

**MINUTES OF THE 114TH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
OF THE PARISH OF CASTLE BROMWICH
HELD ON TUESDAY 6TH MAY 2008 IN ARDEN HALL,
CASTLE BROMWICH COMMENCING AT 8.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Electors of the Parish

CB04 1363	Cllr J Riordan	CB04 1531	Mr J Dutton	CB04 854	Mrs M Turner
CB01 178	Cllr Mrs. B Wilkins	CB01 724	Cllr E Knibb	CB04 853	Mr A Turner
CB01 1399	Mrs H O Hagan	CB01 723	Cllr Mrs T Knibb	CB03 34	Mr Woodhouse
CB03 493	Mrs J Payne	CB05 62	Ms S Aucott	CB01 183	Mr P Wilkins
CB01 1651	Ms. J Jackson	CB03 291	J Siviter	CB01 953	Mrs J Craske
CB04 857	R Beebee			CB01 952	Mr A Craske

17 electors

Members of the Public

Cllr Mrs P Allen	Mrs. J Smith	Mrs S Brain
Mr J Martin	Mr P Brettell	Youth Cllr Miss E Vincent
Mrs M Martin		7 public

Officers:

C. D Tibbles, Clerk to the Council. 1 Officer

Total Attendance 25 people

The Chairman, Cllr Barbara Wilkins welcomed everyone who had remained for the meeting and thanked them sincerely for attending. She had been pleased to present the Chairman's Charity Fund donations before the meeting commenced.

1. The Notice to convene the meeting.

The Clerk read the notice to convene the meeting, copies having been circulated and published on notice boards.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Mrs. Haywood, Cllr R Amos, Mrs M Riordan

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of last year's meeting had been made available prior to the meeting and were taken as read. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 113th Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 1st May 2007, having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4. Report of attendance.

	Actual Meeting	Possible Meetings	
Cllr Mrs Allen (Co-opted 26/09/07)	17	17	100%
Cllr Amos (Co-opted 30/01/08)	9	10	90%
Cllr Bull (Resigned 21/01/08)	12	20	60%
Cllr Feasey (Resigned 31/03/08)	19	25	76%
Cllr Franklin (Co-opted 16/5/07, resigned Aug.07, co-opted 26/9/07, resigned 13/1/08)	7	17	41%
Cllr Gibbins (Resigned 28/11/07)	18	20	90%
Cllr Mrs Haywood	22	24	92%
Cllr Hughes (Died 03/06/07)	1	2	50%
Cllr E Knibb	37	40	93%

	Actual Meeting	Possible Meetings	
Cllr Mrs. T. Knibb (Co-opted 19/12/07)	16	17	94%
Cllr Pearce (Resigned 27/06/07)	1	3	33%
Cllr Rashid (Co-opted on 26/9/07 after missing earlier election deadline)	10	19	53%
Cllr Riordan	39	41	95%
Cllr Mrs Smith	12	24	50%
Cllr Terry (Co-opted 16/5/07)	29	30	97%
Cllr Miss Ward	17	24	71%
Cllr S Ward (Resigned 11/01/08)	5	21	24%
Cllr Mrs Wilkins	39	41	95%
Average - whole Council			72%

Many councillors continued to serve on numerous Working Parties/ Committees that were not reflected in these figures above which relate to full Council and 2 Standing Committees. There are currently 3 vacancies declared and 1 vacancy to be declared.

