

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 January 2025 at 7pm in Defford Village Hall

PRESENT: Chairman I Stephens, Vice Chairman S Rees and Cllrs: P Hale, D Lamont, L Peake, J Robinson and I Spiers, District Cllr A Hardman and District Cllr P Middleborough.

1. **APOLOGIES** were received from Cllrs G Marshall and S Soukup.

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

Public Participation: there were no parishioners in attendance

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meeting on 20th November 2024 – proposed approval Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Lamont – all in favour

5. **FINANCE / GOVERNANCE:**

- a) Approval of receipts and payments to 10th January 2025 (made since last meeting)
Payments for authorisation:

Lengthsman October	192.00
Service Charge	6.00
Hall Hire - 20th November	20.00
Clerks Salary	380.08
Clerks Expenses	15.00
HMRC Clerks PAYE	309.00
Bin Emptying	225.74
Lengthsman November	192.00
Service Charge	6.00

- b) Account Balances:

Unity Trust Current Account: £3,044.18

Unity Trust Savings Account: £26,929.29

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

- c) Budget / Precept Request – to consider draft budget / precept request circulated to Cllrs prior to meeting – a draft budget had been circulated to Cllrs, but observations identified that some parts of the church wall were in need of some immediate remedial works, along with the second phase of the re-build. Taking on board these works, and in factoring an additional amount for Lengthsman services (above the nominal amount contributed to by WCC), the parish council agreed to raise the precept requirement

for Defford & Besford Parish Council to 11.5% which equates to a 41p per month increase for a Band D property.

6. COUNTY & DISTRICT CLLR REPORTS:

- County Cllr A Hardman reported:
 - Reference was made to the Government's proposals for a Unitary Council
 - Flooding – he was not aware of any flooding issues in Defford or Besford following recent heavy rainfall, although Cllr Lamont mentioned debris on the A4101 following the rain washing down debris from Tyddesley Wood.
 - School Reform – changes to the tier system (changing from 3 to 2 tiers are going ahead.
 - Line markings have been installed by the school in an attempt to stop parking.
- District Cllr Middleborough's report had been circulated to Cllrs and is annexed to these minutes.

7. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS (to include traffic calming)

- a) PRoW – No report due to Cllr Marshall's absence
- b) Overhanging trees / hedges – it was agreed that a 'post' be placed on the parish council Facebook page, reminding residents to keep trees and hedges cut back enabling clear footways for pedestrians and to avoid damage to vehicles from those on road edge.

8. PLANNING:

- a) 24/00952/HP - Lincolns Farm Bungalow Rebecca Road - *approved by WDC*
- b) 21/02561 – Land at (OS 9164 4305) Harpley Road – *Awaiting decision by WDC*
- c) 24/01609 - Atalaya, Upper Street, Defford – *refused by WDC and Appeal submitted by applicant*
- d) 24/02165 – Windermere, 6 Crown Court, Defford – *approved by WDC*
- e) 24/01822 – Crabbe Tree Farm, Besford Road, Wadborough – *awaiting decision by WDC*
- f) 24/02599 – Besford Water Tower – conversion and refurbishment to form one dwelling – No objections were raised by Cllrs; however, it was agreed to restate our original comment from the earlier application.
- g) Bowbrook House, Besford Bridge – resubmission of previous application for retention of agricultural works dwelling - No objections were raised; however concerns were made that giving permission may create a precedent in the parish for others to sell agricultural property with no tie to the land

9. REPORTS:

- Lengthsman – Cllr Lamont reported that the LM continues to work diligently and responds to work requests efficiently.
- Traffic calming – 2 new solar powered VAS signs have been purchased for the A4104. We await WCC to install a new post for one of, using the existing post for the other. It was suggested that the old VAS sign could be installed on Harpley Road – guidance would be sought from WC. The clerk would ask if data collected from the mobile speed cameras could be made available to the parish council.
- 30mph speed roundels – it was agreed that 2 pairs of 30mph speed roundels should be painted on Harpley Road and Upper Street. Proposed Cllr Lamont, seconded Cllr Rees. Again, guidance from WCC re exact location would be sought.
- Solar development - A4104/Baughton Lane - Cllr Stephens reported on a meeting he attended with Cllr Peake before Xmas, along with Cllrs from other parish councils in close proximity to this development. Reference was made to a Community Fund, although there was not a lot of information available at the time of the meeting. A further meeting is to be arranged.

10. MILLENNIUM GREEN:

- Grant funding opportunities to be investigated
- Maintenance and future improvements – The clerk to speak to Cllr Soukup to establish any outstanding repairs / maintenance works at MG.

2025/03

13. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS: Communication has been shared with Cllrs but to include:

- WDC – Parish & Town Council Event offering spaces for Cllrs to attend. Cllrs Rees and Lamont were interested and would attend workshops on Rural Transport and Neighbourhood Plans

14. OTHER MATTERS RAISED:

- Smart water kits – Cllr Hale reported that there was still a requirement for 45 residents to sign up and receive their SW kits to enable us to receive signage.

15. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

13. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Wednesday 18th March at Defford Village Hall and to include Annual Parish Meeting, and Wednesday May 21st at Besford Court Hall and to include Annual Parish Meeting.

Wychavon District Council Report

Key issues for Defford and Besford residents

English Devolution Bill

The Government has now announced its plans for reorganising Local Government in shire county areas which still have the two tier arrangements with district councils, into unitary authorities.

For Wychavon and Worcestershire this will result in both the county council and the six districts being abolished and metamorphosing into a unitary or more than one unitary authority providing the services currently run by both county and district councils.

The first part of the process is to defer the County Council elections in May 2025 if plans are ready.

The initial part of the process has been for the County Council to indicate its willingness to engage with the government. To this end the leader of the county council has written to the minister in a positive manner.

Dear Minister

Further to your letter of the 16 December 2024 outlining the English Devolution White Paper and the Government's ambition, we write to inform you that Worcestershire County Council is keen to move at pace to deliver devolution and enable the county to achieve better efficiencies, economies of scale and improved outcomes for our residents and businesses. Therefore, with the pace of change in mind, we are writing to ask you to exercise your Ministerial powers to postpone the County Council elections, which are due to take place in May 2025. This will give us the time to work with partners and stakeholders to put together proposals for local government reform that are necessary to unlock devolution for Worcestershire.

Wychavon like the other five districts in Worcestershire has not been a part of the conversation with government.

You will be glad to hear parish and town councils will not be overtly affected by the proposals and will become the second tier bodies under the unitary authority.

Hearing Day 5. 9.30 am Thursday 13 March

Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations continued

(SWDPR 52: Land at Throckmorton New Settlement continued as necessary)

SWDPR 53: Rushwick Expanded Settlement

Friday 14 March

Reserve morning

**Hearing Week 3 - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester
WR1 2EY**

Hearing Day 6. 9.30 am Tuesday 25 March

Matter 10: Urban Extensions x4

Matter 12: Worcester City Allocations

Hearing Day 7. 9.30 am Wednesday 26 March

(Matter 12: Worcester City Allocations continued as necessary)

Matter 13: Malvern Hills Allocations

Matter 14: Wychavon Allocations

PAUL

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CHURCH LANE

NORTON WR5 2PS

Paul Middlebrough 10th January 2025

In addition, there are requirements to prepare for Worcestershire to work to form a Mayoral model to deliver strategic services on a more regional basis. More of that to come.

South Worcestershire Development Plan Review

I am pleased to say that the planning team got all of the information to the Planning Inspectorate by the 31 December 2024. This means that the inspection can now begin in earnest.

P Lewis and E Worthington, chartered Town Planners have been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the soundness of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.

The timetable is as follows

Hearing Week 1 - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY

Hearing Day 1. 9.30 am Tuesday 4 March

Matter 1 Procedural/legal requirements

Matter 2: Policy SWDPR 03 The Spatial Development Strategy

Matter 3 The Green Belt

Hearing Day 2. 9.30 am Wednesday 5 March

Matter 4: Provision for housing

Matter 5: Housing Land Supply

Matter 6: Housing, health and wellbeing and Implementation and Monitoring Policies

Hearing Week 2 - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY

Hearing Day 3. 9.30 am Tuesday 11 March

Matter 8: Economic Growth Strategy and Policies

Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations

SWDPR 54: Mitton

Hearing Day 4. 9.30 am Wednesday 12 March

Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations continued

SWDPR 51: Worcestershire Parkway

SWDPR 52: Land at Throckmorton New Settlement