

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CASTLE
BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH 2009
AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr J Riordan

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| Councillors: | Cllr Mrs. P Allen | Cllr I Hiley | Cllr M Rashid |
| | Cllr Mrs. A Haywood | [Items 3-end] | Cllr Miss J Ward |
| | Cllr M Hayes | Cllr E Knibb | Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins |
| | Cllr N Harris | Cllr Mrs. T Knibb [Items 1-9 only] | |

Officer: Mrs. C Tibbles

Public: 6 members of the public

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr R Amos, Cllr Mrs. S. Baker, Cllr Mrs. J Smith and Cllr A Terry were accepted for the reasons given.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

None declared.

3. Co-option of new member for the Park Hall Ward.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Richardson and Mr. Hiley stated their reasons for wishing to become parish councillors. Mrs. Richardson said she had an urge to help and after attending the last meeting she thought she might have skills to help get things done in Castle Bromwich. She had enthusiasm, tenacity, would keep going even if tasks were arduous and was used to rules and regulations as she worked in payroll. Mr. Hiley said he had lived in Castle Bromwich for nearly 47 years and felt lucky to have been born and bred here. He was slightly ashamed to have not been aware of what the parish council did. He worried about increasing graffiti and was disappointed that public attendance at meetings ranged from 5/7 people out of a population of 12,000. He had a background in sales and business development and hoped to have ideas to generate cash and interest in the parish council in the future. There were no questions from members. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to hold a signed ballot to decide who was to be co-opted as a parish councillor. The Chairman explained procedures and the Clerk declared the results of 6 votes for Mr. Hiley and 4 votes for Ms. Richardson. The Chairman declared that Mr. Hiley received the majority of the votes and was therefore co-opted as the new member for the Park Hall ward. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Mr. Hiley's Acceptance of Office, duly signed be received and that he would serve on the Leisure Services Committee. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Hiley to the Council and invited him to take his seat.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

Cllr Mrs. Knibb referred to Item 2 and asked for a factual correction to be made as she was a member of the Solihull Volunteer Forum. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Miss Ward, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 10 votes in favour, none against and

ACTION

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1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to delete the word 'not' from the 3rd line. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Allen, with 10 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25th March, 2009 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

5. Questions from Councillors.

None.

6. Questions from the Public.

Standing Orders were suspended so that members of the public could ask questions. Following an explanation of procedures by the Chairman, members of the public were invited to state their name and address and to clearly say if they objected to their identity appearing in the minutes, prior to asking their question.

Mr. Gibbins, Kingsleigh Drive, asked for a reply to his question last year about council's responsibility to hirers if a cancellation occurred? He was not aware of the answer and apologized if he had missed the results being announced and asked what system the Council had for feedback to public questions? The Chairman replied that the matter had been considered and the hire regulations amended as a result of the insurers reply. With the assistance of Cllr Knibb, the Chairman quoted the relevant section of clause 1 of the hire regulations dated December 2008 which stated: "Cancellations: Council In the event that the premises become a) unfit for the use intended by the Hirer or b) an emergency requiring use of the premises as a shelter for the victims of flooding, snowstorm, fire, explosion or those at risk of similar disasters, the Hirer shall be entitled to a refund of any deposit already paid, but the Council/village hall shall not be liable to the Hirer for any resulting direct or indirect loss or damages whatsoever." The Chairman recalled the insurers would not provide insurance cover for this and suggested the Leisure Services Committee clarify the matter. He also suggested the Parish Council should consider a method of feeding back answers to members of the public who had raised a question.

Mrs. Richardson, Cutshill Close, asked if there was any progress on improved play equipment and if suggestions would be welcomed by the Council? Cllr Hayes reported that the Chairman had very quickly met someone and researched the question and obtained contact details for Solihull MBC as a possible source of funding. The Chairman added that her interest was welcome.

Mr. Woodhouse, Blandford Avenue, was pleased that a better relationship was being established with Park Hall School but reported 2 girls in school uniform, aged 12, picking flowers from front gardens in Neville Road and Blandford Avenue before heading for Auckland Drive. He asked that the matter be reported to the school? The Chairman replied that the Headteacher would be the guest speaker at the next Council meeting in April. Cllr Mrs. Knibb offered to raise the matter with the Deputy Headteacher as she would be speaking to him the following day.

Mr. Holland, The Green, suggested the council provide cancellation insurance cover for hirers and add it to the hire charge; congratulated the council on the improved frontage for Arden Hall; thanked the council and its members for support to residents in successfully opposing the Coach & Horses licence changes; asked for better publicity for the PACT meetings that most people did not know was being held? The Chairman confirmed the parish council assisted with publicity where it could. Mr. Woodhouse, Blandford Avenue, added that although a police notice had been placed in a doctors surgery, many residents had medical care outside the parish.

