

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH MARCH 2015
AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

- Chairman** Cllr I Hiley
- Councillors** Cllr Mrs. P Allen Cllr Mrs. A Haywood Cllr M Rashid
Cllr M Hayes Cllr E Hicks [Items 5-end]
[Items 1-9 only] Cllr E Knibb Cllr J Riordan
[Items 1-9 only]
- Guest Speaker:** Mr S. Phelps, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, [Items 1-6 only]
- Officers:** Mrs. C Tibbles, Clerk to the Council/RFO
Mrs. T Kite, Hall Manager [Items 1- 12 only]
- Public:** 5 members of the public [mostly for Items 1-6 only].

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr A Terry and Cllr Miss J Ward were accepted for the reasons given.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or conflict of interests.

None declared.

3. Dispensations.

None requested.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Allen, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Hayes, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th February, 2015, having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the Meetings.

5. Guest Speaker: Simon Phelps, (Warks Wildlife Trust) Proposed Wildlife Meadow at Hob Farm.

Before introducing the guest speaker, the Chairman wished to reassure residents that concerns being expressed before the meeting were unfounded. This parish council was not intending to sell Hob Farm Open Space, was not giving the land away to Warwickshire and that Hob Farm was staying within the parish of Castle Bromwich and would be owned by the parish council. He was unsure where rumours had started and was sorry if people had been alarmed by the discussions taking place. The council was trying to possibly create a small piece of wildflower area that would be funded by grants and not cost parishioners or the council any monetary contribution. As funding was available it could also be extended to other areas of parish land in Castle Bromwich, e.g. Bradford Gardens, the Village Green and Whateley Green and space involved could be as little as 20 square yards. The Chairman invited Mr. Phelps to make his presentation, after which he would be asked to take questions from members and then the public. Mr. Phelps introduced the project that had been running for a year and funded by Public Health at Solihull MBC because there were noticeable benefits for participants to their physical and mental health when getting involved in active work. Evidence showed that projects like this reduced anxiety and depression. He had previously worked with Fordbridge Town Council and met a councillor from Castle Bromwich. This area did not meet the project criteria at that time but due to successes elsewhere and the approach by the parish council, funding was made available because of the clear benefits being achieved. He would need volunteers to work with him and invitations provisionally

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extended to schools to get children involved with creating a series of wildflower areas that would be publicly accessible. Two planting options were used, plug plants initially as they gave a quick visual effect and wildflower seed mix to grow and flower the following year. He felt the most suitable sites were the Village Green, Whateley Green and a small part of Hob Farm near the entrance. Bradford Gardens had potential but was not as centrally located. He then explained the process and that initially it took time to recover from the planting but would then be established and provide places for bees and butterflies and children to enjoy. Temporary fencing may be needed to protect the planting initially but he only envisaged a few posts and two bits of string with a warning sign. The area would then be cut in late summer and possibly a second time in late winter, with normal mowing still happening in all the other areas. He endorsed the project as an opportunity to brighten up pieces of grass and highlighted how many meadows had been lost over time. The Chairman invited questions from councillors and clarification was given by Mr. Phelps on timescales for flowering, ability and enjoyment of children using trowels to put in plug plants, mowing needed around the area initially and then across the wildflower spaces as earlier outlined once/twice per year. The Chairman moved to item 6 for the benefit of the public in attendance and would then return to Item 5 to make a considered decision.

6. Questions from the Public.

Under Standing Order 3(d), the Chairman temporarily suspended standing orders for 15 minutes. A member of the public asked if it was just Hob Farm or other areas and what was meant by 'meadow'. It was confirmed that the original suggestion was for Hob Farm but due to funding and the possibility for greater involvement for children and parishioners, other areas were also being considered. The term meadow used to mean a whole field but modern usage could be just a small area, circle of land or strip of land. A member of the public suggested other areas would benefit more from the scheme and thought the agenda was not clear. A member of the public believed the land was given by the Earl of Bradford in trust for the children of the parish and asked again if there was any intention of selling Hob Farm to the Wildlife Trust. The Council confirmed there was no intention to do this and offered the opportunity to see the title deeds of ownership that the council held. A member of the public was concerned that if the flowers attracted a rare species of bee it could be locked and public access denied. Mr. Phelps replied there were no rare populations close enough to colonize or reach the parish but even if hypothetically rare creatures did arrive, it would not designate the site to have any protected legal status. A member of the public believed it was wrong to lock the gates overnight and believed if the council wanted to promote itself it should put benches on the Chester Road at the new shopping areas. A member of the public asked about children being able to still play football there and Mr. Phelps explained that the council was only considering one or two small strips of land at the immediate entrance and not in the main recreation area. A member of the public thought this would not be very visible or interesting and would be damaged by balls being kicked in the entrance. However, a local school had confirmed they were interested in the project as they had no green space at all in their own grounds and the council felt that a secure area could be better protected than some other open spaces. A member of the public said there was mistrust of the council for over 30 years and what they had read in the minutes had alarmed them. A member of the public said the plants would be trampled and a waste of time in the entrance. Mr. Phelps replied he was here for the zoological aspects and not the past history and instead asked how many people used Hob Farm regularly. The public replied that it could be busy, depending on the time of year and people walked their dogs there. A councillor said that other ideas were suggested and

