

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
 CASTLE BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
 HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
 ON WEDNESDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2009
 AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr J Riordan

Councillors: Cllr Mrs. P Allen Cllr M Hayes Cllr Mrs. T Knibb
 Cllr R Amos Cllr I Hiley [except Items 1,2 and part
 Cllr Mrs. A Haywood Cllr E Knibb 3,4&5]
 Cllr N Harris [except part Item 4] Cllr M Rashid
 [except part Item 9] Cllr A Terry
 [Items 1-9 only]

Guest Speaker: Mr. E Kent, West Midlands Autism Society [Items 3-4 only]

Officer: Mrs. C Tibbles, Clerk to the Council and RFO

Public: 1 member of the public [Except Item 17]

At the start of the meeting, reference was made to the blue information cards to remind members of the public that their participation was restricted by legislation to the section on the agenda for “Questions from the public”.

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr Mrs. J Smith, Cllr Miss J Ward and Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins were accepted for the reasons given.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

None declared. Cllr Knibb raised a point of order and referred to standing order 30b and declared that 4 members were not appropriately dressed. The Chairman suggested that the matter be an agenda item in November when an agreed definition of casual wear would be sought and members were in agreement with this.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

Members discussed the request of Cllr Harris to correct the minutes on 2 comments attributed to him and 1 to the Chairman. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, with 10 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the minute of Item 20 be corrected on page 4, line 12, to read “underused by the community and was excessively expensive to run (and quoted some of the high associated costs such as heating and lighting) and the overspend should be stopped not condoned” and on page 5, line 10, to read “obsessed with Arden Hall at the expense of other community possibilities, as there may be better ways of spending £215,000 in the community rather than on one facility that the majority of residents do not use.” Members respected the Chairman’s wish not to have his comments altered in the minutes. Following discussion, members agreed to consider the style of minutes at the next meeting. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hayes, with 10 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the amended Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 30th September, 2009 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meetings.

4. Guest Speaker – Mr. E. Kent, West Midlands Autism Society.

Mr. Kent explained that communication problems were a key part of autism and members listened to his presentation with interest. Mr. Kent was passionate about his work and recalled the sad treatment of a boy at school who was ‘different’. He explained the history

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and research into autism and described the key elements and misconceptions, estimating there were 200 people in Castle Bromwich with autism who would have varying degrees of difficulties with communication, expressing themselves and assimilating/repeating back information. Autistic people did not recognize non-verbal clues and some were prone to repetitive activities. Friendships were difficult because autistic people said what they thought when expressing themselves. He believed everyone was autistic to a certain extent. His society provided residential homes for adults, support services for families and aimed to improve lives for people with autism, hoping for legislative changes. Training of professionals was important to avoid sufferers being seen as anti-social, rude, tactless or aggressive and ID cards could be carried to show support services to prevent unnecessary arrests. He appealed for support for the society by sharing accurate information or financial help to expand services and improve diagnosis delays. Information booklets were available and he would be happy to help further. At the invitation of the chairman, members asked several questions and Mr. Kent spoke about late diagnoses of autism, education of school officials, lack of knowledge and awareness, irreparable damage to sufferers, 15 people per day nationally diagnosed, sensory shutdown and critical needs. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked Mr. Kent for a most informative presentation.

5. Questions from the Public.

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. Standing Orders were suspended so that members of the public could ask questions.

Mr. Holland, The Green, sympathized with members if views were misrepresented in minutes but knew that when he was attending recorded institute meetings people spoke far less. He asked if there were any developments on the use of the Birmingham refuse tip. Cllr Hayes had visited several times recently and not been asked for his address. Mr. Holland referred to the increase in advertising signage outside the Coach and Horses pub that he thought made Castle Bromwich look a mess and wondered if the marketing was a corporate decision by higher management. He asked if there were regulations preventing this or if a cumulative area was allowed? Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee did not recall any recent applications and the Clerk was asked to request Bor. Cllr Richards keep the Parish Council informed on the outcome of his investigations.

The Clerk gave feedback from a previous meeting and reported that the information about use by residents of the Birmingham refuse tip had been forwarded to the Borough Council.

6. Questions from Councillors.

None submitted.

7. Communications.

Members noted the information listed and were informed of the Gazette coverage of the community consultation and an invitation to the Castle Bromwich Youth and Community Partnership Make A Difference Day event to be held the next day.

