

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

Minutes of the Finance Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 17th July 2024 at 7pm in Defford Village Hall

PRESENT: Chairman I Stephens, Vice Chairman S Rees and Cllrs: P Hale, D Lamont, S Soukup, I Spiers and I Stephens

1. **APOLOGIES** were received from Cllr G Marshall, County Cllr A Hardman and District Cllr P Middleborough

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.

None Declared

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meetings on 15th May and 26th June 2024 – proposed approval Cllr Soukup, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

4. **FINANCE / GOVERNANCE:**

a) Approval of receipts and payments to 10th July 2024 (made since last meeting)

b) Payments for authorisation:

Clerks Salary	363.72
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Insurance	635.79
Lengthsman April	192.00
HMRC Clerks PAYE	272.40
Hall Hire 15th May	10.00
Hall Hire 15th May	25.00
Grass Cutting	525.00
Smart Water	2372.28
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Clerks Salary	363.72
Lengthsman May	192.00
Service Charge	18.00

Account Balances:

Unity Trust Current Account: £5,685.12

Unity Trust Savings Account: £21,604.64

Approval of accounts proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Stephens – all in favour

5. **COUNTY CLLR / DISTRICT CLLR REPORTS** – annexed to these Minutes

6. **HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS (to include traffic calming)**

a) PRoW – Complaints have been received by the parish council regarding overgrown footpaths and hedges. Photographs would be taken and letters written to the property / land owners. The parish council

is mindful that any PRoW cutting carried out by the Lengthsman comes at a cost and would need to be factored into next year's budget.

- c) Upton Drive, Flooding – County Cllr Hardman and WCC Highways to arrange a site meeting in Upton Drive to look at the remaining issues.

7. PLANNING:

- a) 24/00188 – Glenavon, Upton Road, Defford – *approved by WDC*
- b) 24/00189 – Glenavon, Upton Road, Defford – *approved by WDC*
- c) 24/00245 - Land Adjacent, Hillside, Upper Street, Defford – *approved by WDC*
- d) W/24/01125/GPDQ Copelands Farm Woodmancote – *awaiting decision by WDC*
- e) 24/00952/HP - Lincolns Farm Bungalow Rebecca Road – *approved by WDC*
- f) APP/H1840/W/24/3340561 - Appeal Oak Inn, Defford – *awaiting decision by Inspector*
- g) APP/H1840/W/24/3337833 - Appeal Shazam, Upper Street, Defford – *awaiting decision by Inspector*
- h) 24/01347 – Hill View Holiday Park – Retrospective application for erection of boundary walls to replace previous timber close boarded fencing – *this application was received just before the meeting and Cllrs had not had sufficient time to consider it, although some concerns were raised. Comments would be drafted and circulated to Cllrs for approval before being submitted to WDC.*

8. REPORTS:

- Lengthsman – Cllr Lamont reported that the LM had been very proactive clearing visibility at junctions.
- Smart Water – Cllr Hale reported that SW kits are slowly being rolled out to the community with circa 150 still to be distributed. Door to door visits are to be scheduled.

9. MILLENNIUM GREEN;

- Grant funding opportunities to be looked at including the Community Green Space funding, which is likely to be announced late Summer / Autumn
- a recent post on FB asking residents for suggestions to improve MG generated a number of suggestions, the PC is most grateful for the parishioner's engagement on this. These would now be investigated and reported back at a future meeting. Fencing or alternative to rear of goal posts – to look at options but not a priority at the moment
- MG playground report received and circulated to Cllrs – the clerk to contact equipment suppliers for spare parts identified in the report (i.e. missing caps).
- Benches to be installed and removal of existing bench in poor condition.
- A 'works schedule' would be created to include necessary works / progress on scheduled works which would be updated each meeting.
- There had been no recent reports of anti – social behaviour
- Some tree cutting back was necessary – Cllr Rees to obtain a quote for the works

10. COMBINING PARISHES – to consider Defford and Besford becoming a single parish council 'Defford & Besford Parish Council' rather than the current split arrangement. Lengthy discussion took place on this and that despite many attempts to reach out to Besford residents to come forward to fill one of the vacancies there has been no response at all. All Cllrs were supportive of this progressing, proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Rees. The clerk would contact WDC regarding the process but Cllrs were aware this could take a couple of years to be carried out and consultations would be carried out.

11. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS: have been circulated to Cllrs, and to include:

- Bus Service – request from parishioner to investigate – defer to Meeting September 18th, however in the meantime investigations would be carried out to what public / community transport is available.

2024/012

- VAS Signs – purchase of 2 new signs in both directions on the A4104. The clerk to ask WCC highways to identify suitable locations.
- Communication from Church – the Church had written referring to a previous Quinquennial report. The parish council had already carried out some of the issues identified as being a PC responsibility, however it was agreed that the PC would address weed control twice a year and obtain quotes for the pointing some parts of the church wall. Cllr Stephens would reply direct to the church now as the new PC chairman

12. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Besford Parish Vacancies

13. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Wednesday September 18th 2024 7pm, at Besford Hall Plus, future meeting dates:

November 20th – Defford

January 15th 2024 – Defford

Defford parish council meeting.

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A relatively short report from me today since the general election has tended to cause a stop to the activities of local government for the past six weeks but there are a few issues I would just like to raise with you.

- 1) We have launched 2 consultations that could be of interest to the parish council one is on electric vehicle charging points and this is a more complex subject than one could imagine. But as anyone has time it's worth a read.
The second is on an idea that parish councils will take over the mowing and control of verges on the C roads and unclassified roads so that they could then manage them in a more environmental way. I think it's true to say I am extremely sceptical of this, and I have a feeling that someone in highways is using the environment as a method to cost shunt to parish councils, but it could be of interest if you had someone who knew what they were doing, but the key is removing the grass from the verges. Having been to Pembrokeshire during the election, I got an idea of what could be done.
 - 2)) the saga of the RACK at county hall continues and we are now moving out of the building entirely and moving staff into Wychavon and the rest into Wildwood which is a building we own on the same campus. We will also be spending £350,000 on another structural survey, and plan to spend £2M on restoration works, which will solve little. I have strong views on this, which is one of the reasons I am on the back benches!!
 - 3) We ended the financial year only some £4.6 million over spent by using a considerable amount of reserves and a bit of use of something called minimum revenue provision; in effect is a way of extending the mortgage!) The amount the Council owes went through £700 M this year and is costing £30 m to service. I have little to say.
 - 4) The Pershore education review went through cabinet a fortnight ago and I asked a question as to why we were having another delay to it because they were planning to have a month of consultation during September. Interestingly the cabinet member agreed with me that it was pointless and therefore it will not be taking place. The good news is that the Department for Education have agreed to spend for the high school of £23M and the county has put aside some £2.5 million for 3 primary schools which include Defford.
 - 5) Barry Barnes is away on holiday next week for a fortnight, but I've asked him before he goes to give me some dates so that we can fix up a meeting in regard to the issues that remain in Upton Drive. Thanks to the resident from the area who keeps the pressure up.
 - 6) I have asked the grass to be cut around the junctions on the main road, since we are moving the schedule up because of all the rain to do a late July cut of the system.
 - 7) I'm afraid yes again the solar farm is causing more chaos in Bourne Rd but there is little we can do but I hope the new cable is the end of this saga. It is most disappointing. Off to the joys of the NHS tomorrow, so wish me luck but back Friday.
- Adrian