

MINUTES OF THE 120TH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
OF THE PARISH OF CASTLE BROMWICH  
HELD ON TUESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014 IN ARDEN HALL,  
CASTLE BROMWICH COMMENCING AT 8.05 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Electors of the Parish

CB01	1432	Cllr J Whelan	CB01	715	Cllr E Knibb	CB02	2328	Ms. M Hart
CB04	1427	Cllr J Riordan	CB03	537	Ms A Payne	CB05	457	Cllr J Horne-MacDonald
CB01	1408	Mr. B Dargue	CB01	470	Mr. S Stanton	CB05	438	Cllr M Hayes
CB04	1428	Mrs. M Riordan	CB02	1151	Mr. D Kemp	CB03	161	Mrs. G Franklin
CB05	767	Mrs. L. Millward	CB05	243	Mrs. P Bodfish	CB01	1434	Mr. D Readett
CB02	2420	Ms F Harrison	CB02	58	Cllr I Hiley	CB01	1435	Mrs. G Readett
CB03	540	Mrs. J Payne	CB02	59	Ms M Slyfield	CB01	1939	Mr J Holland
CB03	1146	Cllr Miss J Ward						

No of Electors: 22

Members of the Public

Cllr Mrs. P Allen	Youth Cllr Miss J Browne	Police Sgt. I Mirza, WM Police
Cllr E Hicks	Youth Cllr Miss N Browne	Mr. L. Millward
Youth Cllr C Shread	Mrs. L Browne	Miss K Millward
Mrs. J Shread	Mr M Whitaker	Mr. D Jordan
Mr E Collins	Mr. A Gorton	Mr. S Cleaver

15 public

Officers

C. D Tibbles, Clerk to the Council.

1 Officer

Total Attendance 38 people

The Chairman, Cllr Whelan, welcomed everyone to the annual parish meeting and thanked them sincerely for attending. Prior to the meeting commencing, he introduced the guest speaker, Sgt. Mirza of West Midlands Police. Sgt. Mirza spoke about his role as leader of the Smiths Wood and Castle Bromwich Neighbourhood Policing Team, who was present to talk about the reducing crime in Castle Bromwich and how the public can help the police in practical and realistic ways. He outlined the structure of his team and what operations they covered. He gave a breakdown on crime in the parish and how they looked for clusters of crime and supported residents in looking after their valuable goods. With regard to car crime, he emphasized the importance of not leaving valuables in cars, keeping them out of sight and also importantly, remembering to lock the car. Theft of number plates could be prevented by using tamper proof screws which were available from the police station. He asked that if number plates were stolen that the crime be reported to the police as it was likely they could be used in a crime. Police relied upon intelligence from the public as what may seem minor to them could be the missing piece that held the key to detection. He had been involved in 25 warrants being served in the past 2 ½ months as part of a special operation. Local tradesmen were also supporting the work of the police by alerting them to anything suspicious that they saw whilst working daily in the area. Sgt Mirza was pleased to report that graffiti incidents were falling and no-one in the audience felt this was a major problem. Residents did however report problems with parking and he had been out between 8 and 9 am issuing tickets to drivers parking in dangerous places. Children had designed posters and police had given out mock tickets that warned drivers the next one would be a penalty fine, with a message from the children on the reverse. Off road bikes and quad bikes were being targeted by Operation Kick-start, using intelligence from the public to target them. An officer had been seriously injured a while ago and the drivers frequently risked the lives of themselves, the police and the public. He warned of telephone fraud scams tricking people into giving PIN numbers or handing over credit cards to couriers. He concluded by saying his team were there to help them and urged them to call when necessary. Questions were asked about speeding on Water Orton Road and detection measures in place by the police and how to safely report suspicions of criminal activity via Crimestoppers or direct to officers on patrol. The Chairman thanked Sgt Mirza for attending the meeting and giving a useful report on policing in Castle Bromwich.

**1. The Notice to convene the meeting.**

The Clerk read the notice to convene the meeting, copies having been circulated and published on notice boards.

**2. Apologies for Absence.**

Cllr Mrs. A Haywood, Mrs. C Spelman, MP.

**3. Minutes of the previous meeting.**

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting had been made available prior to the meeting and were taken as read. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr E Knibb, SECONDED BY Cllr Hiley, IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the 119th Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013, having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**4. Report of attendance.**

	Actual Meeting	Possible Meetings	
Cllr Mrs. P Allen	44	44	100%
Cllr R Amos	2	24	8%
Cllr M Hayes	35	44	80%
Cllr Mrs. A Haywood	36	47	77%
Cllr E Hicks	31	44	70%
Cllr I Hiley	41	44	93%
Cllr J Horne-MacDonald	13	32	41%
Cllr E Knibb	23	28	82%

	Actual Meeting	Possible Meetings	
Cllr M Rashid	16	25	64%
Cllr J Riordan	25	36	69%
Cllr Mrs. L. Smith	7	12	58%
Cllr A Terry	23	33	70%
Cllr Miss J Ward	17	25	68%
Cllr J Whelan	34	42	81%
Cllr Mrs. B Wilkins	0	16	0%
Average - whole Council			64%

Many councillors continued to serve on numerous Working Parties/ Committees that were not reflected in these figures above, which related to full Council and Standing Committees.

