

2020/17

MINUTES
DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th November 2020 at 7.15pm held via Zoom

PRESENT: Chairman J Clarke Cllr R Davis (also in capacity as District Cllr)
Cllr S Rees Cllr S Harris County Cllr A Hardman Clerk L Yapp

1. APOLOGIES – Cllrs Revell, Harrington and Spiers

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 – There was no one in attendance

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from meeting dated 15th September and 12th October 2020 – Acceptance proposed Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Harris – all in favour

4. REPORTS:

a) **County Cllr Report** – Cllr A Hardman reported:

- Covid cases are on the increase with 231 cases per 100,000 reported in the County (figures as of 17th November). A testing centre is now open in Pershore but by appointment, and not a 'drop-in'.
- 26 care homes in Worcestershire have reported cases of Covid
- Libraries and waste recycling centres remain open during this second lockdown
- Schools across the county remain open though face coverings must be worn at all times when moving around the school. 89% of pupils are in attendance.
- Government grants are available via the District Councils for any business forced to close
- **Full report is available from the clerk**

b) **District Cllr Report** – District Cllr Davis reported:

- Confirming with Cllr Hardman, that there has been an increase in reported Covid cases
- Business grants – to encourage any local businesses to apply for the grant funding available

c) **West Mercia Policing Team** – nothing to report

5. FINANCE

a) Payments for approval / made since the last meeting – *a copy of the full accounts had been forwarded to Cllrs*

1205	Website Admin	528.00
1206	Lengthsman September	384.00
1207	Phone Box Re-Furb	300.00
1208	Grass Cutting	580.00
1209	Street Lighting Costs	132.26
SO	Clerks Salary	268.04
SO	Clerks Expenses	15.00
SO	Clerks Salary	268.04
SO	Clerks Expenses	15.00
1210	Website Admin	30.00
1211	Lengthsman October	513.60
1212	Poppy Appeal Donation	50.00

Approval had been given by the parish council to support the clerks refresher training at a cost of £50
Proposed approval of payments and accounts circulated Cllr Clarke, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

Account balances (less unrepresented cheques):

Current Account: £29013.36

Deposit Account: £4055.64

6. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

- a) Footpaths / Rights of Way – Cllr Rees reported that she would speak to *Pathfinders* asking if they could report to the parish council any issues on PRoW's in the parishes
- b) Street Lighting – Cllr Harris reported that the previous chairman of the parish council had done an excellent job identifying street lights and those which needed replacing. The parish council has CIL funds (Community Infrastructure Levy) available to finance the proposed improvements. Cllr Harris advised he was happy to work alongside another Cllr on this and was aware that at least one other quote would be needed.
- c) Flooding – Cllr Clarke reported that a ditch in Besford village needed attention. This had been raised with WCC but as yet no action had been taken. Cllr Clarke would take some photographs and report this again. Cllr Rees reported that further to the site visit in Harpley Road some time ago, this was now much improved.
- d) Lengthsman – The clerk was asked to request the LM to clear / spray weeds in Harpley Road
- e) Speeding – Cllr Harris reported that he had finally met with WCC officer with a view to discussing traffic calming options for the parishes. It is not possible to get the speed limit reduced through Besford but it was suggested that the vegetation could be cut back at the cross roads (Ladywood Road) which will be carried out by WCC and the give way road markings are re-marked. With regard Lower Drive, 'SLOW' road markings and a junction warning sign could be installed. Discussion had taken place regarding a VAS sign, which would have to be paid for by the parish council. Cllr Hardman very kindly to make a contribution of between £500 and £1,000 with a suggestion that we should approach the Police and Crime Commissioner to see if there is any further funding available. The clerk would research the cost of VAS signs and this would be reported back at the next meeting
- f) Harpley Road, Car Parking – Cllr Rees had met with Rooftop officer with regarding the parking issues. She was advised that any 'illegal' parking was a police issue, but there are a number of garages which could be used and an area at the rear of the garages which could be cleared to enable additional parking spaces. The Rooftop officer would report back to Cllr Rees when he has carried out his own in-house enquiries

7. PLANNING:

- a) Home Farm Housing Survey – nothing further to report due to Covid restriction
- b) 20/02345 – Neilson Park, Defford Arms – change of use for siting static holiday caravans as approved under Planning Ref: 14/00381 restricting occupancy – this application has been received requesting the ‘restricted occupancy’ condition to be lifted, presumably during the ongoing lockdown and travel restrictions. The parish council agreed to support the change on the condition that it be limited to the Covid pandemic period only.
- c) 20/02327 – 7 Lower Drive, Besford – replacement conservatory – there were no objections to this application

11. OPEN SPACES

- a) Millennium Green – Following the extraordinary meeting on the 12th October when it was agreed that we combine the s106 monies (allocated to enhancing open space) and the NHB monies and enhance the facilities at Millennium Green – a total of £15,074. Since that meeting Cllr Harris had been investigating a number of options including tables / gazebo-style structure and a climbing frame – all of which had been circulated to Cllrs for consideration. It has been narrowed down to two options:
 - (i) Option 1 - A gazebo-style structure, 2 x benches and 2 x ‘wheelchair’ accessible picnic tables – total cost of £13,099 (exc. VAT)– the quote for the gazebo included fitting and is included in the total cost, but we would need to factor in any secure fixing for the tables and benches. These would be hardwood constructions
 - (ii) Option 2 - A climbing frame (Uranium Climbing Frame) and 2 x ‘wheelchair’ accessible picnic tables with the tables made from recycled materials – total cost £13,495 (exc. VAT) – the cost for installation of the climbing frame is included in the cost, but we would need to factor in any secure fittings for the tables.

The clerk would circulate to Cllrs details of the two proposals put forward with a view to making a final decision and approval at the January meeting

12. PROJECTS

- a) Village Hall Car Park – Nothing to report
- b) Electric Car Charging Points – Nothing to report
- c) Repair to Church Wall – Extensive enquiries had been made to see if there is any grant funding available to finance the church wall repairs, estimated at £25k – unfortunately nothing is available. A suggestion was made at the meeting that we apply to the Public Works Loan Board for a greatly reduced interest rate loan, however Cllr Davis had made enquiries that as this would be classed as maintenance, the loan would not be approved. Consideration will be given as to whether or not the cost should be covered by the precept.
- d) Phone Boxes – The clerk had not received any suggestions from parishioners as to possible use of the phone box in Defford. It was agreed we leave it as it is for the time being.

13. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – It was reported that the village support group was still active in the villages and helping where necessary in the local community.

14. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS had been circulated to Cllrs

15. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Cllr Clarke referred to communication from two Cllrs and their frustration over the length of time it takes to make any decision. Cllr Clarke reported to the meeting that there is, unfortunately, a process when spending public money which is what the parish council relies upon (via the precept). A suggestion was made that we move to monthly meetings to speed up the process, but this should be discussed with a full council in attendance. It was agreed that we should encourage existing and prospective new Cllrs to engage with parish council projects and to make it clear that the seemingly, long-winded process was something we had no control over, other than to meet more frequently

16. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS – Date for the next meeting – Tuesday January 19th 2021
at 7pm – via Zoom