

**MINUTES**  
**DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.30pm held via Zoom

**PRESENT:** Chairman J Clarke      Vice Chairman S Rees      Cllr S Harris  
Cllr R Davis (also in capacity as District Cllr)      Cllr J Harrington  
Cllr I Spiers attempted to join the meeting but had connection issues  
One parishioner      Clerk L Yapp

**1. APOLOGIES** – None received

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None declared

- a) *Cllrs are reminded of the need to update their register of interests*
- b) *To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
- c) *To declare Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
- d) *Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the clerk at least 4 clear days prior to a meeting.*

*Cllrs who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of paragraph 12(4) of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items*

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** – Parishioner in attendance raised the following:

- Traffic Calming – after reading the last meetings' minutes, the parishioner questioned the costs involved in the proposed traffic calming options. Cllr Rees suggested that in the first instance we should request some 'traffic data collecting' strips so that we can fully justify any expenditure. This will be added as an agenda item for our meeting in January (19<sup>th</sup>)
- Church Wall – parishioner felt that works to the wall needed to be carried out as a priority and if this meant a substantial increase in the precept was the only way forward, this should be considered, particularly as the precept has remained unchanged for a number of years.

**3. MILLENNIUM GREEN** - the parish council has £6,801 of s106 monies (with specific criteria that this must be spent to 'enhance public open space') as well as New Homes Bonus monies of £8,273. It was agreed at our November meeting that these two pots of money be combined (£15,074) and used to enhance the facilities at the Millennium Green with a climbing frame and 2 x picnic tables with wheelchair access. The tables to be made from re-cycled materials. The cost of the climbing frame is £13,495 (plus VAT) which includes installation costs. The tables are £438 (plus VAT) with installation costs to be added. Cllr Rees had been to site and said there was plenty of room to accommodate the climbing frame and there would be no impact on neighbouring properties. Subject to public consultation with parishioners regarding this use of funds, a proposal was made by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Rees that we formally move forward and proceed with this project. All Cllrs were in favour of the proposal

**4. DRAFT BUDGET** – The clerk had presented a draft budget for consideration, to take into account the cost of repairs to the church wall, if applying for a loan. One quote has already been received, almost £40,000, but a verbal quote had suggested this could be done for £25,000 (we are awaiting site of formal quote). The parish council has already set aside £10,000 as a reserve for these repairs and now needs to find an additional £15,000. One option would be to take out the loan and spread this over say 10 years, or the other option would be to spread the sum over 2 or 3 years, with the loan repayments added onto the precept (The parish council element of the council tax bill). Lengthy debate took place

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as to the impact that a large increase would have on the payments the council taxpayer would make, when also considering possible increases on the County Council, District Council, Police and Fire Service elements of the council tax bill. Raising the precept to £15,014 (which would allow £5,000 towards the loan payments) would mean an approximate increase of 48% (an additional £11 for the year on Band D properties). It was agreed that a higher precept for 3 years was preferred to the longer-term loan. A decision will be made at the next meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2021, by which time we should have received two more quotes.

- 5. CHURCH WALL** – this had originally been added as an agenda item in order to agree applying for a Public Works Loan Board loan. Criteria for the loan application means that we had to provide at least two quotes, ideally three, and a FULL parish consultation of at least a month. The urgency was so that we could have made a decision on whether to apply for the loan and start the consultation process, but as we only have one quote, we were unable to formally consider the costs involved

As from January 2021, all parish council information, i.e. agendas, minutes, finance etc. will only be posted on the new website: <https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk>

Emails should be sent to: [clerk@defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk)