

Castle Bromwich Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ONLINE (via ZOOM)
WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE 2020, 6.30PM



Council members: Mrs P Allen (Chairman), E Knibb (vice-Chairman), Mrs A Ahmed, S Beechey, Mrs A Haywood, D Hinsley, J MacDonald, K McCoy, J Riordan, Mrs R Shaikh, K Shaw, M Strong, Miss J Ward
+ two vacancies

Present Cllrs: Mrs P Allen - Chairman
Mrs A Ahmed Shaikh
Mrs A Haywood
D Hinsley
E Knibb – vice-chairman
J Macdonald
J Riordan
Mrs R Shaikh (present from minute no 20/05-08 onwards)
K Shaw
Miss J Ward

Members of the public:

- SMBC member Coun Ted Richards
- Mr Martin Clifford, Castle Bromwich Cricket and Social Club
- Mr Andy Hunter, SMBC Community Development Team

Officers: Mrs Y Smith, Acting Clerk and Mrs G Lungley – Support Officer

20/06-01

Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Mrs Allen welcomed all to the online meeting of the Council and reminded all of the policy for holding meetings online.
Cllr Mrs Allen notified the meeting of restricted hours arrangements for the re-opening of Castle Bromwich Hall gardens.

20/06-02

To note apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S Beechey (unwell), K McCoy (employment commitments), M Strong (employment commitments)

20/06-03

To receive members' declarations of disclosable interests

None received.

20/06-04

To receive and consider members' dispensation requests, if any

None requested.

20/06-05

Public Question Time

- Mr Martin Clifford, Chairman Castle Bromwich Cricket and Social Club. The Club has received significant support funding from Sport England which has helped them clear the outstanding balance owed to the parish council and will support the planned refurbishment of the pavilion. The plans have yet to be shared with the council but this will be carried out as soon as possible. The club is hoping to be able to meet socially in the pavilion again from 04/07/2020 and asked if this would receive council approval. The Council Chairman sought to ensure compliance with all health and safety guidelines.

- ii. Mr Andy Hunter, SMBC Community Development Team shared information about the work of the team which consists of 9 people, one of whom will work within Castle Bromwich. The team looks at the strengths of the community and its assets, bringing them together to support coherent stronger communities through supporting resident-led initiatives. The team will come out to meet with residents who have ideas for making a difference.
- iii. Coun Ted Richards was asked about the suspension of disabled parking bays in the centre of Solihull.

20/06-06 **To approve the minutes of the council meeting held on 27/05/2020**

The minutes of the ordinary council meeting held on 27/05/2020 were: **AGREED** as a true record.
Two members abstained from the vote.

20/06-07 **To note** the creation of a casual vacancy due to a member's non-attendance at any council-related meeting for more than six months and to heed the advice from the SMBC Monitoring Officer.

It was noted that a casual vacancy had occurred due to Cllr M Rashid's non-attendance at any council meeting over the preceding six months. The vacancy would be advertised and if there is a call for a by-election then that would not be held before May 2021 due to Coronavirus regulations.

20/06-08 To provide comment to the following planning application:

Application ref:	PL/2020/01109/MINFOT
Address:	146 Green Lane, Castle Bromwich Solihull B36 0BX
Proposal:	Loft conversion to accommodate new flat.
PC Comment:	This would be acceptable as a neighbouring shop already has similar frontage to the main road therefore the parish council would approve subject to neighbours comments.
And to note the following decision made by SMBC:	
Application ref:	PL/2020/00714/MINFHO
Address:	8 Marlborough Road, Castle Bromwich Solihull B36 0EH
Proposal:	Single storey side & front porch extensions.
SMBC decision	Permission granted

20/06-09 **Committee meeting updates**

a) **Leisure Services Committee meeting held 03/06/2020**

The draft minutes of the meeting were noted.

Questions were put regarding

- payment for the asbestos removal and the date of accounting for this.
- Quotes for the double ditch and mound at Bradford Gardens

b) **Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held 10/06/2020**

The draft minutes of the meeting were noted, following which:

- i. A claim for financial support during Covid-19 restrictions had been made on the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund operated through SMBC.
- ii. The Internal Interim Audit Report and Action Plan was being worked on by the working party, and the requirement to provide each member with a paper copy of 'Proper Practices' by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance had been met.
- iii. **Approval of revised Standing Orders:**
It was AGREED to adopt the revised Standing Orders

