

Minutes of the Meeting of Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council held at the Fairfield First School on 4th December 2017.

Present: Cllrs. J Boswell, A Hood, T Jones, A Mabbett, S MacDonald, P Margetts, Dr R Morgan, S Nock and, C Scurrall. Clerk: J Farrell. County Cllr. K May and 6 members of the public. Cllr. R Morgan chaired the meeting in the absence of Chairman Cllr. Bradley.

355/17 Apologies – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. J Bradley, S Boss, G Parsons and, S Pawley. Apologies were also received from County Cllr. Shirley Webb.

The meeting adjourned, with Standing Orders suspended, for the ‘Open Surgery’ and also to listen to members of the public identifying matters of concern relating to the evening’s agenda.

The meeting re-opened.

356/17 Declarations of Interest - Cllr. Mabbett declared an ‘Other disclosable Interest’ in agenda item 6: Fairfield First School – Expansion Consultation as his wife held a position as a governor of the school.

357/17 Dispensations - Council agreed to the dispensation request from Cllr. Mabbett to remain in the meeting, to speak and to vote during agenda item 6: Fairfield First School – Expansion Consultation.

358/17 Minutes

Council approved the minutes of the Council Meeting of 2nd October 2017 and the Chairman signed the minute book.

359/17 Reports

Chairman’s report:

This is a short report on my activities as temporary chairman during James’s absence I am grateful for the support and assistance that clerk, John, has given to me on your behalf I have been involved in the following: -

- Setting meeting agenda with clerk for November council
- Chaired 6th November full council meeting
- Ongoing discussions about
 - Little Bell Hall pool
 - Land adjacent to Belbroughton village green
 - Footpath diversion / renovation around Beckett’s farm
 - Footway lighting
 - NHP items and progress
- Budget Working Group meeting 7th November
- Laid wreath at Belbroughton on Remembrance Sunday. This was a real honour
- Traffic Calming Working Group meeting on 14th November
- NALC regional AGM on 15th November at Worcester County hall
- Finance Committee meeting
- Fairfield First School consultation meeting on 28th November
- Setting meeting agenda with clerk for December council

Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

He also wished to record both his personal and the Council’s condolences to the Parish Lengthsman Nigel Williamson following the death of his wife.

Planning Committee report: Council noted the minutes of the Committee Meeting held 20th November 2017

Financial Committee report: Council noted the minutes of the Committee Meeting held 20th November 2017

Clerk's Report:

1. The Green, Belbroughton / adjacent building site:
We await what should be the final version of the agreement with the Developer. The remaining point at issue is the Developer not wishing to have an end date inserted in the agreement for completion of drainage works across The Green which the members of the liaison group feel is important. The group has suggested 30th April 2019 for completion as an acceptable date.
2. There have been no applications for the Fairfield ward councillor vacancy which therefore remains open. Provided there are applications then Council will consider these at the 5th February 2018 meeting.
3. A new dog waste bin has been ordered for the Fairfield Rec Ground – to be positioned at the top end of the field adjacent to the footpath which continues beyond the field.
4. Fairfield Memorial Orchard: The Fairfield gardener has planted the replacement apple tree
5. Fairfield, Stourbridge Rd. bus shelter opposite The Swan: the County Council has been requested to issue the necessary 'street furniture consent' to enable the installation of a bench inside the shelter.
6. Belbroughton, Christmas lights: B.D.C. operatives have repairing the broken strands. The lights are 95% lit, thus a small number of bulbs have failed.
7. Tree work took place 27th November in Belbroughton at The Green, taking out a large dangerous limb and Sylvester's Corner reducing a lime which was snagging power lines. The work having been approved by the BDC Tree Officer as it is in the conservation area. Further tree work is scheduled shortly for Woodgate Orchard /Hartle Lane junction and also at Dark Lane.
8. WCC have agreed to new place name road signs for Broom Hill – precise positioning to be assessed this week. The P.C. would pay for the signs but the County will cover costs of installation.
9. WCC are assessing whether warning speed camera signs may be erected on Hartle Lane.
10. Ringway have visited the Fairfield Rec. Ground carpark and will be quoting for the pot hole repairs.
11. R S McColl's shop display in High St Belbroughton: we still await comment from the BDC conservation officer on whether the display contravenes the conservation area regulations.
12. The new gate has now been installed on the footpath from Belbroughton Rec to New Barn. It was completed over 2 days last week by Peter Rose, the landowner whom the PC will reimburse for his time.

County and District councillors:

Cllr. Karen May referred the LTP4. The Consultative document that was presented at District Council was an outline case of only 20 pages in length. The document that came forward to County was 432 pages in length and had "hooks" within it that play a role in addressing the infrastructure issues within the Bromsgrove District.

The 'Top 5' W.C.C. Members' December updates:

Relief for Pershore

A major scheme to improve congestion and journey time reliability in Pershore has been approved. The £11.6m Pershore improvement scheme includes a Northern Link Road to connect the employment site of Keytec Business Park with the A44, enhancements at Pinvin crossroads to alleviate congestion in the area and the upgrade of the Wyre Road / Station Road junction.

Construction is due to start in Autumn 2018

More details can be found at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/pershorescheme

Championing...

Open for Business

Social Work Academy

A Social Work Academy is to be launched in the new year which is to be a one-stop comprehensive hub for our social workers who work in adults and in children's services.

The Academy will focus on social work development and ensure that all professionals, both existing and new, can enhance their skills and knowledge and develop their careers.

Supporting...

Children and Families

Winter Health Plans

Worcestershire's health and social care teams are working closely together to support people through the winter, help to reduce hospital waiting times and to avoid an NHS winter crisis. A new Worcestershire Step Down Unit that the Council is opening this month will ensure that, on discharge from hospital, individuals will have the support and care they need to help them to regain their independence and return home or should this not be possible a long-term care solution is found.

Promoting...

Health and Wellbeing

Minerals Plan

A new Minerals Local Plan for Worcestershire is being developed.

It will set out the plan for mineral extraction in the county. It will guide how much and what minerals we need to be able to supply. The Council is currently looking for landowners to submit additional sites that could be suitable for mineral working and could contribute to our local supply of minerals, especially sand, gravel, clay or hard rock. This call for sites is open until 26 January 2018.

For more info visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/minerals

Protecting...

The Environment



Grit & Determination

With the cold weather setting in, the County Council's gritting teams have been out in force and will continue to be on standby to help keep Worcestershire moving this winter. Highways depots are stocked with 15,160 tonnes of salt, including a 5,000 tonne strategic reserve in the event of an unusually harsh winter.

The fleet of 26 gritting vehicles and the teams that drive them are ready to cover Worcestershire's 1000 miles of designated roads.

Minor routes are covered by more than 1200 Worcestershire grit bins.

The bins are available across the whole of the county and are maintained with stocks of a salt/grit mixture which is available for use by the public on their local roads and footways.

Council...

News Update



Bus Services: She confirmed that Diamond Buses had given notice to end their contract to operate the 318 service from 2nd January, however this notice had now been extended until 24th February. The County Council would be tendering as soon as possible for a replacement operator.

The council expressed its concern and expected the County Council to provide an ongoing service.

360/17 Fairfield First School – Expansion Consultation

Council noted a report from Cllr. Mabbett who attended the school information evening on 28th November.

Council approved supporting the proposed expansion in pupil numbers also requesting that the County Council does what it can to minimise the likely increases in traffic flows and car parking needs.

Action: the clerk to inform W.W.C.

361/17 Council Budget and Precept 2018/19

- a. Council noted the budget which had been previously agreed by the Finance Committee and approved its adoption for 2018/19.
- b. Council considered the level of precept for 2018/19 and approved a figure of £65,000 which would mean no change from the present year.

Action: the clerk to inform and arrange the formal request with the District Council.

362/17 Neighbourhood Plan

Council noted an update report from the Cllr. Morgan leader of the Working Group:

Steering Group - formation

Aims

- *Develop a steering group that*
 - *Reflects our neighbourhood and be of suitable size to function.*
 - *Has a membership that is open, fair and accessible to all*
 - *Is driven by the mutual desire to search out the benefits and shortfalls of developing a N.H.P. for the Belbroughton and Fairfield designated area.*
 - *Will design, deliver a report after consultation on whether it will move onto delivering a Neighbourhood Plan.*

Strategy

- *The P.C. will notify Bromsgrove District council of its wish to designate an area for a Neighbourhood Plan. (this would be the existing parish boundaries)*
- *The working group will report the council at its December meeting*
- *Arrange an open meeting for 22nd January 2018 to formally set up the steering group*
- *Set the agenda for this meeting and the date for the first working meeting of the group*
- *The venue a central location of "The Barn" at Bell Inn, Belbroughton.*
- *Developing a strategy to publicise the above event*
 - *e-newsletter*
 - *Contact those expressing an interest in the 2017 parish survey*
 - *Contact local organisations with membership lists*
 - *Parish Noticeboards*
 - *Notices in shops and other public places*
 - *Banners and notices*
 - *Active promotion by councillors and any other interested parishioners*
- *Develop a process flowchart for discussion and adoption at the initial meeting*

363/17 Traffic Calming

Cllr. Mabbett advised that the Working Group had met 14th November and was pleased to have been joined by two residents from Belbroughton and Fairfield. Council noted the report from the Working Group and would consider approval of specific actions at the next Council following further research:

Aim: To try to ensure a safe environment for residents in the Parish within the context of traffic management.

