

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

28th September 2023

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.20 pm

**Present: Councillor Bettley-Smith (Chair)
Councillors Berrisford, Bullock, Drakakis-Smith, Hales, Head, Owen,
Speed, and Watkin**

Mrs M Clough – Clerk

232/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daly, Ecclestone, and Karling.

233/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

234/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 18th July 2023 and the Special Meeting of the Parish Council held on 7th August 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the following typing errors:

Minute 220/23 (180723) – Clearwire should read Centerwire

Minute 229/23 (070823) - 7h August 2023 should read 7th August 2023

Councillor Drakakis-Smith requested that her objection to Minute 215/23 Planning Matters be recorded in these Minutes.

235/23 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no Members of the Public in attendance at the meeting.

236/23 STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

In the absence of a Police representative, Members discussed the crime statistics.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bullock contacts the police to request crime statistics, including (if possible) the outcome of actions taken.

237/23 REPORTS

The Members received the following reports:

(i) The Chair

Councillor Bettley-Smith submitted his apologies for the October meeting, as he was unable to attend due to family commitments.

On behalf of the Parish Council the Chair extended thanks to Laura Lee for her contributions to the Parish Council finances, from her book sales.

Discussions ensued regarding the street naming of the development on land off Main Road, Wrinehill, and the Clerk explained that Standing Order 26 had been followed to address this matter.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

(ii) The Clerk's Report

Members considered the Clerk's report, circulated with the Agenda.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and advertising signs for Betley Bonfire be approved.

(iii) Representatives on Outside Bodies

Councillor Bullock updated Members on discussions with the police over a recent road traffic accident. He expressed disappointment that there was no police representative attending the meeting.

RESOLVED

(i) That Councillor Bullock formally registers the Parish Council's concerns over the most recent road traffic accident with the Borough Council's Highways Department and the Police;

(ii) That Councillor Bullock informs the Police that the Parish Council would very much like a Police representative to attend the October meeting, in order that feedback can be given to Members on the outcome of the investigations into the road traffic accident.

238/23 FOOTPATHS WORKING GROUP

Councillor Berrisford updated Members on the progress made to the footpath improvements. She reported very successful outcomes from working closely with various landowners, to improve footpath links which now extended beyond the Parish.

In order to encourage young people to participate in this scheme as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award, Councillor Berrisford agreed to advertise the scheme on the Parish Notice Boards.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

239/23 ARMISTICE DAY AND REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2023

Councillor Bettley-Smith reported that the school pupils would be assembling on the Memorial Garden at approximately 10.50am on Friday 10th November 2023, to pay their respects for Remembrance. A normal church service would be held on Sunday, 12th November 2023, and a wreath would be laid by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Daly. Silhouettes would be erected on the Memorial Garden, on the day that the Poppy Appeal was launched.

The Clerk reported that the wreath had been purchased.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

240/23 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2023

Councillor Bettley-Smith reported that the Christmas Tree lights switch-on would take place on Friday 1 December at 7.00pm. There would also be illuminated animals.

RESOLVED

That the arrangements for the purchase of the Christmas Tree be delegated to Councillor Speed.

241/23 CONSULTATION ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVISION BOUNDARIES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

Councillor Bettley-Smith advised Members of the recommendation that the Parish Council continued to be linked to Madeley, and the rural area to its south.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

242/23 PLANNING MATTERS

The Clerk updated the Parish Council on the following planning matters:-

(i) New Planning Application:-

Planning Consultation Reference: 23/00668/FUL - Betley Court, Main Road, Betley, Crewe, Cheshire. CW3 9BH. Following the disastrous fire in 2019, these works comprised the second phase of the reinstatement of the apartments.

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council unanimously supports this proposal.

(ii) Planning Decisions

Planning Consultation Reference: 23/00591/FUL – Application permitted for timber structure outside Betley Post Office, Main Road, Betley.

Planning Consultation Reference: 23/00029/FUL – Application refused for proposed barn conversion to 2no. dwellings at Gorsty Hill Farm Newcastle Road, Balterley, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire. CW2 5PY.

RESOLVED

That the Planning Decisions be noted, and the Clerk circulates the Decision Notices to Members.

(iii) The progress of ongoing Planning Applications, including appeals/enforcement issues and other planning matters:

Public Footpath 20

The County Council considered an application to upgrade public footpath 20 to a bridleway but concluded, based on maps going back to 1794 that there was no evidence to support the redesignation of the footpath as a bridleway.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

At this juncture, the Clerk left from the meeting.

243/23 EMPLOYEE PENSION

Members considered a report by the Clerk on the enrolment of the position of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Clerk returned to the meeting.

Councillor Drakakis-Smith asked for a copy of the Clerk's Contract of Employment, and the Clerk agreed to forward this to the Councillor.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the enrolment of the position of Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme be approved in principle;**
- (ii) That additional literature on the details of the Pension Scheme be circulated to Members;**
- (iii) That an update report be submitted and considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council;**

244/23 AREA MATTERS

Members discussed the following matters:

- Difficulties with street cleaning due to vegetation;
- The low position of the new SID;
- Potholes;
- Grass cutting
- A water burst on Laudy Croft.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

245/23 BUDGET AND FINANCE 2023-2024

The Clerk reported on the following matters:-

(i) Applications for financial assistance

There were no applications for financial assistance.

(ii) Approval of the payment of invoices, including necessary reimbursements

The Clerk reported that the following two additional payments were to be added to the statement circulated with the Agenda:-

- WaterPlus in the sum of £32.38;
- T Townsend in the sum of £100.00, for reimbursement of expenses incurred.

(iii) Budget Expenditure to date during this Financial Year

The Clerk circulated the Budget Expenditure to date during this Financial Year.

(iv) Financial and Bank Statements

The Chair signed and approved the bank statement.

(v) Bank Reconciliation as at 15th September 2023

The Clerk reported that the ten pence discrepancy in her bank reconciliation report had been resolved. The mistake was due to the incorrect recording of a number.

RESOLVED

(i) That the payments listed in the report for approval, be authorised;

(ii) That the Budget and Finance 2023-2024 report be received.

246/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday, 26th October 2023.

Members briefly referred to a visit by the MP to parishioners on the 25th September 2023. The main themes of discussion related to the condition of footpaths and the maintenance of gulleys, gutters and potholes.

Councillor Speed highlighted the importance of “Feel Good Factors” and improvements to the Village Scene.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Speed drafts a report for consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council on Feel Good Factors and Improvements to the Village Scene.

247/23 URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no items of business that required consideration as a matter of urgency.