

BETLEY, BALTERLEY & WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

23rd November 2023

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.35 pm

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

**PCSO Colin Hodgkinson
Mrs M Clough - Clerk**

There was one Member of the Public in attendance.

265/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Berrisford, Daly, Ecclestone, Karling and Speed, County Councillor Northcott and Borough Councillors Gary White and Simon White.

The Chair and Clerk reported that the absent Parish Councillors had forwarded their confidential reasons for not attending this meeting of the Parish Council, all of which were acceptable.

Cllr Mayor Simon White had a civic function and Gary White had a business commitment. Cllr Northcott had a commitment at Keele in connection with his Councillor responsibilities.

RESOLVED

That Section 85 of the Local Government Act be waived for the absences of the Parish Councillors and approval be given for their absences before the expiry of the six month period;

266/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Head and Bettley-Smith declared personal interests in Planning Application Application Ref No: 23/00888/LBC.

267/23 STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

PCSO Colin Hodgkinson from Staffordshire Police reported on the following matters:- road traffic collision at Doddlespool; dog bite at Betley Hall Gardens; report of anti-social behaviour at Wickstead Row, due to parking; the success of Betley Bonfire

In response to a question, the Chair referred to the installation of a Parish CCTV system and confirmed that this would need careful consideration due to the high cost implications.

For incidents of inconsiderate parking, the Police would make contact with vehicle owners, however the Parish Council could publicise leaflets on its social media platform and Notice Boards.

Members were offered an opportunity to ask questions of the Staffordshire Police representative.

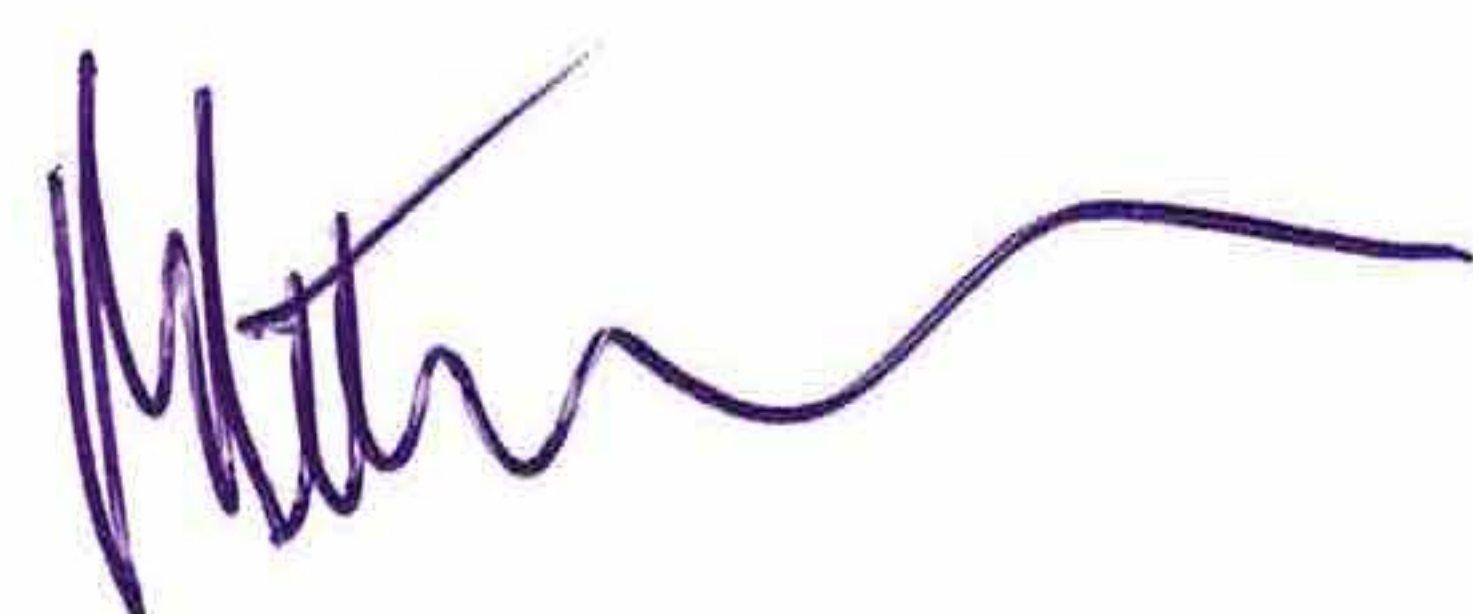
RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

268/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 26th October 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Councillor Owen clarifying that he left the meeting before Item 261/23 and not 258/23 as recorded.

Councillor Drakakis-Smith requested that her objections to Minutes 251/23; 255/23; 256/23 and 258/23 be recorded.



(i) Monitoring Officer

The Chair referred to advice received from the Monitoring Officer following requests made to the Clerk, by a Member of the Parish Council, to rewrite parts of the Minutes. The Clerk had refused the request. The Monitoring Officer had advised that if the majority of Members present at a meeting approved the Minutes, then those Minutes were a true and accurate record in law.

269/23 PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Steven Ball raised the following matters:- the clarity of the Minutes; the state of repair of two sheds at the school used for storing PE equipment; the excellent community spirit within the Parish which he hoped would continue; his offer of assistance within the community.

270/23 REPORTS

Members received the following reports:-

(i) The Chair and Vice Chair;

- The Chair reported that he had received an important announcement from Dr Patel, confirming that his daughter and son-in-law would take over the GP surgery at his retirement on 1 January 2024. Members were delighted with this news, as the surgery had provided an extremely valuable facility over the years. They wished Dr Patel their very best wishes for his retirement. The Chairman said he would be writing to Dr Patel in reply to his letter.
- The Minutes of Meetings of the Parish Council between the dates 2016-2022 had been sent to the Staffordshire Archives for safekeeping (the archives did not accept any other documents). The invoices had been scanned. Any remaining paper items had been passed to the Betley Local History Society;
- At the January meeting, consideration might be given to proposing an additional section within the Standing Orders to introduce guidelines for Member participation at meetings of the Parish Council;
- The Vice-Chair (reported via the Chair) wished to remind Members that they must accept the decisions of the Parish Council, even if they did not agree.

(ii) The Clerk;

The Clerk reported that she had no report for consideration.

(iii) County Councillor and Borough Councillors;

RECOMMENDED

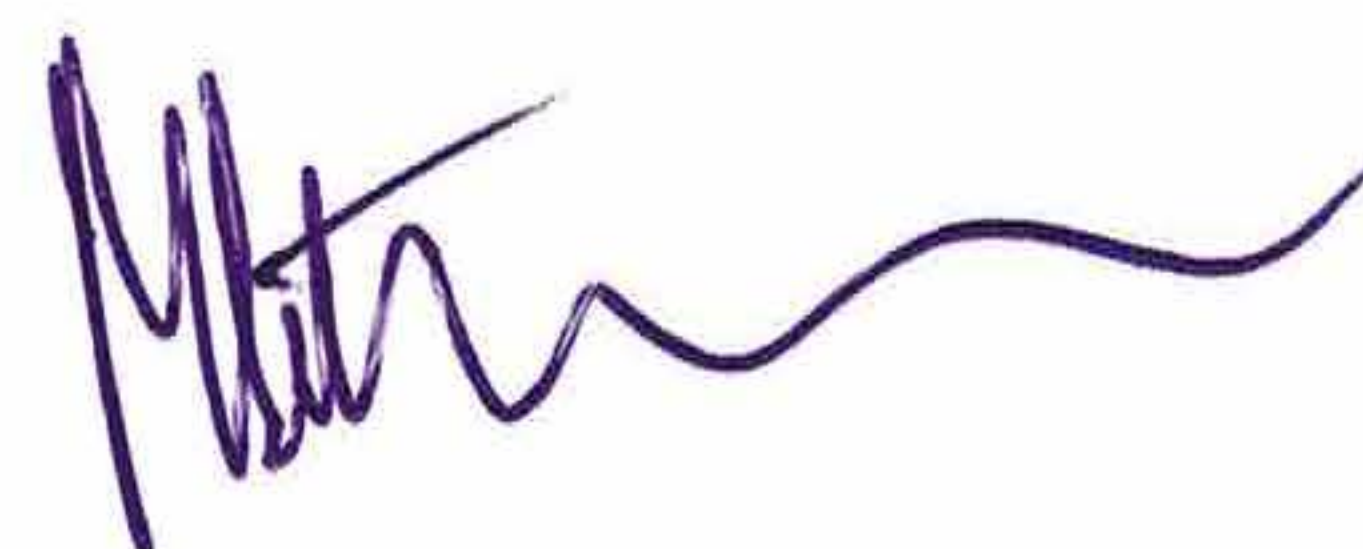
That in the absence of the County and Borough Councillors, a request be made that any Parish matters be forwarded to the Clerk for consideration at meetings and that the Clerk makes contact with County Councillor and Borough Councillor in this regard.