**5a Report of the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee,
- Councillor E Knibb.**

Cllr Knibb stated it had been a difficult year for the Finance and General Purposes Committee with only 8 of the scheduled 11 meetings since 9th May 2007 being quorate and the Council had amended its standing orders to reduce the quorum for Committee Meetings to lessen the opportunities of this reoccurring. He referred to changes to the Committee's terms of reference agreed by the Council during the year. He referred to the Committees' delegated authority to comment and make recommendations on planning applications and outlined the Parish Council's statutory role to be consulted by the Planning Authority and to comment on planning applications taking into account the views of local residents. Over the year the Committee had regularly examined the planning applications put before it and resolved on a recommendation to be submitted to the Planning Department. As none of these plans proved to be too controversial the community interests were best served by reviewing and commenting on these applications in this manner. Cllr Knibb referred to concerns expressed by parishioners about muted plans for the redevelopment of the Sonic building and County Garages by The Green. It was his hope that should a formal application be made and should the Parish Council agree that the concerns expressed are of concern to the community; the Finance & General Purposes Committee should look a little more creatively at its remit in order to assist them. He outlined the functions of the Parish Council's Financial & General Purposes Committee and referred to provision within the budget for 2008/2009 for a part time book keeper to assist with financial accounting and control. Cllr Knibb felt the Committee would support the Clerk with regard to the responsibilities arising from the year end accounts and he felt confident that with the additional services of a book keeper, the Clerk would find this of assistance. The Committee had considered it's reserves and it was felt that steps needed to be taken to gradually put in place reserves equal to the minimum amount suggested of £100,000. Some progress towards this aim had been made during the financial year just completed. A contingency of £25,000 was added to the precept for this coming year as a further step towards achieving this. He felt that there was work to be undertaken to improve the Council's financial systems and believed there was much that the Committee could achieve with regard to supporting residents' concerns regarding planning applications.

5b Report of the Chairman of Leisure Services Committee - Councillor Riordan.

Cllr Riordan started by paying tribute to a past Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee, Cllr Mick Hughes, who had sadly died at the start of the civic year. Cllr Hughes had been dedicated to the work of the Parish Council and a valued member of the Leisure Services Committee. Cllr Riordan said that since his report last year, the Council had been turned down by the Big Lottery last autumn for funding for Arden Hall improvements. The Committee was now working in earnest to reinvigorate the building after 40 years, with ideas and options being considered and parishioners views being sought. The Council worked with organisations that supported youths and free football skills coaching had again been held, in partnership with Waterloo Housing and Fusion. The horse chestnut trees remained diseased and remedial action had been taken where possible to avoid felling, although two trees had been lost. A report had been commissioned on all trees, with priority action being taken as recommended. Some councillors had been working on shrubs and beds on parish land and he thanked them and the local garden centre for this support. Planned work continued with volunteers, which reduced costs to the Parish Council. He expressed the gratitude of the Committee to the Unpaid Work Division of the Probation Service for the hard work they had done with ditch excavations and removal of bushes, to Castle Bromwich Cricket & Sports Club for their hard work on improvements to the Pavilion Clubroom and to councillors for decorating parts of Arden Hall. The hire regulations had been reviewed, updated and were being implemented. The second Bridal Fayre had taken place most successfully and he thanked all those involved in that venture. In conclusion, Cllr Riordan expressed thanks to all fellow councillors, the Clerk to the Council and the staff of Castle Bromwich Parish Council for their support & hard work during this past year.

