

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
CASTLE BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 31 JANUARY 2018 AT 7.30 pm**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr Mrs P Allen

Councillors: Cllr W Horkan Cllr S Beechey Cllr J MacDonald
 Cllr Miss J Ward Cllr K Shaw Cllr J Riordan
 Cllr M Strong Cllr Mrs A Ahmed Cllr M Rashid
 Cllr Mrs R Shaikh Cllr Mrs A Haywood

Officers: Mrs D Weir, Acting Clerk to the Council
 Mrs Yvonne Smith

Members of the Public: 3

1. Apologies for absence.

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record to be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Cllrs Knibb, Cupples and Rashid had tendered apologies. Members noted the reasons given.

RESOLVED: that the apologies given be accepted.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

Members to declare any interest they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the relevant authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

RESOLVED: Cllr Mrs Allen and Cllr Riordan declared an interest in item 25.

3. Dispensations.

None requested.

4. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council may exercise their right to exclude the public and press by resolution from a closed meeting due to the confidential nature to be discussed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 29th November 2018, having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the Meeting. There was 1 abstention. The Working Party Note of the meeting held on 4th October 2017 had been circulated and noted.

6. Questions from Councillors.

None received.

7. Questions from the Public.

The Chairman temporarily suspended Standing Orders to allow an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions. Mr Beebee queried the position with regard to HS2 and referred to a leaflet put through his door which advised that double the amount of HS2 vehicles would be passing through Castle Bromwich. Cllr Mrs Allen responded by saying that Cllr Ted Richards had spoken to her and said that the lorry drivers working for HS2 preferred a route which did not impact as much on Castle Bromwich. Mr Beebee also voiced concern regarding air traffic over Castle Bromwich.

Cllr MacDonald advised that a response to the consultation was expected from BAL in February and suggested waiting until new flight paths have been agreed by CAA before further action can be taken. Cllr Horkan gave an update on the email which had been forwarded to him by an Officer on behalf of the Aviation Environment Federation, the UK's sole NGO campaigning exclusively on the environmental impacts of aviation and wishing to talk to him with regard to the BAL's consultation approach and the proposed changes. Members agreed that Cllr Horkan should contact the Officer. Mrs Beebee asked if anything could be done regarding irresponsible parking on local roads in Castle Bromwich, including outside the card shop (opposite Janes Café) on Manor Park Road. She complained that one retailer parked on the pavement blocking access. Also cars parked on the slope on Chester Road outside the dentist and she had witnessed a motorized vehicle user having to go onto the road to get past the vehicle, also drivers were irresponsibly parking vehicles by Tesco's. Members asked the Acting Clerk to request that mobile traffic wardens visit local roads in Castle Bromwich.

8. Communications.

Members noted recent correspondence and bulletins received, including Recent correspondence and bulletins, including: Solihull MBC Press Releases – Get creative for Malvern Park - annual flower bed design competition / Residential parking restrictions lifted over Christmas / Model Climate Change Conference with local schools / Proposed Parish Council Changes in Catherine- de-Barnes and Hampton in Arden – Petition requesting Community Governance Review to incorporate Catherine-de-Barnes into the Hampton in Arden Parish Council boundary / Applications open to stand for UK Youth Parliament / NALC Newsletter / Balfour Beattie - M6 junction 2 to 4 SMP - Public Information Exhibitions – Smart Motorway Project.