considered, like play equipment but there had been no funding for that. A member of the public did not recall getting the letter from the council about the survey results and did not understand if the overwhelming response was to leave Hob Farm alone then why was the council planning to plant flowers and change the use of the land. Another member of the public asked why the council was ignoring the residents views. Councillors replied that it was a real shock to know people did not want flowers planting, that the Wildlife Trust was not anticipating any rare breeds of creatures to inhabit Hob Farm, that the council had budgeted to cut the grass at Hob Farm and that this was not a cost-cutting measure, that 70 replies from residents were one aspect of representation but that this council endeavoured to act in the best interests of the 12000 residents in the parish. A member of the public thought the council was commendable but naïve and asked when a decision would be made. The Chairman explained that members would now return to Item 5 as public questions had been concluded (at 8.30 pm).

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5. Proposed Wildlife Meadow at Hob Farm.

Following careful consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of the Chairman, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Riordan, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the council proceed with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in establishing Wildflower ‘areas’ at Bradford Gardens, Whateley Green and the Village Green and for a deferment of any wildflower planting at Hob Farm. Members then discussed the areas to be chosen and **ON THE PROPOSITION** of the Chairman, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Mrs. Allen, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that specific locations at the 3 agreed open spaces should be the subject of a site visit for photographs and measurements to be taken.

WWT/
Warden
asap

7. Manager’s Report and Hire issues.

The Hall Manager presented her report, confirming that both hirers require the same amount of storage space, being uncertain of the council’s plans now, as previous discussions had outlined anticipated changes. The Hall Manager was planning two events with tribute acts in May and November, although confirmation was awaited and no entertainment yet booked for the second event. The installation of new windows in the Spencer Kitchen and committee room had been commended and noticeable improvements to the room temperature from better insulation. The only windows remaining to be replaced were the backstage toilets but until she made a decision about refurbishment, no action would be taken. Interviews had taken place that afternoon and a new Duty Manager appointed to start work straightaway. There were no cancellations to report. 6 new bins had been purchased for the park and being used for football matches or high volume times in the park, instead of just bags. As there were only 4 bins in total in the park she would arrange for extra permanent bins if this helped reduce the amount of litter. Signage was needed. A resident had asked if he could put a skip in the playing fields as he apparently did not have access through the front of the house. It would only for one day and dependent on any conditions imposed by the council. The Clerk explained that the council had a system in place for requests like this, which had been implemented by the Wardens in the past. A member had previously queried the charges by a company for work undertaken on the sewage pump and following investigation by the Clerk, information had been emailed to members that satisfactorily clarified the charges for the job were correct. The Clerk apologised for omitting the Windsor Room Heating from the agenda and undertook to rectify this at the next meeting.

Clerk
asap

LSC
1/4

8. Bar Stock Report.

Members noted the bar stock report and the continuing fall in takings that had been anticipated. The trading analysis was also noted.

9. Garage – building of replacement and demolition of existing.

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The Hall Manager had earlier confirmed storage requirements by two hirers, members discussed the need to re-align rental charges in light of the investment being required. Following exploration of options, the Chairman undertook to obtain two quotations for the next meeting - one for a repair/re-roof of existing garages and one to demolish and completely re-build as existing footprint.

IRH
1/4

10. Drainage Improvement in Playing Fields.

Members discussed the different drainage ditches in the park and recalled an earlier quotation for ‘french drains’. It was **AGREED** to ask the contractor to consider the current system and suggest appropriate improvements to the existing flow and also reduce potential risk to visitors, with a quotation being sent for the Committee to consider.

Hall Mgr/
Warden
20/3

11. Review of Speed Bump complaint.

As previously agreed, members reviewed the above topic and were informed by the Hall Manager that there had been no further complaints received. However, as the speed bump in question was actually broken, it was **AGREED** to purchase a replacement (available in sections to make various widths) and the Wardens would then install it.

Wardens
20/4

12. Telephone Quotes.

The Hall Manager reported that one company had not emailed their quote yet, another company already submitted theirs and a third company had asked to see other quotes so they could match the technical specifications. Members **AGREED** this should quickly be sent as requested (but with the prices redacted) so that a decision could be made at the April meeting. The Chairman offered contact details for an additional company that could be approached.

Hall Mgr
immediate

LSC
1/4

13. Working Parties.

The Clerk clarified that the price for a second header on a new Village Green noticeboard had never been received, despite her requests. Folders were handed to Cllr Mrs. Allen who had volunteered to approach the company for the missing information and update on the old quotations so that members could hopefully agree the purchase. The Clerk hoped that clear guidance would be forthcoming, in the light of the different options that had previously been explored.

PA
asap

LSC
1/4

14. Residents’ Concerns.

Members noted recent concerns and the report being awaited on the park locking incident.

Hall Mgr
23/3

15. Clerk’s Report.

The Clerk had nothing to report on trees or travellers.