**2025/01**

**MINUTES**

**DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

[**https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk**](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:**
3. *Cllrs are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.*
4. *To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
5. *To declare Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
6. *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***

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

**4. FINANCE / GOVERANCE:**

1. Approval of receipts and payments to 10th January 2025 (made since last meeting)

Payments for authorisation:

****

1. 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

1. 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

**2025/02**

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

1. **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.

1. **HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS (to include traffic calming)**
2. PRoW – No report due to Cllr Marshall’s absence
3. 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.
4. **PLANNING:**
5. 24/00952/HP - Lincolns Farm Bungalow Rebecca Road - *approved by WDC*
6. 21/02561 – Land at (OS 9164 4305) Harpley Road – *Awaiting decision by WDC*
7. 24/01609 - Atalaya, Upper Street, Defford – *refused by WDC and Appeal submitted by applicant*
8. 24/02165 – Windermere, 6 Crown Court, Defford – *approved by WDC*
9. 24/01822 – Crabbe Tree Farm, Besford Road, Wadborough – *awaiting decision by WDC*
10. 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.
11. 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

**8. 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.

1. **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**

**10. 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

**11. 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.

**12. 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.