

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council held by video conference on 6th July 2020.

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

183/20 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. J Boswell and A Homer.

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

The meeting re-opened.

184/20 Declarations of Interest None. **185/20 Dispensations** None requested.

186/20 Minutes

Council approved the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 1st June 2020.

187/20 Reports

Chairman's report:

Cllr. Morgan advised that he was delighted that the Council was continuing to function with the use of 'Zoom' and welcomed Cllr. Allington to her first meeting for some months.

Planning Committee report:

Council noted the draft minutes of the meeting held 15th June 2020.

Financial Committee report:

Council noted the draft minutes of the meeting held 15th June 2020.

Clerk's Report:

- 1. Belne Stream site:** We still await the Canals Trust advice on which Keir Construction dept, can quote for the repairs to dam chamber. Alternative contractors will be sought as required. Also, the Bromsgrove District Council Tree Officer is yet to give a date for his site visit to consider the trees on edge of site and footway.
- 2. Fairfield Rec. Ground: Drainage** - North Worcs. Water Mgmt. have visited the Recreation Ground and their report on ground levels data and recommendations was received last week. This is now with Fairfield Cllrs. for assessment and recommendation of next actions.
- 3. Lighting 'l.e.d.' bulb replacements:** The County Council are working up a plan for Council consideration to cover current bulbs which will if they fail do not have replacements available and therefore need conversion. (Council has previously approved the principle of converting up to a third of the stock of 80 lights).

4. **Footpaths:** Paul Hardcastle, the volunteer footpath warden has assessed and put in place repair plans for a number of stiles and gates issues raised by residents.
5. The Talbot P.H. after request has tidied its carpark area. I have also asked that the branches over the bus shelter and footways re also removed. We are yet to hear from the District Council regarding whether the correct protocols had been followed when introducing their carparking pay meter and CCTV.
6. The P.C.'s Annual Report has been uploaded to the website and sent to the resident group e mail database, the 'AllAboutBelb.' Fbk. page, the Fairfield Community Association plus, paper copy sent to residents who have requesting such.
7. Fairfield Villa F.C. wish to record their thanks to the P.C. for the further three months rent break agreed. The club will resume rent payments 10th October.
8. The Maintenance Grant recipients have thanked the P.C. for the funds.

County and District Councillors reports:

C.Cllr. Webb advised:

The Worcestershire Cofid 19 Outbreak Control Plan has been issued and is available on the W.C.C. website. Schools are planned to reopen in September. Bromsgrove library has opened from 4th July. The 'Here to Help' is scaling down operations.

Locally Swan Lane Fairfield still has three drains to be cleared out and which require new covers. Yew Tree Lane dropped kerbs – she had met residents of the corner property to discuss their hedge removal and fence installation, this can only happen once the kerb is strengthened which W.C.C. will attend to. As and when the hedge is taken out then the safety team are confident a dropped kerb could be installed.

C.Cllr May advised:

The new parking orders outside Belbroughton primary school were not yet in force, she expects this to be sorted by September.

Hagley library is yet to have a reopen date set.

High St Belbroughton has been resurfaced but as this was on hottest day of the year so far there were tar issues and a proper sweeping up was needed three times.

Drains on Dordale Rd. / Bradford Lane are not yet operational as covers need replacing. – this is back 'Highways' work flow list.

Resurfacing is due in October for Hockley Brook Lane, Dark Lane, Waystone Lane and Mearse Lane.

The inspector will be asked to review the resurfacing work on the High St. outside the shop.

D.Cllr. May advised:

Bromsgrove carparking charges will be re-introduced from 3rd August.

An app will be available for payments as well as the existing cash option.

142 asylum seekers remain at the Britannia Hotel. Serco, for the Home Office are in contact with B.D.C. over operational matters as both parties look at the exit strategy. However, accommodation is not available in the Bromsgrove area.

Economic Development: £21.5m of Govt Funds has been received for grants for local businesses. The application date has now closed. Payments are due to start going out by 11th July.

The 'Birdbox' unit for retailers and others to showcase products / services in now open after a £200k investment.

Cllr. Morgan thanked both councillors for their attendance and work for the community.

188/20 Fairfield Recreation Ground – Playground

Council noted the national government guidance released last week on the re-opening of play areas but felt that it could not have confidence that it would be able to adhere to the guidance and therefore decided at this stage not to re-open the Playground.

Action: the clerk to put up appropriate notices and tape off the entrances.

189/20 Fairfield Traffic issues

Cllr. Mabbett detailed what he felt were unsatisfactory responses received from the County Council replying to the issues which were raised at the June Council, minuted under 158/20. As County Cllr. Shirley Webb was in attendance she was able to comment further on these:

i. The agreement to the speed limit reduction to 40mph on Stourbridge Rd. from the Stoneybridge island:

C.Cllr. Webb advised of implementation delays due to Covid-19 e.g. notices advising of the proposed changes couldn't be placed in the community, and that there was a resultant backlog in any case of Road Traffic Orders processes.

The Safer Roads Partnership had been contacted regarding the proposed changes, they were interested to see what effect the proposed changes when implemented would have on vehicle speeds – they had not commented upon their ability or otherwise to carry out checks should the 30 mph gateway be moved further into the village.