9. Proposed Budget Plan 2018/19

Members considered the report given by Cllr Horkan, Chair of the Councils Finance & General Purposes Committee. He advised that the proposed budget plan had been considered by the Working Party Meeting to which all councillors had been invited to attend. Cllr Horkan advised that he had applied trend analysis and looked at the accounts for the past 10 years to understand the overall position and whether the accounts were going up or down, and looking at projection and trying to estimate where the Council was going over the next few years to get the budget right. He had looked at the worst case scenario identified by the Council's professional advisors in order to arrive at a realistic budget such as unforeseen legal and other professional costs which needed to be catered for. He advised that he considered the Council should be increasing its precept to £297,000. Cllr Riordan felt that this was far too high an increase. Cllr Horkan advised that there had been no increase in the precept for a number of years and essential remedial work to the Pavilion and Arden Hall had not been undertaken. This year there had been major items of expenditure, including the significant cost of replacing the roof of Arden Hall which had amounted to in excess of £130,000 and also the pavilion where urgent remedial work had been required. Cllr Horkan advised members they needed to have regard to the increased expenditure incurred throughout this financial year and he considered the Council had no alternative but to increase the precept to cater for increased operating costs and other work required to be undertaken. He advised that the Council should have been increasing the precept over the years and had regard to work which had been identified, but not undertaken. Members were in agreement with the draft budget plan providing for an increase in precept to £297,839. Cllr Riordan voted against the proposal, the Chairman abstained from voting.

RESOLVED: that the draft budget be approved with the proposed increase in precept to £297,839.

10. Reserves & Contingencies

RESOLVED: that Reserves and Contingencies remain at the same level.

11. Council Tax Base – 2018/19

Members considered the provisional council tax base and provisional council tax support grant arrangements for 2018/19. They noted the reduction in the grant to £3,070 and a slight increase in the number of Band D equivalent dwellings from 3,876 to 3,906. Cllr Horkan advised that one of two issues which impacted on the precept should be considered under confidential terms. The Acting Clerk advised that consideration of the precept should be considered in open session.

Members had regard to the previous review of the Budget Plan and significant budget items, the report given by Cllr Horkan which had been considered and the recommendation of the Working Party. Members also had regard to advice received from it's professional advisors.

RESOLVED: that the precept be increased to £297,839.

12. Appointment of Internal Auditor

RESOLVED: that the Acting Clerk obtain a quotation from the Internal Auditor for provision of internal audit service for 2017/2018.

13. General Data Protection Regulations

Members considered the requirement for a Data Protection Officer and noted that WALC are in discussion with principal authorities regarding provision of this service and advice that the legislation is still changing and is likely to do so well into next year but that budgetary provision was required to be made.

Members noted that this would be a standing agenda item, pending receipt of advice from WALC. Cllr MacDonald expressed an interest in attending any data protection workshops.

14. Email Addresses – Councillors

Cllr Horkan considered it would be beneficial to do more with technology and there was a need for group email addresses for the various Committees and suggested a working party to discuss technology, communications and social media. The Acting Clerk to arrange to meet with the IT Company.

RESOLVED: that this item be deferred for further information to be obtained.

15. Notification of External Auditor appointments 2018/19

RESOLVED: that members note the following:

Under powers set out in Regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd (SAAA) was appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government as "a person specified to appoint local auditors" and as the Sector Led Body (SLB) for smaller authorities. Smaller authorities are those whose gross annual income or expenditure is less than £6.5 million.

Under the Regulations, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities, for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms.

During 2016 various communications outlined that smaller authorities would be 'opted-in' to the new central procurement regime managed by SAAA unless they expressly decided to 'opt-out' and correctly followed the various procedures required under statute to appoint their own external auditors.

Your authority is opted-in to the central procurement process and therefore an external auditor has been appointed for your authority for the 5 year period commencing with the financial year 2017/18. The contact details of your appointed external auditor and

fee scales are shown in the attached appendix, and can also be found on our website.

The approach applied to making these appointments was described last year on the SAAA website at <http://www.localaudits.co.uk/appts.html>. The approach follows the established practice of grouping auditor appointments for Town and Parish Councils by county area. Drainage Authorities and other bodies all have the same audit firm appointed. The audit firms all have previous experience of conducting limited assurance reviews for smaller bodies and have dedicated personnel to support communications. SAAA will monitor the performance of the appointed firms in providing limited assurance audit services in terms of quality and compliance with their statutory terms of appointment.

If your authority has any potential conflict of interest relating to the auditor appointment, for instance if a Councillor, or close relation is employed by the appointed auditor, you should advise SAAA immediately.

