2026/06

MINUTES
DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL
https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 20th May 2026 in Besford Court Hall following the Annual Parish Meeting (Besford)

PRESENT: Cllrs: S Rees, J Robinson, I Spiers and I Stephens, County Cllr A Hardman and District Cllr P Middleborough

1. **APOLOGIES** were received from Cllr L Peake

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR /VICE CHAIR:** Chair – Cllr Stephens volunteered to stand for a further year, proposed Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Robinson. Vice Chair – Cllr Rees volunteered to stand for a further year, proposed Cllr Robinson, seconded Cllr Spiers

3. **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 present**

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meeting on 18th March 2026 – approved, proposed Cllr Robinson, seconded Cllr Spiers – all in favour

4. **FINANCE / GOVERNANCE**
   a) Approval of receipts and payments to 14th May 2026 (made since last meeting):

LM - March	245.00
MG - Playground safety report	99.60
Service Charge	7.00
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Clerks Salary	391.92
Hall Hire	22.00
Grass Cutting	547.50
Subscription	727.81
Street Lighting	350.86
Stationery	20.85
Service Charge	7.00
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Clerks Salary	391.92

Approval of payments made / to be made, proposed Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Robinson

b) Receipts:

Lengthsman	805.00
Interest	140.87
Precept	12,621.00

c) Account Balances:
Unity Trust Current Account: £9,741.92
Unity Trust Savings Account: £30,075.22

d) Year End Accounts for Approval – circulated to Cllrs for consideration and accepted, proposed Cllr Spiers, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

e) Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Form 3 -2025 / 2. AGAR Form 3 and all supporting documents had been circulated to Cllrs in advance of the meeting:
   (i) Internal Auditor's Report: – report carried out by P Dann, received and shared with Cllrs
   (ii) AGAR 2025 / 26 Form 3 – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement – *to consider and formally approve* – proposed Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Robinson
   (iii) AGAR 2025 / 26 Form 3 – Section 2 Accounting Statements – *to consider and formally approve* – proposed Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Spiers

6. REPORTS:

- Lengthsman - *to consider increasing hourly rate nominally to keep on track* – all Cllrs felt that the LM does a wonderful job for Defford & Besford. The clerk reminded Cllrs that LM were in high demand, and considering the ever-increasing fuel costs for his vehicle and tools, it was agreed that his hourly rate should be increased to £25 per hour. Cllr Rees volunteered to be the main contact with the LM and would arrange to meet up with him in the coming week
- Headstones – *update from Clerk* – awaiting quote for the works from Stone Mason – Clerk to chase.
- Millennium Green – *to look at hedge cutting and to ask contractor to carry out works* - It was agreed that the grass should be cut just before Open Gardens (in addition to any other grass cutting scheduled in). Cllr Rees to arrange for trees / hedges to be cut back where necessary. A suggestion made that a small mini digger could be used to transfer topsoil to the low areas – Cllr Rees to cost.
- Defford Open Gardens - *to consider asking LM to carry out a general tidy up and costs to be borne by the parish council from 'free funds'* - this was agreed.

7. PLANNING: W/26/01094 – Orchard Cottage House, Croome Road, Besford – replacement outbuilding and extension of driveway - *No objections*

8. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Any small projects for community groups which may benefit from a small grant / donation from Cllr Middleborough
- Noticeboards – Cllr Rees to liaise with the LM to do the noticeboards

9. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Wednesday 15th July 2026, 7pm at Defford Village Hall