- iv. **Approval of revised Financial Regulations:**
It was AGREED to adopt the revised Financial Regulations
- v. **Approval of Internal Controls Policy**
The wording relating to the review of effectiveness (page 2) would be changed to delete 'Finance & Staffing Committee' and add 'the Finance and General Purposes and the Leisure Services Committees'.
It was AGREED to adopt the Internal Controls Policy
- vi. **Approval of the Statement of Internal Financial Controls**
It was AGREED to adopt the Statement of Internal Financial Controls
- vii. **To note the Annual Internal Audit report**
Each response, A to K, from the internal auditor was separately reviewed by the Council and noted. Members appreciated the unsuitable situation was due to lack of professional support and they were moving towards redressing this through advice provided by the Support Officer and with the intention to appoint a new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.
- viii. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement**
It was noted a copy of the External Auditor's detailed instructions relating to the AGAR for the year ending 31 March 2020 had been circulated to all members by email. Members discussed each assertion in detail.
- Assertion 1: Even though the council's Income & Expenditure accounting and the Accounts and Audit Regulations require the cost of the asbestos removal works to be recorded as an expenditure in the 2019/20 financial year despite the bill not yet having been paid, 4 members voted 'No'; 6 members voted 'yes' to agree the accounting statements had been prepared in accordance with Accounts and Audit regulations.
- Assertion 2: Bearing in mind the Internal Auditor's report, members could not confidently answer 'yes' and so ticked 'no' due to the late attention to its internal controls arising from loss of professional support during the year and then the Coronavirus pandemic that hindered forward progress on this issue.
- Assertion 3: The majority of members were confident they had not acted illegally during the year and had been preparing to take action before the end of the financial year to ensure compliance with Proper Practices; 'yes' was ticked.
- Assertion 4: Members were aware they could not tick 'yes' to this because of the comments provided by the External Auditor last year to the non-compliance with the period of public inspection in 2019 regarding the 2018/19 accounts; the situation had arisen due to absence of key staff at that time.
- Assertion 5: Members ticked 'no' to this since the appropriate risk management steps had not been taken during the relevant financial year, despite intention to do so and subsequent remedial actions.
- Assertion 6: Members ticked 'yes' to this as a both an interim internal audit and an end-of-year internal audit had been carried out.
- Assertion 7: Members ticked 'yes' to this as the council had taken appropriate action following receipt of the External Auditor's comments to last year's audit and the council is working through the recommendations arising from this year's internal audit.
- Assertion 8: The majority of members were confident the council has disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year, including events taking place after the year end; 'yes' was ticked.
- Assertion 9: Not applicable.

- ix. **The Annual Accounting Statements**
Members approved the Accounting Statements, with three abstentions.
- x. **The Council's financial position to 31/05/2020**
Members reviewed the comparison between actual receipts and payments to the budget. It was noted the Hall income for the first quarter was considerably reduced due to the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown which saw 2 members of Hall staff furloughed via HMRC Job Retention Scheme because their income is provided through hall lettings; three of the park wardens had also been furloughed whilst the Arden Hall park had been closed, but not via JRS because their wages are paid via precept income.
Concern was expressed about the way in which the cost of the asbestos removal works would be shown in the accounts when the bill is paid; further advice would be sought on this matter.

Cllr E Knibb left the meeting

c) Staffing Committee

Meetings were held 16/06/2020 and 22/06/2020.

One of the committee members had resigned from the Staffing Committee and the committee Chairman asked for another council member to join the committee; no one present volunteered to take part.

The draft minutes of the meetings were noted. Arising from which members were asked to approve, as part of the application pack:

- The Clerk's job description (as circulated and read out) **APPROVED** following discussion on the Clerk's membership to SLCC which was agreed as a useful tool for the Clerk to meet the expectations of the role and meet continuous professional development targets.

Point of order: the time being 9pm members were asked to agree to continue to 9.30pm. On being put to the vote, the majority of members present agreed to continue to 9.30pm

- The job evaluation had been undertaken to assess the pay grade for the Clerk's position which was LC3 below substantive range, SCP 33 - 36, currently £35,934 – £38,813 pa full-time.
- The options for advertising were provided. After the advert was read out it was **AGREED** to advertise via WALC and WM Jobs.

20/06-10

Website accessibility

Members were asked to ensure the parish council website complies with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Cllrs D Hinsley and Mrs R Shaikh agreed to look into this.

20/06-11

To note:

- a) Members Code of Conduct: survey on the standards expected of local authority members is open for members to comment until 17/08/2020 (next agenda)
- b) Policing arrangements in Castle Bromwich: the local police are keen to liaise with the parish council and possibly make use of the premises for meetings.
- c) West Midlands Action to meet Climate Challenge: not discussed (next agenda)

Cllr Mrs A Haywood left the meeting.

20/06-12

Council office report

In brief, it was reported:

- Staff are to continue with review and disposal of old paperwork
- Members are to be asked to agree to disposal of obsolete office equipment
- Staff are preparing to re-open Arden Hall closely following government guidance

- The resumption of team sports is expected imminently, but again working within the government guidance for safe play and following consultation with the council's insurers. Everyone taking part and all hirers are to be notified of their responsibilities

20/06-13 **Closure of meeting for confidential business**

There was no requirement for this motion.

20/06-14 **Date of next meetings, all starting at 6.30pm:**

- Leisure Services Committee will meet on 01/07/2020
- Finance and General Purposes Committee will meet on 08/07/2020
- Full Council will meet on Wednesday 29/07/2020

This meeting ended at 9.30pm

.....
Signed as a true record of the business transacted
Chairman Castle Bromwich Parish Council

Dated

DRAFT