

Minutes for Belmont Parish Council meeting held in Belmont Community Centre on
Thursday 11th July 2024

Present: L. Mavin (Vice-Chair)
Councillors, M.P. Bennett, P.J. Conway, P.S. Conway, V. Hawes, E.S. Mavin, K. Noble,
A.P. Watkins, and S.C. White.

Also present: Mrs S. Overton (Clerk)

Members of the public (8)

24.28 To Receive Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Appleby, C.A. Fletcher,
J. Knight, C.A. Lattin, A.C. Walker and M. Watson.
RECEIVED.

24.29 To Receive Declarations of Interest.

Members Please Note: - this is a standard item. If Members are aware of a personal
prejudicial interest in relation to any item on the agenda this should be disclosed at this
stage or when the interest becomes apparent during the consideration of an item in
accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members. This item is linked to your Declaration
of Members Interest forms please consult these forms when reading these Notes on agenda
items to ensure compliance with this item.
RECEIVED.

The Chair suspended Standing Orders.

24.30 To Receive Miscellaneous Reports.

(a) Police.

A PACT report was circulated to councillors for information.

A concern was raised regarding opportunists allegedly breaking into properties via
windows left open during the recent spell of hot weather.

A concern was raised regarding a dangerous section of the A1 where the road merges
from three lanes into two, the matter to be discussed further at the next PACT meeting.

(b) Community Warden.

There was no Community Warden present.

(c) Members of the Public.

A member of the public said he had reported issues to the Chief Executive Officer and Chair
of Durham County Council, relating to a number of HMO's untidy gardens, hedges and
overflowing litter bins not being put out by the occupants. He requested whether Belmont
Parish Council along with Durham County Council could force the issue with the
landlord to resolve the problem.

A member of the public questioned whether the new boundary changes introduced would
effect the Parish Council finances after attending a meeting of the Area Action Partnership
and was informed the parish council would not be effected by the changes.

A member of the public asked whether Belmont Parish Council would be responding to the
Community water fluoridation expansion in the North East of England. The government are

consulting on a proposal to request the relevant water companies to enter into new fluoridation arrangements, and to vary existing agreements, in order to expand community water fluoridation schemes across the North East of England. This is because of significant and long-standing inequalities in the region and is part of the government's plan to improve dental health. The Chair informed the resident rather than Belmont Parish Council respond as a whole get everyone to respond individually.

A group of residents attended the meeting to raise concerns about recent resurfacing work which has covered over drains resulting in puddles occurring in Coniston Close. Concerns were also raised regarding bitumen being trod into peoples homes causing extensive damage to flooring. Councillor EM to arrange a site meeting with Durham County Council Officer, subcontractor who undertook the works and residents to discuss the concerns.

The Chair re-imposed Standing Orders.

- 24.31 To Confirm and sign as a correct record of the Minutes of the meeting of Belmont Parish Council held on 9th May 2024 – Minutes attached*
AGREED.

- 24.32 To Receive matters of information, Clerk's Report, Correspondence Tabled Items – for information.
Northumbria in Bloom judges will be visiting several areas in the parish Friday 12th July 2024 for the summer judging.
The Disability Play Equipment will be getting installed this week in Moorfield.

- 24.33 To Consider Risk Management in relation to items on the Agenda.
Members please note: - this is a standard item. Risk Management has been considered when compiling these notes for July and has been incorporated into reports and presented to members.
RECEIVED.

- 24.34 To Receive completed Risk Assessments.
In progress.

- 24.35 To Receive Update on Community Resilience Plan – see attached *.
Councillor LM gave an update regarding the Community Resilience Plan which included the following points:-
Councillor LM to contact the Community Centre Manager with regards to arrangements for key access in the event of an emergency.

Durham County Council have a list of emergency numbers on their website, a suggestion was made to include information in the parish newsletter on a separate leaflet

The parish notice boards have posters displayed with information on what to do in an emergency, contact details to stay for councillors.
Received.

- 24.36 To Approve Complaints and Appeals Procedure Policy - see attached*
Councillors discussed the draft Complaints and Appeals Procedure Policy with amendments.

AGREED: Councillor LM to contact Durham City Parish Council to ask if they would consider being a back up if an Appeals Committee was ever required and vice-versa if they needed similar support.

24.37 To Consider Donation Request for the Mayors Appeal 2024/25 “Feeding Families and Stray Aid”

Councillor LM proposed £200.00 consisting of £100.00 - Feeding Families and £100.00 - Stray Aid for the Mayors Appeal 2024/25

Councillor MB seconded the proposal

AGREED.

24.38 To Approve amendments to Financial Regulations.

Councillor MB requested this item be deferred until September meeting.

AGREED

24.39 To Approve amendments to Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

It was agreed to update the cemetery rules and regulations to read under Tributes, (Flowers, wreaths, ornaments), Pg 5 ‘no further applications for plaques on benches will be accepted’. The update to be explained in the parish newsletter for information.

AGREED.

24.40 To Consider Pavilion Modernisation.

Notice of motion

Belmont Parish Council agrees to the following, in respect of the proposed modernisation of the Sports Pavilion:

1. To accept the fee proposal from Durham County Council, in the sum of £3,706, to be funded from the earmarked reserve for this purpose;

2. To waive the requirement to obtain 3 estimates as this a specialised service and an extension of the existing lease agreement with Durham County Council (Financial Regulations 11.1 (ii) and (iv) refer).

3. To apply for Section 106 funding of £100,000 to be reserved for modernisation of the Sports Pavilion,

APPROVED AND AGREED.

Councillor MB was thanked for his hard work on the Pavilion Modernisation.

24.41 To Discuss Publication of Members Addresses.

A discussion took place regarding proposals by DCC to remove Members home addresses from the Register of Interests, unless the Member decides to opt-in.

An email was forwarded to councillors explaining there is a survey to ask parish councillors if they agree – deadline 31 July with the links to the survey and DCC report. The three County Councillors were at council meeting last week where the report was presented and they voted to remove councillor home addresses with an 'opt in' option for those who wanted their home address published for the public.

AGREED: members addresses would not be displayed only the area (except on contact details for the Community Resilience Plan).

24.42 To Receive Committee Reports:

(a) Finance – to consider financial matters – see attached*

Councillor MB (chair) gave a report on the following items:-

Cheveley Park Play area

The police have been notified of a damaged fence in Cheveley Park play area caused by a vehicle crashing into it. Following the incident DCC have since been out to inspect the fence to assess the damage, the fence is secure, nevertheless repairs or replacement sections are needed and costings obtained.

Damage to wet pour surface at Cheveley Park Play area.

AGREED: to look to Durham County Council for advice on a more lasting method of surfacing and to check for further wet pour damage in other play areas in the parish.

Installation of ‘dog leg barrier’ at Cheveley Park.

Councillor LM to chase up and report back to council with an update.

To Receive Receipts and Payments during the month of May/June 2024 - see attached*
RECEIVED AND AGREED.

To Receive bank reconciliation during the month of May/June 2024 - see attached*
RECEIVED AND AGREED.

To Receive Quarterly budget statement for April/May and June 2024 - see attached*
RECEIVED AND AGREED.

Zurich Insurance Premium has been adjusted from £4,394 to £5,066 as a consequence of re-valuation of assets.

Councillor MB (chair) was thanked for his diligent work on the Finance & Assets Committee.

(b) Planning – to consider and make comment on Planning matters – see attached*

Councillor PC (chair)

Weekly Planning Applications for May/June 2024 - see attached*
RECEIVED.

Countywide Delegated for May/June/July 2024 - see attached*
RECEIVED.

Planning Report June 2024 - see attached*

Councillor PSC gave a report on planning applications which included the following:-

a) The parish council formally requests the Planning Authority to ensure that conditions relating to the approved planning application for 38 Moor Crescent are adhered to.

b) The parish council again requests Durham County Council to immediately review Policy 16 of the County Durham Plan and in particular the Article 4 Direction. Recent events in this cul de sac show the existing wording, while being well intentioned, does not take account of local road lay outs. It is suggested this request is made to the Leader of the County Council and Chair of Planning

AGREED:

Belmont and Gilesgate Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor PSC gave an update on a public meeting held on the 10th June in Belmont Community Centre, whereby the key findings of the Housing Needs Assessment report were discussed. Councillor MB praised PSC and RH (Gilesgate Residents Association) for a very well organised and positive meeting.

(c) Communications Committee

The Chair informed councillors the next edition of the Parish Newsletter would include Remembrance Sunday, Senior Citizens Party and How to be a considerate Neighbour.

A concern was raised regarding mobility scooters users and residents with pushchairs being unable to walk on path due to parked vehicles causing an obstruction. Councillor LM to find out where the problem is and feed it back to the police.

Councillor LM (Chair) was thanked for her diligent work on the Parish Newsletter.

(d) Environment – to consider environment matters – see attached*

Councillor KN (Chair) gave a report on Environment matters which included issues with the Gardening Contract, in particular weedkiller, BMX Track and PROWs.

AGREED: to arrange a meeting with DCC to discuss concerns raised.

Scrambles update

Trees.

Councillor SW reported that three additional trees had been identified as diseased, bringing the total to eight needing to come down on the Scrambles

AGREED.

Belmont Allotments Update.

Belmont Allotments have identified a number of diseased trees, a lot of them not on the TPO site and members are happy to undertake the work themselves.

Councillor SW was thanked for his diligent work.

Friends of Kepier Woods – see attached*

Councillor MW provided a report to councillors which included feedback from a meeting with Belmont 1st Scouts Troop Environment Project regarding what they liked about the area and what improvements they would like to see in the parish regarding the environment.

Positive comments were received from residents regarding recent PROW footpath repairs event in Kepier Woods, materials were purchased from grant from Belmont Parish Council.

Councillor MW was thanked for his diligent work.

Councillor KN (Chair) was thanked for her diligent work on the Environment Committee.

24.43 To Receive reports from Ward Councillors.

Due to time constraints the Chair asked councillors to forward any concerns to the parish office.

24.44 Council business (any Item which has been brought to the attention of the Chairman for discussion during the meeting for approval or otherwise)

Councillor LM gave a BCA report which included completion of roof repairs and the 'Blue Room' now available for hire.

Future of the Local Heroes Event was discussed and councillors agreed to hold the event once every four years.

AGREED.

24.45 Date of next meeting Thursday 12th September 2024.