

Birstall Parish Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held in the Village Hall, Birstall Road, Birstall on Monday 14 January 2013

Present:

Councillors T Fowler (Chair), J Cassidy, G Evans-Hay, J Garner, S F Jones, A Marshall, D Marshall, N Mays and D Topley.

In attendance:

Mr S C Blackburn (Clerk to the Council), PCs R Carruthers and Des Earnshaw and three members of the public.

9237 Cllr Fowler read the letter of resignation which had been submitted by Cllr Cleere at the preceding Management and Policy Committee meeting.

In response Cllr Garner expressed his distress at the news and this was seconded by others.

9238 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs T Abbey, M Allen, S Alcock, M Coley, R Dickinson, D Gaskell, J Howe, M Houghton and D Topley.

9239 Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Jones declared his membership of Charnwood Borough Council.

9240 To receive a report from a representative of the Police

PC Richard Carruthers introduced the report.

Category	Dec	Jan	+/-
Assaults	7	7	0
Harassment	1	1	0
Burglary	7	7	0
Burglary OTD	5	9	-4
Damage	2	5	-3
Damage to Motor Vehicle	3	1	2
Drugs	2	2	0
Fraud	3	5	-2
Public Order	0	0	0
Robbery	0	0	0
Theft	3	5	-2
Theft of Cycle	0	0	0
Theft from Motor Vehicle	0	2	-2
Taken without Consent (Vehicle)	0	1	-1
Theft of Motor Vehicle	3	1	2
Theft – stores	2	6	-4
	38	52	-14

- Burglaries have risen but a number of suspects have been arrested following police enquiries
- Op Dynamo and Op Baton still in place resulting in arrests of suspects.
- Although there has been a rise in theft from stores we have two suspects to arrest and interview.
- The safer Neighbourhood Teams have been formulated. Although this has resulted in a temporary disruption to day to day policing this is anticipated to lead to improved local neighbourhood policing in the long term.

PC Des Earnshaw was introduced to the meeting. He is to take over from PC Carruthers who is moving to be 'Beacon Officer' for the Rothley and Quorn area.

The meeting thanked PC Carruthers for his work in Birstall and wished him well in his new role.

9241 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2012 be signed as a correct record.

9242 Public Participation: None.

9243 Report of the Clerk to the Council

The Clerk had circulated a summary of current work which is attached to these minutes.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's report be received.

In addition to the summary he reported that residents of Wanlip Lane had complained that cars were being parked on the wide verge, causing it and the surrounding paths to become muddy and dangerous. Cllr Cassidy had received a similar complaint adding that some residents would park on the road if nothing was done, leading to traffic congestion in a busy stretch of road near to schools.

RESOLVED: that the concerns be relayed to Charnwood Borough Council with a request that laying of a porous tarmac surface should be considered.

9244 Request for Dispensations under s 33(10) of the Localism Act 2011

In view of Cllr Cleere's resignation, this matter was not discussed.

9245 To consider and approve a budget and precept for the period 2013/14

The Clerk reported that the final Council Tax computations had been received from Charnwood Borough Council, resulting in some changes to the provisional figures available when the precept was discussed in December. These figures are attached to these minutes.

The grant element has increased from £21,426 to £21,588 and the number of houses has increased from 3,830 to 4,008. On the basis of the provisionally agreed precept of £354,800 this still represents a cash decrease of 5.9% but will now be presented on Council Tax bills as a decrease of 5.7%.

RESOLVED: that the budget for 2013/14 including a precept of £354,800 be agreed.

9246 Planning

Due to time constraints it has not been possible to gain an extension which would allow these applications to be considered at a meeting of the Planning Committee.

a) P/12/2582/2 Erection of a 2 storey side and single storey rear extension: 520 Loughborough Road

b) P/12/2650/2 Erection of a car port to front of dwelling: 2 Mill Close

RESOLVED: that no comments be made on these applications.

9247 To consider a request from Birstall Methodist Church for Council representation on their Age Committee

Cllr Allen has been approached to become the representative of the Parish Council on this committee and has made a formal application to the Council for this.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Allen be appointed as the council's representative to the Birstall Methodist Church Age Committee.

9248 Updates:

Hallam Fields – proposed play area. The Clerk reported on a meeting between the Hallam Fields Working Party and representatives of Jelson's which discussed the proposed play area no.4 which will be adjacent to our Harrowgate Drive Playing Fields. Proposals for this area will be drawn up with a view to avoiding duplication of existing play equipment.

Hallam Fields – School Provision. In the absence of Cllr Gaskell this item was deferred.

Proposed Travellers Sites: At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Terry McGreal read the press release issued following the decision to proceed with a travellers site at Greengate Lane. He remarked that he

hoped that it would be published in the Leicester Mercury. Mr Stephen Dorrell had expressed dismay at the decision although it was not in his constituency and the relevant MP, Liz Kendall had not yet responded.