(iv) Representatives on Outside Bodies

Councillor Bullock updated Members on his work with the Police Authority.

Councillor Hales reported on the poor condition of the two wooden sheds (previously raised by Mr Ball Item 5), and sought a donation from the Parish Council to fund 50% of the cost of the materials to repair the sheds. The Betley Trust had agreed to also fund 50% of the cost of materials (Councillor Watkin declared his personal interest in this matter). The total cost was around £500 for materials, but at this stage, a written quote was not provided. The labour however, would be completed free of charge by Councillor Hales, Speed and Mr Ball.

Work to one shed would be carried out over the Christmas period, and it was anticipated that the materials would cost in the region of £250.00. As the next meeting of the Parish Council was not scheduled to be held until the end of January, at which a detailed quote could be considered, the Chair agreed to consider this matter under the provision of the Local Government Access to Information Act – Urgent Items.



RESOLVED

That to enable urgent works to take place to one of the sheds, the Parish Council agrees to contribute the sum of £125.00. Further consideration will be given to the request for additional funding in January, when a full quote is available.

271/23 FOOTPATHS WORKING GROUP

Further to Minute 255/23 of the last Meeting, Members received a written report from the Footpaths Working Party and also a verbal update from Councillor Owen.

RESOLVED

That the reports be received.

272/23 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Further to Minute 256/23 of the last meeting, Councillor Drakakis-Smith circulated supplementary information relating to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

Lengthy discussions ensued regarding the disproportionate number of emails being sent from a Member of the Parish Council to individual Councillors, the content of which Members felt was causing considerable harm to the positive spirit of community participation within the Parish.

RESOLVED

- (i) That consideration of Items 8, 9 and 10 be deferred until a report on outcomes of concerns, referred to the Monitoring Officer by Members, is received.
(The Chair requested that the vote be recorded for this resolution: 4 in favour; 1 against and 2 abstentions);
- (ii) That requests for information from individual Councillors, be directed to the Clerk, who will refer them to the next meeting of the Parish Council for consideration.

273/23 COMMUNITY SAFETY CHARTER

RESOLVED

That consideration of this Item be deferred until a report on outcomes of concerns referred to the Monitoring Officer by Members, is received.

274/23 DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

RESOLVED

That consideration of this Item be deferred until a report on outcomes of concerns referred to the Monitoring Officer by Members, is received.

275/23 UNITED UTILITIES – C2V+ BETLEY WwTW PROJECT

The Chair updated Members on the above project and noted an invitation had been extended to Parish Council Members to visit the sewage treatment plant in the summer which, at his request, had also been extended to the Village Hall Trustees.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