Exempt authorities

There are various changes to the legislation taking effect from 2017/18, most notably the potential for authorities where the higher of income or expenditure for the year was £25,000 or less, to declare themselves as 'exempt' from a limited assurance review by an external auditor if they meet certain qualifying criteria.

However, all authorities, even if they declare themselves 'exempt', will still need to fully complete and publish an annual return and must still have a named appointed auditor to deal with questions or objections from local electors about the accounts. Opted in authorities have already had an auditor appointed for them by SAAA.

The Annual Return

The Annual Return will now be known as the "Annual Governance and Accountability Return" and will need to be completed in accordance "proper practices" as set out in 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, a Practitioners' Guide', and then be published in accordance with the applicable Transparency Codes.

The new, Annual Governance and Accountability Return forms will be sent out by your appointed auditor electronically at the end of the financial year. It is assumed that your authority is willing and able to accept documents electronically by e-mail unless you specifically advise SAAA to the contrary no later than 31 December 2017. The return can either be completed electronically or printed off and completed manually.

Advice and assistance is available from the various sector membership organisations, namely: National Association of Local Councils and County Associations - www.nalc.gov.uk / Society of Local Council Clerks - www.slcc.co.uk

16. Castle Bromwich Airport Forum

This item had been reported on during Item 7.

17. Access at Small Green

Members noted that responses to the letters sent to residents had been forwarded to the Parish Council's solicitor, and her advice was awaited. Members also noted that Notice of appeal had been received regarding the Borough Council's Planning

Authority Decision for 39B The Green which was on the Finance & General Purposes Agenda.

18.Review of Risk Register

Following review by members it was agreed that the Risk Schedule as updated was an accurate reflection and would be signed at the next meeting. Members noted that a Working Party Meeting would need to be arranged for the inspection of the Councils assets. The Acting Clerk suggested that the Working Party could also look at the facilities at Arden Hall.

19.Chairman’s Charity Quiz

The next quiz has been arranged for Friday 9th March. Cllr Shaw asked if Cola’s Fish & Chips Saloon could be contacted nearer the time with confirmation of numbers.

20.Request to use Bradford Gardens to make film

Members had been provided with details of a request made by a group of youths to film on Bradford Gardens. The Acting Clerk advised that the Group have since found another venue and no longer required the use of Bradford Gardens.

21.SLCC – Subscription

The Acting Clerk advised members that Finance & General Purposes had approved that herself and the Interim Assistant Clerk attend the SLCC Practitioners’ Conference. Members considered payment of subscription fees. Cllr Horkan advised there was a need to be professional and show alignment to professional bodies.

RESOLVED: that the Council pay the SLCC subscription fees to enable its Officers to be corporate members of their professional body.

22.Finance and Payments

a) Income and Expenditure Report. The latest income and expenditure report was noted, and the latest bank statements and reconciliations approved.

b) Payments and Salaries. Members considered the list of payments and salaries for retrospective approval and scrutinized the invoices presented. There was a query regarding payment of an invoice for a gas canister which members felt should be met by the bar management company.

RESOLVED: that the payments presented be approved with the exception of the invoice from Horizon.

c) Income – members noted receipt of payment of £1566.70 from Leisure Bars Ltd.

24. Review of Standing Orders

RESOLVED: that a Working Party Meeting be arranged for members to review the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

25. Report of Staff Panel

The meeting went into confidential session for the Chairman of the Staff Panel to update members on recent staffing matters.

25. EAT – Update

The Staff Panel provided an update in confidential session. Members noted that the Hearing Date had been postponed.

26. Report of Leisure Services Committee

The Minutes of the January Leisure Services Committee Meeting had been circulated for information.

27. Report of Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Minutes of the January Meeting had been circulated. The meeting in December had been cancelled.

28. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Representatives reports were noted.

29. Report of the Chairman.

The Chairman presented her report, a copy of which had been tabled.

30. Report of the Officers of the Council.

Members noted that the Acting Clerk had accepted the quotation for repairs to the roof, the work and lowest quotation having been approved by the Loss Adjuster.

Members requested that the Table Top Sale be formally considered by Leisure Services Committee in order that the formalities could be approved.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm.