notices which will speed up cases. An additional two staff have been taken on to help meet weekend demands.

4. Residents Open Forum

Questions/statements

1. Thanked Councillors for all their hard work and acknowledges it is an underappreciated role.
2. Communication – Council is failing to reach out to its residents. Could we reinstate the email residents list?
3. Sadly, Paul Shotton, an ex-councillor has passed away.
4. Would we consider reinstating paper Newsletters?
5. Would we consider playing notices in the village shops?
6. Debate on the affects the quarry's in Wildmoor are having on the parish.
7. The Fairfield Survey was very biased and felt at the Residents Meeting to discuss findings, Fairfield Villa was hardly mentioned.
8. The way the survey was worded gave the assumption that Fairfield Villa was staying. The Recreation Ground is already open to the public and hardly anyone uses it.
9. Residents might use the Recreation Ground more if the barriers were removed to make it more accessible.
10. Has any Belbroughton Councillors gone and looked at Fairfield Recreation Ground recently?
11. What is our responsibility with regards streetlighting?
12. District Cllr. Sherry was thanked for all her work with regards fly tipping in Wildmoor.
13. I have been a Fairfield resident for over 30 years, when I came to the parish there were 60 children at the school, there are now 150. The Football Club has got bigger and there are more cars on the road. It is horrendous at times trying to get off my drive.
14. Traffic is too fast in the parish.
15. Fairfield First School have agreed that football supporters can park on the school carpark and playground.
16. Parking is more dangerous in Belbroughton than Fairfield.

The Chairman thanked all for attending the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.10pm.

Signed
Chairman
Date

DRAFT