276/23 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH COMMUNITY GRANTS

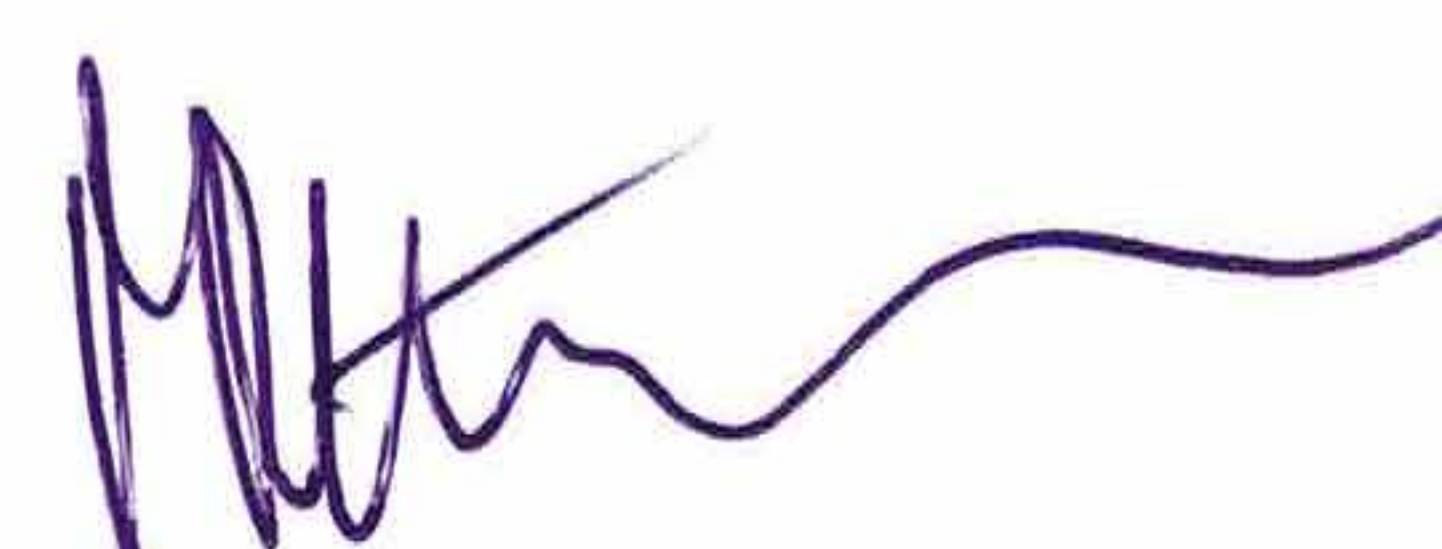
Councillor Bullock updated Members.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

277/23 PLANNING MATTERS

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



(i) New Planning Application/s

- Application Ref No: 23/00751/COU Proposal: Change of use from an agricultural grassland to a dog exercise pen. Location: Land At Fields Farm Church Lane Betley. Further to Minute 258/23 (i) of the last Meeting, Councillor Bettley-Smith confirmed that the Parish Council's response (no objection) had been submitted to Newcastle-under-Lyme Planning Department.
- Application Ref No: 23/00888/LBC Proposal: Rear porch extension. Location: Old Post Office Main Road Betley. Councillors Bullock and Owen recommended that no objections be raised regarding this proposal.

RESOLVED

That the unanimous decision of Members, that no objections be raised regarding this application, be submitted to Newcastle-under-Lyme Planning Department.

(ii) Planning Decisions

Members noted that a historic request to upgrade Footpath 20 Betley Parish to Bridleway Status was rejected by the Panel on the recommendation of the County Council.

(iii) Ongoing Planning Applications (including appeals/enforcement issues and other planning matters)

Members noted that the Environment Agency had successfully prosecuted two individuals for environmental offences relating to waste at land known as "part of Doddlespool Farm" and Elms Farm in Betley, Crewe. The Parish Council had been asked by the Environment Agency to make residents aware.

RESOLVED

That the letter from the Environment Agency for the attention of Parish Residents be placed on the Parish Council Notice Boards and the Website.

278/23 BUDGET AND FINANCE 2023-2024

The Clerk reported on the following matters:-

(i) Applications for financial assistance

Members noted that this matter was considered under Minute 270/23 (iv) above.