Objectives:

1. *To ensure that all road speed signage is compliant and can be enforced.*
2. *To review the appropriateness of speed limits and make recommendations for changes if found advisable.*
3. *To evaluate the current effectiveness of speed enforcement by the agencies and make recommendations if appropriate.*

4. *To review the use of roads in the parish for heavy goods lorries with a view to recommending size restrictions/alternative routes.*
5. *To identify any parking issues and recommend possible solutions.*
6. *To determine whether (private) road traffic orders can be usefully applied in the parish to control parking on pavements.*
7. *To identify gaps in the use of dropped kerbs/tactile pavements in the Parish which limit or prevent the free movement of people, especially those who have a mobility issue.*
8. *To seek an urgent rectification of any such deficiencies within the Parish.*

Desired Outcomes:

1. *Production of a concise paper for full council to contain action points.*
2. *Identify what is within PC powers and implement if agreeable to council*
3. *Identify other points for action and pursue with relevant agencies through the PC*

Summary of Meeting:

1. ***Dropped Kerbs:*** *The main problem would seem to be in Fairfield along the Stourbridge Road. This is a long standing issue which has been raised on many occasions with WCC but nothing has been resolved to date. The deficiencies are a) Mount Road, b) Yew Tree Lane, c) the mini roundabout, e) outside the Village Hall. There is also another position at the junction of Bournheath Road/Brook Road where there is no dropped kerb, and the visibility for vehicles and pedestrians turning out of Bournheath Road is very poor due to hedgerow/trees overhanging the roadway on the bend. There did not appear to be an issue elsewhere in the Parish but steps will be taken to assess the situation.*

SUGGESTED ACTION:

1. *Continued pressure on WCC/CC to rectify the problem in Fairfield with the hope of tapping into new money to promote cycling and walking in the Bromsgrove area*
2. *Assessment of the provision elsewhere in the Parish would be undertaken*

2.Parking: *There was a wide ranging discussion but it became clear that finding solutions would not be easy. It would appear that the issue is worse in Fairfield along the Stourbridge Road at School time and when the Recreation Ground is being used for Football matches. Anecdotally, it would seem that the excess parking in Fairfield is a result of people from outside the area coming into the village rather than an abundance of residents parking in the road/pavement. Whilst space in Belbroughton is at a premium, it would appear that a more responsible attitude is taken towards any necessary on street parking. Whereas in Fairfield, there appears to be more cases of inconsiderate on-street parking. Therefore, it would suggest that the behaviour of some drivers needs to be changed or 'nudged'. Options could be through fixed penalties, but that would involve the implementation of one or more type of parking restriction which could have a negative effect for some residents e.g. yellow lines, limited parking, permit parking, restricted pavement parking etc. The efficacy of such an option would depend upon enforcement which appears to be problematic. There were no easy solutions coming forward. Discussions then centred on relieving the demand on parking which led to the suggestions a) walking bus for school, and b) earlier drop off for children to spread the 'peak' parking period.*

SUGGESTED ACTION:

1. *To suggest to the school that a) walking bus be considered and b) allowing children to be dropped off from 8.30 provided suitable supervision can be found.*

3. Traffic: Again discussions were wide ranging covering HGVs, signage and engineering methods. The difficulty of handling the problem in a number of dimensions indicated the complexity of traffic management. What became apparent in discussions was the impact a few individual can make with a lot of hard work and perseverance. Progress seemed to partly depend upon luck, a detailed knowledge of regulations and who to contact. Also a lot of pressure was needed in the right pace. HGVs would appear to be an increasing problem. Large lorries driven by drivers with no local knowledge are creating traffic problems. The inappropriate use of certain Sat-Navs could be a contributing factor, Comments were also made about lack of clarity in existing road signage and maybe an absence of signage in some areas.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

1. General letter to local businesses (and maybe all residents through web site?) asking for cooperation in ensuring that suppliers are aware of the local road conditions.
2. Recording through local observation by residents the details of haulage companies so they can be informed of what is happening and be asked to help prepare their drivers in the deliveries.
3. Recording, using photographs if possible, the incidents of problems with vehicles, and reporting serious cases through 101.
4. Asking WCC to review signage for HGVs in the Parish.

On the matter of general traffic, it is recognised that the volume has increased. It is assumed that the bulk of the traffic is commuter traffic and 'rat-run' traffic. Whilst there may be little action that can be taken to reduce the flow, speed is also perceived to be a problem. It was welcoming to learn about the hard work individuals have put into various traffic issues and it does demonstrate what can be achieved. The speed issue on Hartle Lane continues to be monitored but the average speed is still too high for the CSW to be triggered. However, the absence of speed check signage was high-lighted. Speeding in Fairfield is problematic. Different measurements would seem to be achieved by different agencies. Local knowledge is required when measuring speed. Slow progress is being made towards CSW but the outlook is optimistic. The use of mobile cameras has been requested but was declined on grounds of there being no appropriate parking for the vehicle. The provision of VAS was discussed and it was felt that the use of green/red digital speed displays maybe more appropriate than the current 30 slow signs within the Parish.

The use of engineering methods was briefly discussed as these had been requested for consideration in Fairfield. To date WCC have declined "With regards to the traffic calming request I thought we had made clear previously that engineering methods on this "B" classified would not be considered". The current thinking in Fairfield is the use of horizontal road deflection at the two ends of the village, a long speed table near the school and the use of pedestrian refuges.

Within Belbroughton, the site near the Talbot was identified as a 'trouble' spot requiring suitable engineering methods.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

1. Purchase and installation of speed camera signs for Hartle Lane after checking the legitimacy of usage.
2. Supporting the implementation of a similar CSW scheme for Fairfield
3. Review the positioning of existing VAS and identify any new sites for consideration with a view to submitting recommendations to WCC.
4. To consider the viability of utilising green/red digital speed VAS within the Parish.
5. To continue to press WCC over the implementation of engineering methods on Stourbridge Road.
6. The site near the Talbot requires further investigation with a view to alleviating traffic issues.

County Cllr. K May advised upon request from Council that she would ensure that the faded double yellow lines and 'H' Bar markings on High St Belbroughton would be repainted. She would also investigate whether software could be integrated with existing VAS units to provide traffic flow information.

364/17 First World War – Commemorations

Council deferred until the return of Cllr. Bradley, and thus until a future Council, consideration of any events. It noted that the Fairfield Community Association was considering events and would aim to work together with local entities on holding events during next year.

365/17 Smartwater

Council noted that there was renewed interest in these schemes from a number of Fairfield residents.

Council approved by seven votes in favour, one against and one abstention to form a Working Group to investigate current offers available. It therefore deferred considering whether a scheme should be set up pending a report from the new Working Group. Cllrs. Jones would lead this group and garner members to join the group.

Council noted that should it wish to progress to considering a scheme it would firstly need to revisit its decision of the November 2016 Council under minute 353/16 concerning the use of Parish Council funds.

366/17 Quality Council Status

Council noted a report from Cllr. Scurrall on the current Local Council Award Scheme and approved, by three votes in favour, two against and four abstentions forming a 'Working Group' to work with the clerk to progress achieving Quality Award council status. The 'Working Group' lead by Cllr. Scurrall would include Cllrs. Mabbett and Nock.

366/17 Flagpole

Council defeated a motion by two votes in favour, four against and three abstentions to purchase and install a second flagpole in Belbroughton.

367/17 Councillors' Items

Cllr. Margetts requested that when The Green Belbroughton is reviewed for new tree plantings, expected during 2018, that a new tree is planted to replace the current tree which had the Christmas lights installed as that tree was probably nearing the end of its life.

Cllr. Scurrall advised that he had issued a written request for foliage to be trimmed to a Stourbridge Rd resident.

Cllr. Jones sought confirmation that the Council would cover the costs of a Christmas tree for Wildmoor. The clerk confirmed that this was in the budget.

Cllr. Boswell advised that a complaining resident had still not had his request for foliage to be reduced at the junction of Galtons Lane and Hartle Lane despite the clerk informing WCC some weeks ago. WCC were to have contacted the landowner.

C.Cllr. K May advised that Richard Clewer from WCC Highways would be visiting the site 6th December.

The Meeting was closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed Chairman