

# Belsay Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall, Belsay First School at 7.15pm on Wednesday, 1st August, 2012

**Present:** Councillors R. Batchelor (Chairman); K Storey (Vice-Chairman); F. Neilson; E. McDonnell; K. Metcalfe; F. Neilson; D. Holmes.

**In attendance:** Mr. K. Murray-Hetherington (Parish Clerk); County Councillor R. Dodd.

**1. Chairman's Opening Remarks:** The Chairman stated that Mr. D. Feeney had tendered his resignation as Parish Clerk. She recorded thanks to him for his work. Mr. Keith Murray-Hetherington had agreed to take on the role of Clerk to the Council.

**2. Apologies for Absence:** None.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meetings:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 12th June 2012 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 11th July 2012 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**4. Matters Arising:** Councillor Dodd referred to the site visit to Wallridge and the need to circulate a questionnaire to all households in Wallridge to establish local needs and opportunities. Members expressed concern about the storage of several (37) gas cylinders. It was agreed that further information and guidance is required regarding safe storage regulations to ensure the health and safety of residents.

**5. Public Participation:** None.

**6. Clerk's Report:** The Clerk reported that he had been acting as Clerk to the Council from 12th July including work on setting up and preparing a website designed specifically to meet the Council's needs, and dedicated email account and telephone number for parish council business. He reported that that BDO external auditors required an explanation why 'other payments' in the accounting statements had decreased by £569.00 (63%), an explanation for which was provided. It was agreed that this variance was caused by the number of un-presented cheques which were now out of date and which sums had now been written back in the accounts and a prudent decision by members to set aside those savings to spend on improvement projects in Wallridge.

**7. Code of Conduct:** The Clerk presented a report on the model code of conduct. Arrangements which came into force on 1st July 2012 under the Localism Act 2011 regulate the conduct of members of parish councils, the registration and disclosure of their interests, and how complaints about their conduct will be handled. Members are required to register disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of adoption of the code. **RESOLVED:** To approve and adopt the National Association of Local Councils (NALC's) model code of conduct; and to publicise the adoption of the code of conduct on the parish council's website.

**8. Bus Shelter:** Members considered details of a new bus shelter (Thirston Parish Council) which cost £1,100. It was felt that any proposed shelter should be placed as close as possible to the existing telephone box at Wallridge. It was agreed to write to British Telecom asking what their plans are. The Clerk reminded members that consent to the erection of a bus shelter may be needed. **RESOLVED:** To source a contractor to build a bus shelter and to obtain quotes from A&D at Hartburn (Councillor Holmes agreed to contact the firm); G. Hodgson & Son in Belsay; and Northumbria Leisure Buildings (Wallsend). County Councillor Dodd offered 50% of the cost from his Member's Small Grant Scheme for capital projects.

**9. Parish Questionnaire:** Members reviewed the draft questionnaire. It was agreed to add a question relating to the removal of the existing telephone box. It was felt that the form should be sent to everyone on the electoral register within all village households in Wallridge seeking priorities for the village and any concerns residents may have. Questionnaires should be returned to the Parish Clerk by 2nd October 2012 in an enclosed stamped addressed envelope. County Councillor Dodd agreed to deliver the questionnaires.

**10. Calendar of Meetings:** The meetings for the ensuing year were agreed. Meetings will take place six times a year on the second Tuesday of every January, March, May, July, September and November and usually at 7.15pm in the Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall at Belsay First School. The Annual General Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting will take place in May.

**11. Grants and Donations Policy:** The Clerk presented a report on a grants and donations policy. The Parish Council is allowed to spend a limited amount on activities which it considers “*will bring direct benefit to the area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants*”. The Council’s resources are wholly derived from public funds and it has an obligation to ensure that any grant or donation made is generally in the interests of the Parish. **RESOLVED:** To adopt as a general policy the principles set out in the report and to publicise the procedure to the community.

**12. Financial Matters:** Members were asked to consider a) the most recent financial accounts: balance at Current Account £2,647.89; Business Instant Access Account £813.67. b) invoices for payment: Belsay Daycare Ltd. £250.00; professional services including website £53.83; and £36.17 for postage and travel expenses. c) application for a grant towards the upkeep of Bolam Churchyard. **RESOLVED:** To require the submission of a description of the substance and purpose of the grant in sufficient detail to enable members to form an opinion about its merits, including details of anticipated costs to be incurred; who is the contractor; and other steps taken to secure necessary funding. **RESOLVED:** a) To receive the most recent financial accounts and note those payments shown which have been made under the financial regulations b) To approve payment of those invoices presented at the meeting c) To consider any future grant applications under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 at the ordinary meeting immediately preceding receipt of the half-yearly precept.

**13. Correspondence:** A full report of correspondence received and sent during the previous months was presented. Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC): **RESOLVED:** That the Council does not wish to subscribe to NALC for the current year 2012-13 at a cost of £86.48. The Planning Inspectorate: The hearing into the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 53 Northumberland County Council (Public Rights of Way) Modification Order (No 9) 2009 will be held at 10.00am on Tuesday, 20th November, 2012 the definitive map and statement for the area. **RESOLVED:** To place an item on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting. Local Transport Programme (LTP): Northumberland County Council has invited the Parish Council to submit its top three priorities for the LTP 2012-13. **RESOLVED:** To submit the Council’s priorities for new and improved local bus services.

**14. Reports:** There were no reports.

**15. Planning:** Councillor Neilson declared a personal interest at the commencement of the following matter: 12/01781/COU: Belsay Estate Office - application for change of use of part of the existing Estate Office into a shop. **RESOLVED:** That the application is NOT acceptable as it is in direct conflict with, and does not compliment existing retail facilities in the area including the Village Shop/Post Office which sell materially similar goods, and therefore would not make a positive contribution towards a sustainable local economy. 12/01945/FUL: 1 The Red House Barns, Belsay - application for construction of Gin Gan Extension. **RESOLVED:** That the application is acceptable and the Parish Council raises no objections.

**16. Any other business:**

**17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Tuesday, 9th October 2012 at 7.15pm in the Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall, Belsay First School.

Chairman.....*R Batchelor*.....

Date.....09.10.12.....