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

Members approved the following payments:-

REF	BUDGET	PAYEE	REASON	AMOUNT
1634	Memorial Garden	Luke Rimmer	Maintenance October and Remembrance Plants	£775.00
1635	Grants	Audley Rotary Club	Christmas Donation	£150.00
1636	Sandy Croft	WaterPlus	Water Supply	£55.97
1637	Salary	M Clough	November Salary (inc. backpay for national pay award)	£573.30
1638	Salary	G Griffiths	Backpay	£126.44
1639	Salary	HMRC	PAYE (November)	£183.00
1640	Salary	Staffordshire Pension	Pension Contributions	£219.91
1641	Admin-Other	M Clough	Petrol Reimbursements	£90.72
1642	Salary	HMRC	PAYE (December)	£111.20
1643	Salary	Staffordshire Pension	December Pension Contributions (Post Dated)	£161.18
1644	Salary	M Clough	December Salary (Post Dated)	£420.09
1645	Memorial Garden	North West Xmas Trees	Xmas Tree 2023	£250.00

1646	Memorial Garden	North West Xmas Trees	Xmas Tree 2022	£250.00
1647	Miscellaneous	Robert Bettley-Smith	Postage & cable tie Reimbursements	£13.89
1648	Grants	J Chase	Croquet Club Donation	£240.00

(iii) Budget Expenditure to 14th November 2023 for this Financial Year

Members approved the following Budget Expenditure to 14th November 2023 (the figures below excluded additional payments approved at the Meeting):-

Budget Head	Total	BUDGET ALLOCATED 2023-2024	DIFFERENCE
Salary	£5,477.79	£6,500.00	84.27%
Admin – Insurance	£783.67	£725.00	108.09%
Admin - Audit Fees	£40.00	£320.00	12.50%
Admin - Venue Hire	£300.00	£520.00	57.69%
Admin – Subscriptions	£0.00	£330.00	0.00%
Admin – Website	£122.28	£100.00	122.28%
Admin – Other	£847.30	£500.00	169.46%
Highways	£8,070.00	£1,500.00	538.00%
Footpaths	£2,911.20	£1,000.00	291.12%
Grants	£972.50	£1,150.00	84.57%
Miscellaneous	£177.23	£250.00	70.89%
Sandy Croft	£2,054.30	£1,100.00	186.75%
Memorial Garden	£5,149.75	£4,170.00	123.50%
Neighbourhood Plan	£0.00	£300.00	0.00%
Contingency	£0.00	£1,200.00	0.00%
	£26,906.02	£19,665.00	

(The Clerk confirmed that grants were received for the Highways and Footpaths Budgets)

(iv) Bank Statement as at 3rd November 2023

The Chair signed the Bank Statement dated 3rd November 2023 and confirmed that it reconciled with the Bank Reconciliation Statement below.

(v) Bank Reconciliation as at 15th November 2023

Members approved the Bank Reconciliation as at 15th November 2023 (and noted that it excluded a number of additional payments authorised at this meeting)

<u>Bank Reconciliation 14th November 2023</u>		
BETLEY, BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL		
Financial year ending 31 March 2024		
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO		
Balance per bank statements as at 3rd November 2023		£
Current Account (61491483)		£30,636.92
Less: any unpresented cheques		£2,298.53
Add: any unbanked cash		None
Net bank balances as at 14th November 2023		£28,338.39
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows		

CASH BOOK		
Account @ 01.04.2023		£24,182.38
Add: Receipts in the year (including interest)	£31,373.44	£55,555.82
Less: Payments in the year	£27,217.43	£28,338.39
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above		£28,338.39

(vi) Precept for the 2024-2025 Financial Year

Members considered the expenditure required for 2024-2025 and agreed that the Precept would be discussed and agreed at the next meeting of the Parish Council on 25th January 2024.

(vii) Unity Trust Bank

Members considered a request from the Clerk to transfer to an electronic banking system with the Unity Trust Bank, which required two named signatories to authorise all payments. It was agreed that the Clerk drafts a report for the next meeting, providing more information on the background to this bank, and any cost implications.

RESOLVED

That the decisions detailed above under Items 278/23 (i)–(vii) be noted.

279/23 AREA MATTERS

Members reported that there were no area matters for consideration at this meeting.

280/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday, 25th January 2024. [There was no scheduled meeting in December.]

281/23 URGENT ITEMS

Members noted that this item was considered earlier and recorded under 270/23 (iv).


25/01/2024