

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

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 15th November 2023 at 7pm in Defford Village Hall

PRESENT: Chair S Rees, Vice Chairman I Stephens, Cllrs: P Hale, D Lamont, G Marshall and I Spiers. County Cllr A Hardman, District Cllr P Middleborough, M Peg (Defford VH) and M le Brun (Avonvale Action Group).

1. APOLOGIES – none received.

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 P Hale – Chair of Defford Village Hall Committee
- None others declared

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Nothing to report.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from meeting dated 20th September 2023 were approved, proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

4. COUNTY / DISTRICT CLLRS REPORTS:

- County Cllr's Report: Cllr A Hardman reported:
 - WCC Budget was under considerable pressure, mainly due to Children's Social Care but Adult Social Care was still proving to be costly but under control.
 - Bourne Road – aware that the 'road edge' was dangerous. Cllr Hardman to meet up with Cllr Spiers once the road works have been carried out.
- A full report was received from Cllr Middlebrough and circulated to Cllrs but in brief:
 - A new council leader has been appointed at Wychavon. The new leader is Chris Day
 - I have been appointed the Executive Board as member for Town and Rural Vitality. My responsible are for: Smart growth working with developers and the public realm, support and initiate projects in Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore, support cross border development opportunities, support and initiate projects to strengthen rural communities. This new role means I have stood down as a member of the Planning Committee. However, I can still speak at planning committee meetings on local applications.
 - Wychavon's Budget process for 2024/2025 has already started at Wychavon. The initial planning process is proposing to increase expenditure budgets by 5% in 2024/25 with an

increase in fees and charges of 3%. In addition to this further efficiency gains and removal of any excess budgets will continue.

- The Parks Ground Maintenance contract with Continental Landscapes was extended. Amongst the changes are that Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil is used in all diesel vehicles, including the ride on mowers, and Aspen Alkylate Petrol for other equipment.

For 12 month a trial of manual and mechanical weeding in all parks from 1 April 2024 is done to see if the elimination of herbicides is practical.

- At long last the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public. As well as the Plan, supporting evidence and other documents have been submitted, including all the comments received from the Regulation-19 consultation held last year. The Secretary of State has yet to appoint the independent inspector.

It is expected/hoped Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils will be able to adopt the Plan in late 2024, but the timing of this will be subject to the Planning Inspectorate's timetable for the examination.

I am concerned that some current staff vacancies that are filled by agency staff resulting in increased costs to the Council. In my view the proliferation of Home Working exacerbates the problems and difficulties in contact and action. This is acknowledged and I will certainly be pressing for changes.

IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT ME DON'T HESITATE

PAUL MIDDLEBROUGH

THE FORGE

CHURCH LANE

NORTON WR5 2PS

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5. FINANCE

- (a) Approval of receipts and payments to 8th November 2023 (made since last meeting)
- (b) Payments for authorisation:

Clerks Salary	312.72
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Elections Costs	50.00
Salary U/Payment	25.40
Clerks PAYE	253.60
Lengthsman Weedkiller Co	85.00
Goal net pegs	4.99
Planning Training	120.00
Lengthsman August	192.00
Service Charge / Fee	5.09
Clerks Salary	338.12
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Hall Hire	20.00
Street Lighting	189.35
Expenses - Millennium Green	14.29
Lengthsman September	192.00
Tree Works - Churchyard	432.00
Grass Cutting	537.50
Clerks Salary	338.12
Clerks Expenses	15.00

Account Balances:

Unity Trust Current Account: £12,010.54

Unity Trust Savings Account: £8,668.96

Lloyds Bank Savings Account: £4,069.27 (these funds to be transferred to Unity)

- (c) To consider and approve Clerks salary increase of £1 per hour following NALC's release of pay award 23/24 – to be backdated to 1st April 2023 – supported and approved by all Cllrs, proposed Cllr Hale, seconded Cllr Rees.
- (d) SmartWater – to consider outlay for SmartWater packs for whole parish circa £2k but grant funding is being investigated to bring cost down – Cllr Hale reported that the total number of properties, including Woodmancote and Besford was 377. The Community Safety Team had indicated they would be happy to do the registering of kits on behalf of residents. The clerk is investigating grant funding from Rooftop Housing to cover the tenanted properties within the parishes. County Cllr A Hardman very kindly offered a donation of £500 towards the cost. Cllrs fully supported progressing with this whole community project, proposed Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Lamont.
It was further noted that bicycle marking was available, free of charge. Anyone interested to contact the Clerk.
- (e) Quote for Tree Works at Churchyard – to consider quote for further tree works in the churchyard of £480 plus VAT. This was acceptable, proposed Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Lamont – all in favour.

6. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS:

- a) **PRoW / Footpaths:** Cllr Marshall reported:
 - Upper Street – diverted footpath sign is still lying on ground.
 - Croome Road – following recent hedge cutting, all of the 'waymarking' posts have been knocked down. The clerk would bring this to the attention of the landowner.
- b) **Bus Shelter, Besford** – it has been identified that the bus shelter in Besford (now in very poor condition) is owned by the parish council. Cllrs were all in support of it being removed and the clerk would ask the LM to remove it (though not as art of the LM scheme).
- c) **Millennium Green, Pedestrian Access** - Cllr Hale reported on the confusion in locating the pedestrian access to the side of Millennium Green. It was agreed that the main gate should remain locked (to deter 'late night visitors in vehicles' to the car park) and that extra signage to be organised directing pedestrians to the side access. Cllr Stephens would draft and pass to the Clerk.

- 7. **AVONVALE RIVER ACTION GROUP** – the parish council welcomed Mr Le Brun raising awareness of the water quality on the River Avon. Regular checks are to be carried out at various locations with the data collected to be collated and shared with the Environment Agency, water companies and Government. The parish council were asked to finance a starter kit at a cost of £130. Lengthy discussion to place with reasons for and against supporting this outlay shared by all Cllrs. A proposal from Cllr Rees was made to make this contribution, supported by Cllr Stephens with a total of 4 Cllrs (including the proposer and seconder) supporting and two Cllrs against – carried. It was noted that the agreement was for one year only. The clerk would arrange for the payment to be made.

8. PLANNING:

- a) 22/02706 – Land Adjacent, Hillside, Upper Street, Defford – awaiting decision by WDC
- b) 23/01224/PIP - Shazam, Upper Street, Defford - refused by WDC
- c) 23/01315 - Ashgrove, 36 Besford Court Estate - approved by WDC
- d) 23/01143 – land adjacent to Defford Motors – approved by WDC
- f) 22/00781 - Railway Inn, Upton Road, Defford –approved by WDC
- g) 23/01525/FUL - Crabbe Tree Farm, Besford Road, Wadborough, Besford - approved by WDC
- h) W/23/00971/HP - 21 Lower Drive, Besford – approved by WDC
- i) W/23/01857 – Dower House, 12 Besford Court Estate – awaiting decision by WDC
- i) W/23/01958 – 32 Besford Court – approved by WDC

k) 23/02112/OUT - Orchard Farm Defford Road Pershore WR10 3BX - to consider the impact of the Defford side of Pershore, and whether to submit any comments - *it was agreed that Cllrs should make their own decisions as to whether to comment personally.*

l) 23/02133 - St Lawrence, 1 Besford Court Estate - no objections received.

Two late applications received will be considered at a planning meeting of the parish council on 30th November at Defford Village Hall at 6pm:

- 23/02044 – Oak Inn, Woodmancote – outline application with access to be considered in detail and all other matters reserved for the erection of x 4 self-build or custom build dwellings
- 23/02180 – Wickford House, 24 Lower Drive, Besford - Erection of single storey extension

9. REPORTS:

- Lengthsman – The clerk reported that the LM’s vehicle was off the road but would make contact with him to establish an estimated date when he would be back working.
- Neighbourhood Watch – Cllr Hale thanked Cllrs Rees and Lamont for their assistance at the ‘open event’ back in October, which was well attended by parishioners. Also to County Cllr Hardman and District Cllr Middlebrough for their support.
- Church, Quinquennial Report & Tasks received – to consider report received (and which had been circulated to Cllrs). The Yew trees at the church yard had been attended to and the LM would be asked to apply weedkiller to the NE entrance.

10. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS had been circulated to Cllrs.

- Defford Village Hall – communication had been received regarding the amount of overgrowth from the hedge between the VH and car park (the car park being owned by the parish council), now out of control. A request from the VH committee had been received asking for the hedge to be either removed completely or cut right back. Concerns were raised regarding a complete removal of the hedge and it was agreed that it would benefit from a good cut back and then to be maintained at that height. It was also identified that the footpath needed to be raised to stop ‘pooling and a drainage channel to be installed. Cllr Spiers reported that there was always the intention to instal a drainage channel and that there was a small reserve for this purpose. To be actioned.
- EVG Charging Points – Cllr Stephens reported that he had followed up previous communication re EVG charging points at Defford VH, and established that there was no viability to progress with this at the present time

11. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Policies – to review all polices - ongoing
- Budget / Precept request
- 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.

12. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS – Wednesday 17th January 2024 – 7pm at Defford Village Hall