

Minutes of the BELBROUGHTON and FAIRFIELD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held at 7.00pm Tuesday 4th May 2021 by video conference.

Present: Parish Councillors: Dr R Morgan (Chairman), B Allington, G Ingram, A Mabbett, S Nock and, S Pawley. Parish clerk & R.F.O.: J H F Farrell.
Other attendees – Paul Hardcastle (Parish volunteer footpaths warden), 3 members of the public.

The Parish Council Chairman, Dr R Morgan, welcomed all to the meeting advising that due to the health crisis the Parish Council had to host the meeting via Zoom video conference.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from District Cllrs. K May and M Sherrey, Parish Cllrs. A Hood, A Mabbett, S Patchell and, S. Danks. And, Dr. S Morgan.

2. Minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 8th April 2019

The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting were approved as an accurate record and were adopted. The Chairman of the meeting thus minutes his acceptance of the approval.

3. Annual Reports

Parish Council Reports for 2020/21

Chairman's Report on Parish Council activities: Cllr. Dr Robert Morgan

- **Our general direction is guided by a parish survey held in 2019:-**
- Developing the Belbroughton Village Green has been successful and is ongoing – led by Cllr. Sue Pawley.
- Tidying and making safe Land at Drayton Rd – Belne Brook / Little Bell Hall Pool.
- Supporting regeneration of play equipment at the Belbroughton Recreation Centre – led by residents Sam Benbow and Alison Skidmore. The £20,000 grant will be drawn this month.
- Investing in green spaces.
- Traffic calming.
- Investigating improvements to the Fairfield Recreation Ground.
- Quarries – watchful eye maintained. Thanks to Cllr Syd Danks for his involvement and expertise.
- **Covid:**
- Supporting our tenants with rent free periods during the health crisis.
- Issuing of food vouchers via the primary schools.
- Moving our physical meetings to online and maintaining our business as usual.
- Our new clerk is set to take over from John Farrell and he welcomed Cheryl Powell.

1.

Finance Report: Cllr. Alan Mabbett

The Council expects to report a small surplus, and the salient figures were displayed and are copied to the minutes.

Precepted Income was unchanged from the two prior years but with a slight drop in other income due to Covid agreed rental freezes for Parish Council tenants.

Capital grants: - helping the community with food vouchers for children via the two primary schools. Also, the District Council Covid youth help hub received a donation.

Lighting: The Parish Council owns 80 lights and some column replacements are needed following a Health and Safety survey, plus there will be a staged replacing of bulbs with 'l.e.d.' energy saving units.

C.Cllrs K May and S Webb supported initiatives with grants totalling £3000 from their 'Divisional funds' for which the Parish Council was extremely grateful.

Future expense: In 2021 repairs to the internal chamber of the dam at Drayton Rd. Belbroughton and drainage works on the Fairfield Recreation Ground will take place.

Income and expenditure: Year to 31.3.2021 (subject to final audit)

Precepted Income	£65,000	(total of the tax from our residents)
Other Income		
Lengthsman Scheme	£2,832	(County Council support.)
Rental income	£13,413	(Farm tenancies, F.V.F.C. & The Deli, Belbroughton)
Cash Investments interest	£5,076	(8 investments are in place with F.S.C.S. banks)
Wayleaves	£449	(n'power & National Grid)
Ward members grants	£3,000	(Thank you C.Cllrs. Karen May & Shirley Webb)
Total income	£ 89,770	

Grants paid and projects for our Community:

Maintenance Grants		
The Parochial Church Council	£2,250	(Help with the churchyard maintenance for The Belbroughton & Fairfield churches)
Belbroughton Recreation Centre	£1,250	
Fairfield Village Hall	£750	
Belbroughton Church Hall	£750	

Capital Grants:

Meal vouchers to school	£1,000	(Aldi Food support vouchers)
Belbroughton Cricket Club	£414	(Pavilion clock)
District Council Covid Help hub	£500	(Young people's support hub.)

