

Castle Bromwich Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE PAVILION, ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
WEDNESDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2019, 7.00PM



Committee members: S Beechey (C'ttee Chairman), Mrs A Haywood (vice-Chairman), Mrs A Ahmed, Mrs P Allen, E Knibb, D Hinsley, J MacDonald, K McCoy, Mrs R Shaikh, K Shaw

Committee quorum is 4 members.

Present Cllrs: S Beechey, Committee Chairman
Mrs A Ahmed
Mrs P Allen
D Hinsley
J MacDonald* (arrived late, with apologies)
Mrs R Shaikh
K Shaw

Officers: Ms C Carruthers – Financial Advisor via Rialtas
Mrs G Lungley – Support Officer

Members of the public: none

F&GP **To note apologies for absence**
19-11/1 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Mrs A Haywood (committee
001 vice-chairman), E Knibb and K McCoy.

F&GP **To receive members' declarations of disclosable interests**
19-11/1 None received
002

F&GP **To note members' dispensations, and consider any dispensation requests if
any**
19-11/1 None received
003

F&GP Transcription error; agenda item 4 repeated agenda item 3.
19-11/1
004

F&GP **Public Forum - To hear from members of the public**
19-11/1 None present
005

F&GP **To receive and consider the minutes of the previous meetings**
19-11/1 The draft minutes of the committee meetings held 9th and 30th October were to be
006 presented for approval, however the draft for the meeting held 09/10/2019 was not
yet available.
The draft minutes for the meeting held 30/10/2019 were approved and will be
signed by the chairman upon presentation of the non-draft document.

F&GP **To consider and comment on the following planning applications notified:**
19-11/1 **PL/2019/02582/TPO 249 Bradford Gardens Castle Bromwich Solihull B36 9AG**
007 Cut back branches of 1 No oak tree overhanging into rear garden of 247 & 249
Bradford Road, by 3-4 metres.
CBPC Comment: Would approve subject to tree officer's opinion.

PL/2019/02754/TCA Dabar Rectory Lane Castle Bromwich Solihull B36 9DH
3m crown reduction on 1 No lime tree in front garden

CBPC Comment: Would approve subject to tree officer's opinion.

PL/2019/02700/MINFHO 35 Beechcroft Road Castle Bromwich B36 9SJ

Single storey rear extension

CBPC Comment: Would approve subject to neighbours' comments.

PL/2019/02687/NONMC 80 Hawthorne Road Castle Bromwich Solihull B36 0HJ

Non-material amendment for alteration to roof – lowering soffit to allow the flat roof cap to allow the flat roof cap to be omitted and insertion of 2 No obscure glazed windows to side elevation on planning approval **PL/2019/01009/MINFHO**

CBPC Comment: Would approve subject to neighbours' comments.

PL/2019/02598/MIODW 101 Chester Road Solihull B36 9DS

Outline planning application for the erection of 2 No dwellings with means of access and layout being determined (matters of appearance, landscaping & scale reserved). Renewal of planning approval **PL/2016/02645/PPOL**

CBPC Comment: Would approve subject to neighbours' comments.

F&GP
19-11/1
008

Finance and payments: To receive and consider the income and expenditure reports to date

Ms Carruthers spoke to this item. Due to technological problems in the parish council office that have not been resolved for the last three months, it has not been possible for her to provide current financial information or a bank reconciliation. Although Ms Carruthers had been on site all day she had been unable to carry out the expected work.

Despite this there were bills to be paid; it had been possible to produce a list of payments as this did not require the same IT input and was not therefore subject to the same glitch. Some of the invoices were for work outside the approved budget; the list was presented for approval and signed off by the committee Chairman.

F&GP
19-11/1
009

Bars: update on progress following handover to in-house management

This item was included on this agenda to ensure appropriate consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the risks involved in the new undertaking.

Cllr Mrs Allen reported the bars were well run on the first evening (09/11/2019) with just a few teething problems regarding operation of the new tills, but no complaints.

