

**MINUTES**  
**DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**  
<https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk>

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7pm in Besford Court Hall

**PRESENT:** Chair S Rees, Vice Chair I Stephens, and Cllrs: Peter Hale, Debra Lamont, Ian Spiers, and District Cllr P Middlebrough

1. **APOLOGIES** – were received from Cllr G Marshall and County Cllr A Hardman

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

- 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 the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items.*

- Cllr S Rees – Chair of Governors (school)
- Cllr P Hale – Chair of Defford Village Hall Committee

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – No parishioners in attendance

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meeting dated 15<sup>th</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were approved, proposed Cllr Hale, seconded Cllr Stephens – all in favour

4. **COUNTY / DISTRICT CLLRS REPORTS:** A report was received from Cllr Middlebrough and circulated to Cllrs and annexed to these minutes.

5. **FINANCE**

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

	1351	Lengthsman April	192.00
SO		Clerks Expenses	15.00
SO		Clerks Salary	312.72
	1352	Insurance	640.41
	1353	Hall Hire	82.00
	1354	Clerks PAYE	248.39
	1355	Lengthsman May	192.00
	1356	Cllr Training	36.00
	1357	Grass Cutting	537.50
	1358	Clerks Expenses	22.50
	1539	Lengthsman June	192.00

Proposed acceptance of payments made by Cllr Lamont, seconded by Cllr Rees – all in favour.

Account Balances:

Current Account: £18,144.47

Deposit Account: £4,069.27

**Yew Trees at Church** – one quote has been received for works on the two Yew trees. Two further quotes are being sourced.

With regard to the headstones in the closed churchyard and cemetery, it was identified that a survey should be carried out on the headstones. The clerk would look into this and arrange quotes, to be shared with the PCC (with regard to the cemetery stones).

**Unity Bank** – the new account is being processed and a 'switch' from Lloyds Bank will be carried out by Unity.

## 7. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS:

- a) **Bourne Road** – scheduled for closure between 21<sup>st</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August for electricity cable works.
- b) **Public Rights of Way** : The LM has been spending some time clearing overgrowth on some of the PR's of W although this should be the responsibility of the landowner where possible. WCC are allowing the LM to do some remedial works once approved by WCC Footpaths Officer. It was agreed that there may be a need to allocate some of our reserves to cover his additional time spent, and that this will be factored in when we re-visit the budget in January for the next financial year.
  - Path Harpley Road to Springbank has now been addressed
  - Path Upper Street to Bluebell Lane is open but the signpost is lay on the floor and the access to / from Bluebell Lane needs opening. The Clerk to report this to WCC.
- c) **Hedges** – The parish council will continue to contact any resident with an overgrown hedge abutting the pavement kindly requesting them to cut them back to enable a safe walking route.

## 8. PLANNING:

- a) 22/02614 - Land and Building at OS 9137 4249 Upton Road – approved by WDC
- b) 22/02706 – Land Adjacent, Hillside, Upper Street, Defford – awaiting decision by WDC
- c) 23/01224/PIP - Shazam, Upper Street, Defford - Permission in Principle for the construction of 2 to 8 housing units - *awaiting decision by WDC*. Cllr Rees reported that concerns had been raised by parishioners particularly as the site is prone to flooding. Cllr Middlebrough was asked to request it be considered at full planning committee rather than delegated to a single officer.
- d) 23/01143 – land adjacent to Defford Motors – awaiting decision by WDC

## 9. REPORTS:

- Lengthsman – Cllr Lamont reported that the LM continues to work diligently concentrating on visibility splays, some footpaths, works within the churchyard and replacing dog fouling signs. Thanks to him were recorded.
- Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Hale has been very proactive raising the profile of the NW scheme in both Defford & Besford with a leaflet drop scheduled for all houses in the two villages. Help to be given by Cllrs to assist with the delivering of the leaflets. Signage is due to be put in place in Besford, Woodmancote and Bourne Road. An event is to be held in October which will hopefully raise the profile of NW

10. **BENCHES** - The replacement bench for the church is to be ordered and the plaque re-instated. With regard to the seat for Besford, any decision re location will be deferred until we have a resident on the parish council representing Besford

- 11. TRAINING** - Cllr Rees had participated in Chairman training and both Cllrs Rees and Lamont will be undertaking a planning training session.
- 12. MERGING OF DEFFORD WITH BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL** - to consider the merging of Besford with Defford (from an Electoral perspective) – currently Besford has no representation on the parish council. *Defer to a later meeting.*
- 13. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS** had been circulated to Cllrs.
- Parishioner from Besford contacted the clerk regarding the poor state of the bus stop in Besford, commenting that it is never used and an ‘eyesore’. It was questioned whether it would be more practical to have it demolished. The clerk to contact WCC in the first instance.
- 14. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**
- Policies – to review all polices - ongoing
  - Speed Limit / VAS Sign A4104 – formally consider approval to purchase VAS sign (identified that there was previously a ‘transferable’ unit on the A4104. The post is still in situ but no knowledge as to where the sign is. Cllr Middlebrough suggested that a grant could be applied for (via the Police and Crime Commissioner) towards the cost for a new sign - *Clerk to check ‘post’ still in situ and approval from WCC that a permanent VAS sign can be installed.*
  - Village Design Statement - Cllrs discussed considering writing a Village Design Statement to support developers and the planning process ensure applications were sympathetic to the locale.
- 15. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS** – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – 7pm at Defford Village Hall