Cllr Fowler thanked Mr McGreal for his report and contribution.

9249 To consider a request from LRALC that the Parish Council should petition the Minister for Communities and Local Government regarding the way in which Localisation of Council Tax Support has been introduced

The Clerk reported a request by LRALC for the Chairmen of Parish Councils to send letters to DCLG in protest at the way in which Localisation of Council Tax Support has been handled and the last minute work required at all levels. The Clerk also suggested that further criticism of the drafting could be included to refer to other unintended consequences including the need for dispensations to decide the precept and in relation to changes in the code of conduct.

RESOLVED: that a letter be drafted for signature by the Chairman.

9250 Finance and Accounts

(a) To authorise invoiced expenditure (list attached)

RESOLVED: that the schedule of accounts be authorised for payment.

(b) To note the financial summary as at 31 December 2012

RESOLVED: that the summary be noted.

9251 Chairman's announcements: None.

9252 Reports by Councillors attending meetings of outside bodies

Cllrs Cassidy and Garner had attended a meeting of the Charnwood Crime and Safety Forum at which the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Sir Clive Loader, was been present and outlined his plans for the future.

9253 Reports from Borough and County Councillors serving the Birstall area. None at this stage.

9254 Councillors reports and items for future agendas

It was reported that a litter and dog waste bin at the junction of two paths in School Lane Playing Fields had disappeared. This will be looked into; the question of bins is to be discussed at the next Estates and Recreation Committee meeting.

9255 To consider excluding the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 for the following items on the grounds that it involves confidential matters relating to staff

RESOLVED: that the public and press be asked to leave.

Members of the public and press left the meeting.

9256 Complaint by Mrs Coulson against Cllr Cleere

Cllr Garner expressed his disappointment at this outcome which he felt was not justified. He then began to read a list of complaints but was advised from the Chair that, as these were similar to complaints received from Cllr Howe he should put them in writing when they would be considered jointly under the formal procedures.

Cllr Fowler regretted the resignation; in discussion it was mentioned that the Management and Policy Committee had begged him not to resign. An appeal was made to Councillors to work as a team and that issues and concerns should be discussed in an open manner and that, after voting, decisions should be accepted and respected.

Cllr Cassidy acknowledged the good work he had done for the Council and community notably in working towards bringing Hallam Fields into the community and his involvement in the development of the

Watermead Country Park.

It was agreed that the Council would send a letter expressing its regret and thanks for the work he had contributed.

9257 Retirement of the Clerk

The Management and Policy Committee recommends that the following course of action is approved:

(a) the position of Clerk will be advertised internally in the first instance and if Sue applies she will be interviewed on the basis firstly that a job share arrangement will be put in place and secondly that there will be an automatic progression to full time appointment as Clerk in May 2014.

in the event that Sue is recommended and appointed:

(b) with effect from May 2013 the Clerk reduces his hours to 3 days per week and that a job share arrangement is put in place by which the Deputy Clerk acts as Clerk on two days per week

(c) the Clerk will retire at the AGM in May 2014

(d) Wendy Cotter will take on additional responsibilities in line with a new role of 'Assistant Clerk' at a salary to be agreed

(e) this arrangement will be put in place for a trial period of six months during which the further loss of hours will be carefully monitored

in the event that Sue is not appointed:

(f) the Clerk will re-consider his retirement date and an external recruitment process will begin at a date to be agreed.

The M&P Committee also recommends to Council that the previously agreed interview panel (Cllrs J Cassidy, T Fowler, S Jones and A Marshall) should be augmented by Mr Jake Atkinson of LRALC and, if she is willing, Mrs Christine Geschke, a former Councillor with HR experience.

RESOLVED: that the above recommendations be implemented.

9258 Reports from Borough and County Councillors serving the Birstall area

Cllr Roger Wilson arrived during the closed session and waited outside. At the end of the confidential business with the agreement of the meeting he was invited to present a report.

He referred to the County Council's budget and the austerity programme which was likely to continue to 2018. There is a funding reduction of 22% for 2013/14 with further reductions in future. 'Top Slicing' of the education budget for academies amounted to £131 per pupil but with only £90 actually going to the academy. A similar transfer of Youth Justice funding would see funds transferred to the Police but at a lower level than current costs. Social care will be a major factor in future budgets but each year of austerity is likely to require £20m of savings. The effect on staff is likely to be loss of 1,100 FTE posts over four years.

9259 Cllr Fowler indicated his willingness to chair future meetings but that he did not intend to seek election as Chairman. Cllr Mays thanked Cllr Fowler for his work in chairing a difficult meeting.

9260 Date of next meeting: Monday 11 February 2013 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

_____ Chairman

_____ Date