F&GP
19-11/1
010

Budget planning 2020/21

To consider the position for the next financial year relating to income and expenditure with a view to setting the precept for 2020/21

Ms Carruthers took the committee through the preparation of the budget for 2020/21 by referring to the finance report of 30/11/2018. It was noted that only a few of the identified Capital Health and Safety works for this financial year had yet been completed.

A thorough inspection of the report ensued with a review of each budget heading and options to decrease or increase on last year as well as some rationalisation of cost centres; for instance it seems unwieldy to split wages across the pavilion and the open spaces rather than include all under one cost centre.

The committee's attention was drawn to the lack of any financial planning for the re-introduction of the bars; however it was stated the decision to take the bars back in house, as discussed at the Extraordinary Meeting held 24/10/2019, was forced upon the council by the withdrawal of the independent management company giving short notice.

With regard to the budget for 2020/21 it was possible to foresee savings, however these would likely be overridden by the following:

- Bar costs (all incomings and outgoings)
- Arden Hall CCTV ongoing support programme
- Arden Hall capital projects
- Pavilion capital projects
- Professional fees and services

Additionally, rather than remain static it was recommended that an inflationary rise of 2.7% is included.

It was noted that last year's precept of £327,624 had an impact on the Band D council taxpayer of £83.79.

F&GP
19-11/1
011

Renewal of electricity framework agreement

To consider renewal of Espo contract

This was not considered at this time; it will be considered nearer to the date of contract renewal.

F&GP
19-11/1
012

Computers: to consider updates to improvements to the office-based computer set-up including installation of wi-fi at Arden Hall

- i. Members were disappointed that the IT issues that prevented the preparation of the council's finances had not yet been fixed. It was noted Ms Carruthers would be returning in two weeks' time and members agreed to the pressing need to resolve the immediate problems by then.
- ii. Members agreed to move forward with measures to overhaul the council's IT operations and working with the support of Cllr D Hinsley the office staff would be tasked with arranging a specification and seeking quotes for the work required.

F&GP
19-11/1
013

External Auditor's Report: to note the final report from the External Auditor to the 2018/19 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

It was noted that due to the late submission of the AGAR, the External Auditor had been unable to complete the audit by the required date of 30/09/2019.

A holding statement had therefore been issued, followed by the final report that is now published on the Castle Bromwich PC website, as follows:

Final External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19 in respect of Castle Bromwich Parish Council WA0050

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2019; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below).

Our work does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

External auditor report 2018/19

On 29 September 2019, we issued a report detailing the results of our limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of this authority's Annual Governance &

Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2019. We explained that we were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. We are now in a position to certify completion of the review. The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return requires amendments as follows:

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The smaller authority failed to approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2019, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2019/20 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2020/21.

External auditor certificate 2018/19

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2019.

PKF Littlejohn LLP 30/09/2019.

F&GP
19-11/1
014

To receive a report from the Support Officer

As follows:

014.1 To review and update the council's Financial Regulations

The NALC model Financial Regulations have been updated and it was noted this council's Financial Regulations do not comply with current legislation on for example the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Support Officer will review and prepare an updated version for council approval.

014.2 To review this committee's Terms of Reference

Members agreed to seek consideration of this item at the Council meeting to be held on 27/11/2019.

014.3 To appoint the Independent Internal Auditor for 2019/20 financial year

Members agreed to the requirement to seek a minimum of three quotations for this work to be undertaken.

In addition, due to the reduction of appropriate office staff, members agreed to arrange for a mid-term independent internal audit. The Support Officer will report to the next meeting of this committee on progress.

014.4 To review compliance with Local Government Transparency Code 2015

It was noted the council is not currently complying with the requirements of this Transparency Code which requires the publication of specific data on its website. Efforts would be made within the council office to address this in association with the following item...