Parish Projects:

Village Green Belbroughton	£15,366	(Trees and hedging improvements) (covered by developers payment of £21.5k in 2019/20)
-		
Belbroughton Village sign	£1,416	(repairs to the 1930s sign) (funded by C.Cllr May)

Minor Grants:

£0 due to Covid – no requests received.

Other notable Expenditures:

Lengthsman £3,996	Dog bins emptying £3,950	Grass Mowing £4,885
Lighting £14,247 (incl. £9k provision for column replacements)		
Other green space management £5,110		
Staff £26,867 (includes. N.I., & pension contr.)		
Gen. Admin £5,204		
Total Expenditure - £89,788		

The Balance sheet as at 31/3/2021 is little changed at **£510,666**.

Within this land assets are £165,434. Cash deposits total £351,498.

Operational Bank a/c £25,867

Provisions are raised for £16,750 (Belbroughton Rec Centre Playground Project)
£17,000 (Lighting column replacements)

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Mabbett for his work as chair of the Finance Committee.

Planning Report: Cllr. Sue Pawley

She thanked her colleagues for their support during the year.

Notwithstanding Covid 45 planning applications were considered during the Council year.

Recommendations made to the Bromsgrove District Council:

- 17 No Objection
- 13 No Objection but with conditions
- 15 Objected

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 advise on the local quarry matters.

The Committee meets once a month on the third Monday.

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

Agricultural Holdings Report: John Farrell for absent Cllr. Allan Hood

The Council owns 85 acres of arable farmland in Wildmoor & Stoneybridge.

Let under 13 tenancies at £90 /acre and is used for various arable cropping types.

A three month rent freeze was agreed to assist during the health crisis.

The income is used to fund the Capital & Minor Grants and Parish Projects.

The usual committee 'farm walk' inspections of the holdings were not held due to Covid.

However, from drive past visual examinations the land was being well maintained.

As well as providing a regular income the land is a significant area of 'Green Belt' within the Council's ownership and control.

District Cllrs. No report.

4. Footpaths

The chairman thanked Paul Hardcastle for his excellent volunteer work over many years and felt that the community were very appreciative. He wished him well following his decision to now retire from the role.

3.

Mr Paul Hardcastle:

- **Effects of the lockdown:** numbers using footpaths has never been as high with many new walkers from outside the local area. This had kept vegetation in check and less strimming had been required. The greater usage however also led to some abuse of rights of way. This though was a county wide issue.
- **The Severn Trent Resilience project.** While this finished by January 2020 Lockdown meant that a lot of reinstatement work was not completed until mid-summer 2020. The 'New Barn' area benefiting from Barhal Ltd., with the contractors putting down stone to improve that pathway and surrounding area. People however were still using the old diversion when it's not now needed.
- **Strimming plans:** The County Council normally agrees a programme with their contractors for the once a year heavy trim backs but due to Covid the working parties were unavailable and thus there has been reduced activity. 2021 so far may be the same again. There is a loss of local control on when W.C.C. will act – the window is the May to August period but we are unsure when the works actually would take place. Too early in the season might mean a second visit is needed later in the year.
- **Issues**
 1. Bridge / boardwalk at the 'Hadleys field' : greater usage means its deteriorating and repairs to the stanchions have been required. W.C.C. have committed to put in new a bridge at some point, possibly within a couple of months.
 2. Belbroughton Churchyard footpath: - the church fenced off the churchyard as abuse was seen on graves allegedly from dog walkers. The footpath surround is however now good due to extra pavings donated by Parish Cllr. Simon Nock. Winter weather may lead to a poorer surface here again and the Parish Council may wish to consider funding fresh stone and gravel.
 3. The new quarry extension works recently granted permission at Chadwich will affect three footpaths which will now require diversions.

He would be leaving the role but was happy to remain in place until a new volunteer had been appointed.

The Chairman again thanked him for his work.

5. Residents Open Forum

No Comments requiring resolutions to be put to the meeting – one member of public expressed disappointment at poor local community turnout for the meeting despite the good works being achieved by the Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked all for attending the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting was closed at 7.28 p.m.

Chairman..... Dated.....

4.