

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council held by video conference on 12th April 2021.

Present: Cllrs. B Allington, J Boswell, S Danks, A Hood, G Ingram, A Mabbett, Dr R Morgan, S Nock, S Patchell and S Pawley. Clerk J Farrell. 1 member of the public.
District Cllr. K May.

93/21 Apologies

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Cllr. A Homer.
Cllr Nock had advised the clerk that he would be delayed joining the meeting.

94/21 Chairman Dr R L Morgan on behalf of the Parish Council expressed sorrow on the passing of H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, saying he was an incredible character and would be well missed and our best wishes go to the Queen and her family.
Cllr. Mabbett added that he had been a great public servant and had carried out many more duties than people realised in his public role.

The meeting adjourned, with Standing Orders suspended, for the 'Open Surgery' and to listen to members of the public identifying matters of concern relating to the evening's agenda or other issues to raise with councillors.

The meeting re-opened.

96/21 Declarations of Interest None. **97/21 Dispensations** None (but see minute 101/20.).

98/21 Minutes

Council approved the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1st March 2021.

99/21 Reports

Chairman's report: Cllr. Morgan confirmed the Working Group (Cllrs. Mabbett, Nock, Pawley and himself) was progressing the recruitment process for the new clerk. The interview process would be by video conference due to the health crisis.

Planning Committee report:

Council noted the draft minutes of the meeting held 15th March 2021.

Cllr. Pawley advised that the 'Planning' training sessions she and Cllr. Ingram were attending, organised by Worcs. Calc., were excellent.

Cllrs. Danks and Mabbett expressed concern with both the District and County Councils not taking on board comments made by parish councils on planning matters.

Council noted that having a Neighbourhood Plan may influence allocation of housing, although there was concern whether such plans now remained effective.

Financial Committee report:

Council noted the draft minutes of the meeting held 15th March 2021.

Cllr. Mabbett confirmed that the Hampshire Trust Bank funds had been reinvested and advised that the annual lighting invoice from W.C.C. had at last arrived and was paid prior to the financial year end.

Clerk's Report:

1. Belbroughton History Society has recommended to the developers of the new housing on Hartle Lane that the access road is named 'Bellamy Close'.
2. C.Cllr. Shirley Webb had advised on 11th March that she would expect to use her Divisional Fund to purchase 'White gates' for the entrances on the Stourbridge Road Fairfield.
3. Fairfield Recreation Ground – we still await two further quotes for the drainage works. I would suggest that if firms are not prepared to quote for this specialist work then Council uses the one contractor who has shown interest and quoted and who is also a preferred supplier to the District Council for such works. The next Council meeting can consider this.
4. The Parish Council has advised the County Council that it is content with the revised Traffic Regulation Order which if agreed will place a 40 mph speed limit from the Stoneybridge roundabout up to the existing boundary of the 30mph zone.
5. Reseeding of the councillor requested areas by Greenaways is set to take place this month.
6. D.Cllr. Margaret Sherrey had arranged for the Police Commissioner Mr John Campion to attend this meeting but due to the proximity of the election for his position the Chairman has postponed this to a future council meeting.
7. Email: work is underway to assess if a gov.uk domain name should be applied for and then to provide new individual email addresses for council members and staff. This would be a best practise for the Council.
8. PC Marc Ginder, Hagley and Rubery Safer Neighbourhood Officer is requesting that the council inform him of any concerns it would like police to be aware of.
9. Belne Brook, Drayton Road Belbroughton – Treble R Ltd representatives have visited the dam site and are able to gain access via the temporary removal of parts of the trash screen and /or gating to enable them to carry out repairs to the chamber brickwork. The initial quote prior to a site investigation for the maintenance work is £1,050.
10. The Chairman received the resignation of Cllr. Parsons on 4th March. The District Council has been informed and the usual notices have been placed on the main notice boards. With no request from 10 residents for an election the Parish Council is now free to Co-opt a replacement councillor. There are now three vacancies in the ward.
11. The position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer has been advertised and the Working Group will be compiling a shortlist of applicants this week expecting to interview during the following week.
12. The Belbroughton Recreation Centre playarea improvements have been completed and the Centre have now requested the release of the balance of the £20,000 Parish Council grant.

Cllr Nock joined the meeting apologising for his lateness, Council accepted his apologies.

100/21 Meetings

a. Council noted the legal requirement to hold public face to face Council and Committee meetings from 7th May 2021 and therefore to cease the use of video conference facilities for such purposes. It further noted that there was a legal challenge pending from Hertfordshire County Council which was seeking to have the 2020 emergency regulations renewed. The majority of Parish Council members expressed concern at meeting in public as they felt that the health crisis was not yet over and many had had only one of the two vaccinations. Council further noted that following the death of The Duke of Edinburgh it was not permitted to summon meetings until after the 'Mourning Period' (effectively 19th April).

b. Council noted that the venues needed for public meetings used by it in 2019 were currently not able to accept bookings. Alternatives were being sought to use as necessary.

c. Council agreed that the Chairman and Clerk could re-arrange scheduled meetings with the aim of holding both the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Council Meeting via video conference before 7th May.