8. Working Parties.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on Wednesday, 21st October she was not joined by members for the Village Green working party meeting so the following recommendations were made by her, in line with prior views expressed. Members were asked to consider cutting back overhanging branches in the Garden of Memory and replacing the two large conifers

with ornamental grasses to increase the light and feeling of space. She also recommended the dead shrubs be replaced under guarantee in the flower bed by Bradford Road at the Village Green, the broken branch be cut off a tree and the dead broom shrub and weeds be removed. Members discussed and **AGREED** with these recommendations. Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on 20th, 24th, 25th and 26th October the parish council had taken part in the Castle Bromwich Bulb Planting Festival. She thanked Parkfield Patient Participation Group, Friends in Retirement, Cllr Mrs. Haywood, Cllr Miss Ward, Cllr Mrs. Knibb and Michael Connor who had worked hard in several parts of Castle Bromwich. Cllr Harris thanked Cllr Mrs. Allen for her work on this project. Cllr Amos had helped with manure and Cllr Terry offered to help remove the conifers. Costs would be investigated for a future meeting and the Clerk would remind the Wardens about removing low branches.

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9. Proposed Motion by Cllr Hayes.

Cllr Hayes suggested deferring the motion but on reflection felt it best to proceed. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, he asked members consider that as currently both committees have a maximum of 10 councillors appointed at the start of the council year, the maximum number be removed thus allowing any councillor willing to volunteer to serve on both committees to do so. Any councillors who want to serve on both committees must understand that the committee they volunteer to serve on is in addition to the one they are already appointed to and they must give written confirmation that they understand and accept his. Cllr Hayes proposed this system be put into effect as soon as possible and be reviewed in May 2010 when the committee appointments were set for 2010/2011. In line with standing orders, this would be adjourned for one month and would be duly considered at the November meeting, ensuring compliance with the six month rule.

10. Completion of Audit

The Clerk reported the successful completion of the External Audit and External Auditors report. The Clerk apologized for again circulating correspondence with the auditor that had already been done in July and September. The closure of audit would be complied with. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

11. Finance Training

Members noted the offer of the Responsible Finance Officer to provide in-house training to all members on budget setting and financial management. In accordance with the training policy, requests should be submitted via the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11th November. This would take place before the budget planning for 2010/2011.

12. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Allen, with 8 votes in favour, no votes against and 2 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 7th October 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

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

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, with 8 votes in favour, no votes against and 2 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday 29th July and 9th September 2009, having

been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

14. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

The Chairman reported that on 1st October he had attended the WALC Solihull Area Committee meeting held in Balsall Common. The guest speaker was Alison Hodge, County Secretary of WALC. She talked about WALC and the service they offered to parish councils. She explained that 25% of our WALC fees goes to NALC and one benefit of this is that the Council had access to their Legal Services team and hence could get advice on many legal matters affecting parish councils. Later in the meeting the Solihull Area Committee identified items for the agenda for a joint meeting between Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and chairs of parish councils. SMBC would be represented by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and cabinet members. Top of the SAC agenda was the Solihull Partnership Board and the fact that parish councils were not represented on this Board.

On October 8th, Cllr Riordan had attended the WALC County Committee Meeting held in Warwick. Four budget options for the next financial year were discussed and a budget was recommended which included an increase of 1% in the affiliation fees. A report was presented on the NALC AGM and conference held in September.

15. Report of the Officer of the Council.

Members noted that the Clerk had been supported by the book-keeper to research information for the financial investigation, which had been prioritised. As the integrity of previous councils and their decisions had been questioned Cllr Hayes had met independently with the book keeper and would no doubt report to members in due course. Cllr Hayes added that he intended to report fully to Council at the November meeting. He had sought advice and thoughts from Peter Lacey, Somerset Association of Local Councils and information from Clement Keys. The book-keeper had valuable experience to offer as she audited 19 parish councils. The Clerk added that unfortunately there had been a serious computer failure necessitating emergency repairs to the server and considerable disruption to normal work for staff. Service to customers had been maintained and more details would follow to committees. Members were asked to reply to invitations for forthcoming events.

16. Report of the Chairman

The Chairman reported that on Friday, 9th October he had been pleased to attend the Chairman's Charity Quiz Night and thanked everyone who had helped with the event. The work of the quizmaster and his team had been much appreciated and just over £200 had been raised for the Chairman's Charity Fund.

17. Land Matters.

Under confidential terms, members considered the professional advice received. After discussion, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hayes, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the solicitor be instructed that the requirements be met or the matter be closed.

Clerk
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