6. The Chairman's Address - Cllr Mrs. B Wilkins

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 114th Annual meeting of the parish of Castle Bromwich, thanking residents for finding time to attend this important meeting in the parish council's year. The Chairman explained the council was bound by law to hold this meeting and following the reports already given by Cllr Knibb and Cllr Riordan, she did not plan to repeat what had already been said. It was at those Committee meetings where most of the work was done, with decisions made at them being passed to full Council for ratification. During the past year she had had the pleasure of attending several functions with the Mayor and Mayoress of Solihull, the latest occasion being the annual Easter function at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, which had been a delightful day. In November she had laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day service held on Castle Bromwich Village Green and it had been wonderful to see so many people attending this very special occasion. She thanked everyone who gave their time so freely to help with the organization of the road closures and necessary safety procedures. For the council it had, as always, been a very busy year and for many councillors this had been their first year as parish councilors. She felt sure that they, like herself when she first began, had found the workings of a Parish Council surprising, at times frustrating, but she hoped also fulfilling and worthwhile. She thanked them all for the time they so willingly gave and the hard work they did on parishioners' behalf. Some of the newer councillors had left for various reasons during the year and she thanked them for the time they gave during the year. The past year had been a difficult one again for the staff of Arden Hall due to the prolonged absence due to ill health of the Hall Manager. She was however happy to report that the Manager was back at work which was most welcome and she looked forward to him taking full responsibility for the running of the Hall again. His long absence had obviously put great pressure and demands on the Clerk and staff of Arden Hall, in particular the Assistant and Deputy Managers who had provided the necessary cover. She thanked them for being so willing and helpful. On a more positive note, the Council was looking to give the front of Arden Hall the facelift it so badly needed. As reported, the lottery bid for funding had not been successful although there had been a group of community service 'volunteers' in the Park and the drainage ditches had been cleared at no cost to the parish. It was hoped to have some of them back again to help with redecoration of inside Arden Hall. The Council continued to research as many avenues as possible to find extra funding for some of this work and would welcome positive input from the residents of Castle Bromwich. Some parishioners had noticed councillors out on the Green working to tidy the War Memorial and gardens, work that would be continued, and she thanked those who worked so hard out there. Another very successful Bridal Fayre had been held at the end of March, the event being organised by Cllr Mrs. Haywood and her husband, Alf, and she thanked them for their work, whilst looking forward to another one. Sadly, during the year the Council had continued to see acts of vandalism to property and land owned by the parish, once more done by the mindless minority who seemed to find pleasure in their actions. The cost of repairs and replacement had to be borne by the Parish Council. She asked that parishioners keep both the council and the police informed, although realizing that in many cases by the time the police arrived the damage was done and those responsible had disappeared. The Chairman had been pleased to distribute the proceeds of the Chairman's Charity Fund to youth groups, community organisations and schools in Castle Bromwich. The money had been raised by holding functions in Arden Hall – the next quiz would be on 30th May. Without wishing to send the audience to sleep, she took the opportunity to most sincerely thank Cllr Riordan and Cllr Knibb as Chairman of the committees, and all the members of the council for their support and hard work on behalf of the parish during the last year. The biggest thank you went to the Clerk, Cathy Tibbles and her assistants, Diane and Carol, without whose hard work and dedication, sometimes far above the call of duty, the council would not be able to function. A big thank you went to all the staff of Arden Hall and the Park without whose teamwork and effort Castle Bromwich would not be an attractive place that the council strived so hard to maintain on everyone's behalf.

In conclusion, the Chairman reminded everyone that there were some vacancies on the Parish Council and asked if anyone had a little spare time to consider joining – details were available from the Clerk. She appealed to people to ask questions, put forward their ideas, points of view and suggestions which were very important - this was their community and the parish council existed to try to help. Thanks were expressed once again for everyone being at the meeting, for their attendance and for listening to what the Parish Council tried to do on behalf of parishioners.

7. Questions from Parishioners

Mr. Beebee, Marlborough Road, expressed his thanks to the Parish Council, staff and councillors in appreciation for the help received when booking functions at Arden Hall. Mr. Woodhouse, Blandford Avenue, suggested that the council change the sequence of public questions at council meetings by holding a 15 minute session at the start. This was done by other councils and could encourage more people to come and hear the serious discussions about the future of Arden Hall. Mr. Siviter, Blandford Avenue, who regularly attended Parish Council meetings, was disappointed by the same few people attending and suggested the council advertise in the Solihull Times as there was not enough information published about what the Parish Council did. He was particularly sad that the recent police meeting was only attended by 9 people and wished that the community cared more by coming to meetings. Members would recall that he had supported the Castle Bromwich Ladies Club with issues in the past but as there was no-one attending this meeting, he would rest his case. The Chairman felt the community in Castle Bromwich had changed and that although 67 agendas had been sent out, it was difficult to get people interested even though noticeboards in the library and Arden Hall had shown the dates of the whole year's meetings since last May. Advertising would cost money. Mr. Woodhouse suggested that there was a need to wake people up and thought the council could be provocative.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.