The Planning and Finance Committees due for 19th April could not be summoned and would be postponed until 26th April.

To enable the continuation of Council business should meetings not take place the Council renewed approval of the Scheme of Delegation put in place at the start of the pandemic and recorded under minute 82/20 dated 30th March 2020.

101/21 Belbroughton Churchyard

Cllr. Nock declared an 'Other Discretionary Interest' in the agenda item. Council agreed to note this since Cllr Nock had not been present earlier in the meeting when Declarations of Interest required to be announced to the Council by members.

The clerk advised that he had received a Dispensation request from Cllr. Nock which if Council agreed could now be considered, requesting that he remain in the meeting and speak to the item but not to vote. Council agreed to consider the Dispensation request and agreed to it.

Council noted a resident's letter of complaint to the local Parochial Church Council regarding an access closure to the churchyard. A copy of a letter from the P.C.C. responding to the complainant explaining its actions had been promised but was awaited. Whilst the Parish Council was not specifically involved it would wish to understand the reasoning for the actions taken by the P.C.C. but decided to take no further action itself at this stage.

District Councillor report:

D.Cllr. May apologised for her late arrival at the meeting.

Council agreed to hear her report at this point of the meeting.

Upon enquiry from Cllr. Danks she confirmed that the District Council would be asked to get roadsweepers out to clear the roads around the quarries of mud and sand deposits.

Covid case figures in Bromsgrove District continued to reduce to a present rate of 12 per 100,000 people. While this was very good news she was mindful that with the opening of non-essential shops and hospitality residents must continue to follow rules.

There remain some 4,800 residents on furlough. And, 5% of 19-24 year olds are now unemployed. There is a need to address the skills sets of people and working with the Local Enterprise Board B.D.C. will advocate apprenticeship schemes.

A campaign is being launched to get dog owners to pick up their mess.

From 21st April the Direct Response Transport app. will be live. This enables residents to request bus transport from the railway station to the town centre. Two small shuttle buses will be available.

102/21 The Green, Belbroughton

Cllr. Pawley updated Council on the improvements to date advising:

13 new trees had been planted.

The new yew hedge adjacent to the Talbot carpark has been planted plus addition plants put in last month.

Contractor, Mr Williamson would be installing the four millstones adjacent to the footpath along with the two new replacement benches.

A new vintage style lighting column and lantern had been ordered from the County Council. W.C.C. will install this. However, the lead time is up to three months.

A new litter bin is to be purchased.

The Belbroughton History Society were assessing a new display unit to site on The Green.

Council approved Mr Williamson being requested to paint strip the two other benches on the site, but further approved that these were not repainted.

Action: the clerk will clarify from the contractor his dates for completing works, and discuss the additional work on the two older benches.

103/21 Volunteer Parish Path Wardens.

Council noted and regretted that Paul and Lyn Hardcastle would be retiring shortly from the roles. Council agreed that the County Council is advised and that it informs the Parish Council of their processes for appointing fresh volunteers to work on its assets.

Mr Hardcastle was happy to assist with a handover.

Action: Cllrs. Allington and Mabbett would assess with him the priority works on the paths plus would contact adjacent parish councils to see if there was scope to work together.

Council noted that if volunteers could not be found then urgent maintenance work may need to be paid for, but this would need a discussion on structures with the County Council.

Action: The clerk to contact Patrick White in the Countryside Team at the County Council for the procedures.

33.

104/21 The Lengthsman Scheme

(Due to the commercial sensitivity of this agenda item any members of the public present would have been excluded from the meeting during this item.)

Council approved renewal of the Lengthsman's existing contracting terms for 2021/22. Members would however review site locations scheduled for specific actions. These would be discussed with Mr Williamson and members would advise Council of any requested amendments to the work schedule.

Such changes it was acknowledged may mean that a contractor working outside of the 'Lengthsman Scheme' may be needed if additional work was identified.

Action: The clerk to issue the annual contractor terms and conditions and inform the County Council of the renewal.

Members to report their site findings to a future Council.

105/21 Councillors' Items

Cllr. Mabbett requested that traffic management including a discussion on the proposed entrance gates in Fairfield is placed on the next Council agenda.

Cllr. Mabbett requested that the drainage works for the Fairfield Recreation Ground are placed on the next Council agenda.

Cllr. Morgan requested that a discussion on reviving the setting up of a Neighbourhood Plan is placed on the next Council agenda.

Cllr Allington advised that she had arranged for a vehicle to be moved off a grass verge at Woodgate Way, Belbroughton and also an area there will be reseeded. A laurel hedge at Ram Ally will be trimmed back to improve footway access.

Cllr. Hood advised that he had received a revised quote for the maintenance works at the chamber under the dam on Belne Brook, Drayton Rd. This would need to be considered at the next Finance Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

To be Confirmed by future recorded Council Minute.