014.5 **To acknowledge the minimum requirements for the council's website**
It was noted the office staff do not have direct access to the website and are unable to upload documents to or amend information. Arrangements had been made for the creation of a new website in association with Meriden and Hampton in Arden parish councils, which was apparently only awaiting photographs in advance of going live. However the office staff will still be unable to have any control over the new website, which was unsatisfactory in today's fast-paced environment.

014.6 **To review the Support Officer's remit and comment**
The Support Officer had been appointed on a part-time temporary basis to assist the council to deal with the current workload and move forward, starting on 16/10/2019. Although a basic initial impression of the current position was voiced, a full report would be provided in due course.

The time being 10pm a resolution was passed to suspend Standing Order 3aa to allow for discussion to continue beyond 2½ hours.
Cllrs Mrs A Ahmed and Mrs R Shaikh apologised but had to leave the meeting.

F&GP **Members' questions and suggestions for items for the next meeting**
19-11/1 This item was not considered.

015

F&GP **Resolution to exclude the public to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to staffing levels and particular member of staff.**
19-11/1

016 It was resolved to close the meeting to the public.

F&GP **1) Consideration of staffing levels**
19-11/1 The suggestion to create a Staffing Committee would be put to the next meeting of the council.

017

2) Consideration of renewal of contract for staff member

The recommendation to renew for a further three months the contract for a named staff member would be put to the next meeting of the council.

F&GP **Date and time of next meetings of this committee:**
19-11/1 - Planning and licencing matters to be considered on 27/11/2019 (7pm)
018 - Full committee will meet on 11/12/2019

This meeting ended at 10.35pm

.....
Signed as a true record of what took place
Chairman, Finance and General Purposes Committee

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Dated

The following page shows the payment list approved at minute no. 19/11-1, 008 above.

Payments list approved at minute no. 19/11-1, 008 above

Date of Inv.	Reason for payment	Amt
01.07.2019	Bookkeeping (July)	£ 348.00
01.07.2019	Bookkeeping (July)	£ 512.64
01.10.2019	Bookeeping (Oct)	£ 512.64
01.10.2019	IT services (Oct)	£ 271.20
01.10.2019	CCTV support	£ 76.79
02.10.2019	IT support (Oct)	£ 90.00
03.10.2019	IT support (Oct)	£ 116.82
07.10.2019	Telephones	£ 88.24
07.10.2019	Bank charges	£ 20.00
07.10.2019	Bar stewardship/hall support	£ 356.25
07.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 4.68
07.10.2019	Play equipment	£ 327.17
08.10.2019	Chairman's expenses	£ 10.00
10.10.2019	Posts, grounds maintenance	£ 156.42
10.10.2019	Energy	£ 60.53
10.10.2019	Energy	£ 483.50
10.10.2019	Energy	£ 1,409.58
10.10.2019	Energy	£ 2,048.58
11.10.2019	Printing/scanner/copier	£ 157.56
13.03.2019	Rates (Oct)	£ 1,215.00
13.10.2019	Bar stewardship/hall support	£ 231.25
14.10.2019	Annual play safety report	£ 195.60
15.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 178.50
15.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 62.42
17.10.2019	CCTV installation	£ 10,678.80
21.10.2019	Bar steward expenses	£ 143.75
21.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 7.74
23.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 13.50
24.10.2019	SMBC support	£ 197.97
24.10.2019	Final bar invoice	£ 720.00
25.09.2019	Office expenses	£ 2.25
25.10.2019	New tills for bars	£ 2,876.40
25.10.2019	Councillor training	£ 30.00
26.09.2019	Office expenses	£ 14.90
28.10.2019	Catering supplies	£ 92.53
28.10.2019	Bar steward expenses	£ 250.04
30.10.2019	Chairman's expenses	£ 23.67
30.10.2019	Bar stock	£ 832.06
31.10.2019	Bin emptying (Oct)	£ 761.40
31.10.2019	Hosted telephony (Oct)	£ 47.94
31.10.2019	Telephone services	£ 25.43
31.10.2019	Telephone services	£ 1.19
31.10.2019	Telephone services	£ 2.32
31.10.2019	Telephone services	£ 7.45