(S.R.P. did advise that 359 notices had sent out to speeding drivers, although the time period of these was not given)

ii. Speed tables rejection and alternative traffic calming measures:

C.Cllr. Webb had forwarded a 'toolkit list' of possible options and felt that it was up to the P.C. to request measures and not for the County Council to offer such as it felt that the Stourbridge Road in Fairfield had all that was needed for traffic calming. However, should the P.C. wish to progress further measures then these would be considered.

50.

iii. Dropped Kerbs at Yew Tree Lane:

C.Cllr. Webb had commented on this earlier under her County Council report, minute 187/20, and did not comment on any other solutions mooted by Council at the June meeting.

iv. Advisory HGV warning signs:

C.Cllr. Webb confirmed the response that despite comments made previously these would not be put up since it transpires that a census had found that only 3% of traffic usage was by HGVs.

v. Widening of footways:

C.Cllr. Webb advised this was in hand, but no specific timeline could be given.

Council noted that allied to traffic issues was the matter of social distancing during the health crisis and questioned what actions the County Council were considering to protect pedestrians in view of the narrow pathways not helped by cars parked on pavements. The issue was most prevalent during school drop off and pick up times.

C.Cllrs. Webb and May were not aware of any specific measures for Fairfield or other similar rural sites.

Actions: The clerk to enquire from W.C.C. what measures were to be implemented in line with National Government guidelines in respect of spacing for 'Social Distancing' along footways, especially as vehicles continue to park on footways.

190/20 Fairfield - Slip Road, Fairfield Court

This item regarding vegetation clearance was not discussed as C.Cllr. Webb advised that since the works involved were 'substantial' she had now arranged for the County Council Highways contractors to carry out the work.

Members questioned if parking restrictions could be put in place on the slip road.

Action: C.Cllr. Webb would enquire of relevant W.C.C. dept.

191/20 Mineral Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

Council noted the sites promoted for consideration in the County Council's D.P.D. for possible mineral extraction which included land promoted by outside parties but was owned by the Parish Council.

Council agreed to write to the County Council to reiterate its original objection, recorded in minute No. 244/18 (3rd September 2018) that it would not consider mineral extraction on its own land and also would neither sell nor lease its land for such purpose.

Further, the Council objects to any expansion of mineral extraction in the parish area
Cllr. Morgan thanked Cllr. Danks for his work on this for the council and the community.

Action: the clerk would write to the relevant W.C.C. Dept.

192/20 The Green, Belbroughton

Council noted an update report from the Working Group, the chairman thanked Cllr. Pawley for her work leading the group.

193/20 Belbroughton Benches

Cllr. Hood advised that three of the nine benches were beyond repair (two on The Green and the one opposite the school). Nigel Williamson had offered, when operational restrictions allowed, to clean / wash the remaining benches prior to weather proving (rather than any re-painting).

Council agreed that six benches should be refurbished.

194/20 Parish Upkeep (Gardeners)

Council noted that both gardeners had now resigned their positions.

It thanked both for their work over many years.

Council agreed that fresh works schedules should be drawn up and then new contractors approached, however work should in future cover other parish 'upkeep work' and not purely gardening tasks.

Council approved that this year's present unused budget would now be used to carry out priority works which members would advise to the clerk.

Actions: Cllr. Patchell for Belbroughton and Cllrs. in Fairfield ward to draw up fresh work schedules for consideration by the September Council.

The clerk to arrange for 'upkeep' work to be done on a priority basis pending the new schedules being agreed by council and new contractors being formally engaged.

195/20 The Artrix - Bromsgrove

Council noted the recent move into administration of the current operators of the theatre. Recognising the cultural benefit of the arts venue for the community, it would thank the District Council for its support to date including the acquisition of certain assets from the administrator.

It approved requesting that the Bromsgrove District Council offer further financial support to a new operator to enable the venue to re-open.

Action: The clerk to write to the District Council.

196/20 Meetings format – during the Health Crisis

Council approved continuing to hold meetings via video conference, since the health crisis was not over and so it had no plans to resume face to face meetings in rented rooms.

It acknowledged that 13 members had been able to use the new format but would endeavour to assist with any operational difficulties.

Council agreed to the continued postponement of the Annual Parish Meeting and would review the position in three months.

197/20 Website review / accessibility.

Council noted the requirements of The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 regarding accessibility for people with various disabilities.

Council approved sourcing an external I.T. expertise to assist with the required action plan and accessibility statement along with the uploading adjustments to the website's format.

Action: the clerk to seek contractors and refer costs for the September Council's consideration.

198/20 Councillors' Items

Cllr. Mabbett advised that the September Council would consider actions to address the drainage problems at the Fairfield Recreation Ground following receipt of the report from North Worcestershire Water Management which will be assessed by Fairfield Councillors. The car park extension would also be considered further at that Council.

Cllr. Danks referred an issue with a resident's property's verges on the A491 Sandy Lane, which C.Cllr. Webb advised she would address.

The meeting was closed at 9.25pm

To be Confirmed by future recorded Council Minute.