7. Communications.

Following consideration of the information listed, Cllr Mrs. Knibb referred to the letter from Autism West Midlands and declared an interest as her son was autistic and it was likely that she was too. There were many issues facing people who were on the spectrum, e.g. consideration of building design and she suggested the society be invited to speak to the Council and help raise awareness. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Mrs. Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, with 11 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that a speaker be invited to the June/July meeting.

Asst. Clerk
04/09

8. Committees and Council Structure.

Cllr Hayes explained that since becoming a member a couple of months ago, there had been questions regarding the business of committees so to improve communication and give better public access he had tabled the suggestions on the agenda. He felt that less time spent on procedural matters would increase time available for other discussions. Cllr Hayes recognized that other members had more experience and that his proposal might not work but he wanted to increase public participation and suggested more meetings could give better feedback, although realizing it would take a few months to put into effect. The Chairman referred to Standing Order 80 and clarified that if the proposal was seconded it should stand without discussion to the next meeting of the Council. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Knibb, at the April meeting the Council would consider: full council meeting on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month, Arden Hall Management Working Party (consisting no less than 5 councillors, plus Hall Manager, to report to full council) to meet on the 3rd Wednesday each month; also to consider either one meeting deals with Finance and General Purposes Committee matters and one meeting Leisure Services Committee matters or, depending on public input, that both meetings deal with any items arising or brought to the council.

Clerk
22/4

9. Email Communication.

Cllr Mrs. Haywood felt that email was a business tool but one that sometimes was not being used correctly within procedures of the council, as some matters that should have been done at Council were being inappropriately done by email. The Chairman invited comments. Cllr Mrs. Knibb stated she found it difficult to speak at meetings and had communication difficulties so it was easier to write down, consider things and then email afterwards. Some days she coped better than others but could not absorb information properly at meetings. Cllr Mrs. Haywood appreciated this but emails did not include all members and for those members who used a business email address it had caused serious problems at work as a result of the volume received. Cllr Knibb disputed that discussion had taken place as he had not received replies to the 12 emails he had sent. Cllr Harris agreed that work email addresses were not a good idea so he had a separate one, although he had not received replies either when asking for guidance. Cllr Mrs. Haywood found Cllr Knibb's emails too long and felt that business of the Council should be brought to Council meetings. Cllr Harris felt things should be sorted out behind the scenes. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins supported Cllr Mrs. Haywood and had not replied to the emails received on her personal email address to avoid unconsciously 'hiding' matters from others. Agendas had an area for questions from councillors. Cllr Hayes thought if emails had been more selective he would not have been stopped by his employer from receiving them. If emails had been sent just to the appropriate person, others would not have been overloaded so he suggested members be more selective and follow email etiquette. His work policy was to

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limit emails to 12 lines or speak to the person concerned. Cllr Mrs. Knibb said a record was needed of what transpired but accepted that her email address book needed corrections. She personally found it very difficult to make phone calls. The Chairman believed council business should be conducted at meetings and not done in cyberspace. Having now reviewed his contact availability, the Chairman was withdrawing his personal email address for use by members. He would allow the Clerk to use it to send him information on council business. Cllr Harris asked for his email address to be removed and asked if letters were needed to communicate with the Chairman. The Chairman replied that communication should be via the Clerk at the Council Office. Cllr Rashid felt it was down to individual choice for email arrangements and entirely a personal matter.

10. Working Party Arrangements.

Members discussed the requests made and agreed that the expertise and offers available be used by the working parties as follows:

An amendment **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **SECONDED** by Cllr Ward, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to separate the Events working party from Promotions and Marketing roles. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Miss Ward, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, the following membership was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**:

Events WP: Cllrs Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Haywood, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Knibb and Miss Ward;

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Harris, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, the following membership was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**:

Marketing and Promotions WP: Cllrs Harris, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Knibb and Hiley; the first meeting to list the objectives, aims and priorities for recommendation to Council.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hayes, with 10 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, the following membership was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**:

Standing Orders WP: Cllrs Knibb, Hayes, Harris, Riordan and Mrs. Knibb.

11. Payments.

Due to the approaching financial year end members had received schedule of invoice payments and the clerk had tabled the latest payroll costs for the current tax month. Following clarification of a query by the Chairman, **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 9 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the payments be approved.

12. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by the Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 6 votes in favour, no votes against and 4 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 4th March 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

13. Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, with 8 votes in favour, no votes against and 2 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday 25th February and 11th March 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Meeting
Tba

Meeting
Tba

14. Report of the Staffing Panel.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Rashid Ward, with 6 votes in favour, none against and 4 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the report be noted. In response to a question from Cllr Knibb, Cllr Mrs. Haywood was happy to clarify that although it was linked to a confidential matter advice was being sought on how the Council could move forward and when a reply was received it would be referred to the Buildings working party. Cllr Harris explained members were abstaining because they had not attended the meetings in question.

15. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on Saturday, 7th March she had the privilege of attending the Remembrance service of the War Widows Association at St. Paul's Cathedral in Birmingham which had been a very well attended national event.

On Sunday 8th March she had been pleased to attend the Volunteers Day at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens and on Thursday, 13th March she had also attended their Trustees meeting.

Cllr Knibb reported that on Tuesday, 3rd March he had attended the first meeting of the North Solihull School Governors Association at the newly built Kingshurst Junior School, which commenced with a tour of the school. On Thursday 5th March he had attended an all day inspection at Castle Bromwich Junior School, which encompassed teaching assessments and curriculum application in operation. It was a very enjoyable and informative day and he was sure that resulting reports when actioned would prove to further enhance the remarkable progress being achieved by the school and its pupils. On Monday 16th March he had attended the governors curriculum meeting where reports of the day inspection were discussed and recommendations made adopted. On Monday 23rd March, the governors Finance meeting was held when budgets and funding requirements for 2009/10 were agreed. Governors also acknowledged the successful completion of last year's spend and provision which included new systems and resources, furniture and playground development within budget and schedule. He complimented the staff and everyone connected with the schools developments and achievements during the past year and was confident that Castle Bromwich Junior School would continue to progress throughout the coming year.

Cllr Knibb read the report prepared by Cllr Mrs. Knibb – on Thursday 19th March, Cllr Knibb, Cllr Mrs. Knibb and the clerk had attended the Solihull Area Committee which included a presentation by Dave Pinwell, Chief Executive of Sustain, regarding the role of the third sector of which Parish Councils were generally considered to be a part, and their relationship with Sustain. He explained that Sustain had been contracted to provide a range of support services to the third sector and to take on the role of facilitating communication across the sector. He stated that Sustain would like to connect up with Parish Councils as there was evidence that there was strength in building better connections. The new Monitoring Officer at Solihull MBC felt Parish and Town Councils had a clear and important role to play and would attend the next SAC meeting to advise on the Charter agreement, representation on the Solihull Partnership, quality status and devolution of powers, and Parish Councillor surgeries. Two temporary representatives from SAC were appointed to serve on the Standards Committee until the next AGM meeting in July, and she was pleased to report that Cllr Knibb was one of those representatives. As requested by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr Knibb did ask about whether other local Parish Councils held councillor surgeries.

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Although none currently did, some were planning on doing so in the future, especially as it was considered best practice for quality status councils and it was agreed that the Monitoring Officer would be asked for guidance on appropriate procedures when he addressed the next meeting.

16. Report of the Officer of the Council.

Members noted that notification to residents was mentioned in discussion when the council decided to replace the Village Green benches and the Clerk tabled a draft letter, with map. **ON THE PROPOSITION** of the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 10 votes in favour, no votes against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to send letters as tabled and Cllr Mrs. Wilkins again offered to deliver them promptly before the planned installation date. The Clerk summarized the replies from members on the possible training dates which were duly considered. The Clerk undertook to confirm arrangements for Wednesday 15th April: the Monitoring Officer to undertake a Code of Conduct training; on 22nd April the Council to pay for Bill Robinson to provide induction/general procedural training/Q&A session. [Clerk's Note: Both events would commence at 7 pm.] Cllr Mrs. Terrie Knibb had written to request daytime training as evenings were not suitable. Following an approach by the Chairman of Friends of Acorns, Margaret and Albert Turner had been to see the Clerk to express their concerns about the recent complaint, which they believed was exaggerated. In the absence of seeing the emailed complaint, they were reluctant for the Council to spend excessive time and resources investigating the matter. The Clerk therefore suggested that the Hall Manager should report on the handling of the booking enquiry, as agreed by the Council during the public question session last month, to the next meeting of the Leisure Services Committee which was in line with the initial advice from WALC. Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens had asked the Clerk to act as a referee on their grant application form, which as the council's Proper Officer she had undertaken for other known community groups. They had asked for this to take place the following morning and members raised no objections. The Fusion Project had approached the Council to undertake sporting sessions in the Playing Fields later on Saturdays (6 pm onwards) as a diversionary measure from other areas. Members did not object to the provisional extension of this scheme activity for a trial period, subject to park opening hours and assistance at closing time, if required by the Park Warden. The Clerk tabled documents for members to consider at their future Committee meetings.

17. Report of the Chairman

The Chairman reported that on Friday 6th March he had attended the concert by the West Midlands Police Band at Arden Hall, organised by the Friends of Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens. He thanked the Friends for a most delightful evening which he had thoroughly enjoyed.

18. Land Matters.

There was no further information to report.