**5.a) Report of the Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee Councillor M Hayes.**

Cllr Hayes reported there were many functions for the Committee but two key strands were the scrutiny, but not control, of the finances of the council (as Government regulations state that control is a whole council responsibility) and the second was the scrutiny of planning applications to the Borough Council. Regarding the first area of responsibility, he reported that, as expected, 2013/2014 was expected to be a difficult year, faced with ever increasing costs (like heating, lighting, waste collection as examples) and decreasing income from national government and major drops in open spaces income. When this was added to the increased capital spend such as moving the Council Offices downstairs to increase hire space available in Arden Hall, and money being allocated to install the keep fit equipment in the park as a supplement to the lottery funding of £9170. He thought that setting a manageable budget was always going to be a problem, a task not helped by carrying over money from 2012/2013 for multi-year projects, hence the considerable jump in some cost centres expenditure when work had been delayed from the previous year. The draft year end income and expenditure account was available on display on the wall. Cllr Hayes then reported on the other strand of responsibility – the scrutiny of planning applications when the council had continued to judge all applications with the needs and wishes of the community in mind, with what the Council believed that was. He urged people to tell the Council what their views were on planning applications. He explained that opposition had been put forward on every occasion when applications were made for permanent extension of alcohol sales times. The Committee had kept a close eye on HS2 news and would continue to seek to mitigate the damage or disruption to the community during the planning and building stages – that would be something to watch in future. The Clerk’s report on the accounts had been available before the meeting and is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

**5.b) Report of the Chairman of Leisure Services Committee - Cllr Mrs. A Haywood.**

In the absence of Cllr Mrs. Haywood, the Vice Chairman Cllr I Hiley was pleased to stand in and present her report. Cllr Hiley said that another year has gone and what an exciting year it had been. Looking back at what was a long hot summer where the Park was enjoyed by so many it

was hoped that this year we would again be able to welcome people of all ages to enjoy the benefit of this wonderful area within Castle Bromwich. The Footloose Project, which was led by former Cllr Bob Amos, had secured funding of £9,000 and enabled the purchase of adult gym equipment for the Park. The official opening took place in July 2013, so not only could you now enjoy a gentle stroll, but if you wished, instead of visiting the gym you could use the equipment. During the year, the Council Office had moved into what was originally the managers' accommodation at the rear of Arden Hall, which had freed up accommodation within Arden Hall. The tennis courts were resurfaced during 2013 and she was sure that for those who used them regularly it had made a huge difference to their game. The refurbishment of the Windsor Room had been completed with the bar area also just having been done the previous week. The Spencer Hall was still a "work in progress" and during 2013 after having a professional survey on the stage lights, a new much simplified system had been purchased and installed, being well received by hirers. The 3 yearly tree survey had been commenced on all trees on Parish Council land and work on the trees on Bradford Gardens would be taking place shortly, in accordance with the regulations in place for all trees under the Tree Conservation Act. General maintenance had taken place on the Pavilion, which was used by various Groups and Arden Hall continued to be well used with new hirers being welcomed. Cllr Mrs. Haywood took the opportunity, through Cllr Hiley, to thank Mrs. Tina Kite, Hall Manager and her staff for all their hard work throughout the year. The annual Carol Concert took place in November when the Council again welcomed the children from St Mary and St Margaret's School and Castle Bromwich Junior School who entertained the audience with Christmas songs had made it an evening to remember. The decision to change the format of New Year's Eve party night had been well received and would be repeated again this year. Thanks were also given to Mrs. Cathy Tibbles for her commitment and help during this year and to fellow members of the Committee. In summary Cllr Mrs. Haywood believed it had been a good year, with much being achieved.

#### **6. Report of the Youth Parish Council – Youth Cllr Miss J Browne.**

At the end of an interesting year for members of the Youth Parish Council, Youth Cllr Miss J Browne reported there had been successful co-options of 7 new members during the year, a number of working party meetings had been held, a kind donation received from the Dame Mary Bridgeman trust of £250 towards plants and shrubs for the sensory garden at the Village Green (where ongoing maintenance and weeding had taken place). The Peace tree had been vandalized sadly but priority decisions made for it to be replaced. The Youth Council were still working on details for their information sign on the new notice board at the Village Green and the garden had been entered in Solihull in Bloom. Members had completed a survey on travel assistance and had distributed information about apprenticeship opportunities at Jaguar Landrover to young people in the community. She had attended a meeting about the HS2 railway. Members had enjoyed attending other council events like the annual civic service, the carol concert in November. They had also represented the council at the Remembrance Parade and service, with the Vice-Chairman attending the re-dedication of the chapel of rest at William Painters. She had worn the Mayor of Solihull's replica Junior Chain at some events and spoken at the national Clerk's Practitioner's Conference about the work of youth councillors. A DVD project had taken place in partnership with Park Hall Academy whose students had filmed events and interviewed councillors. There had been guest speakers at meetings, including Ben Hobbs talking about the Youth Volunteering Service and future plans included a trip to the Mayor's Parlour and to Parliament, to apply for funding for more youth equipment to complement the new adult keep fit equipment, to work on youth council information for the website. She concluded by thanking Cllr Mrs. Allen and the Clerk for their help and support. Cllr Whelan thanked the Youth Council for their endeavours, knowing that they were the envy of many other councils around the country. The DVD was shown to the audience.

#### **7. Future Projects involving the Parish Council.**

Cllr Whelan said that at last year's Parish meeting he had presented the community's Parish Plan which was subsequently approved by the Parish Council and published on its website and in a limited number of hard copies. He gave a brief progress report on some of the ideas and

recommendations contained in the Plan and also highlighted three proposed actions for the near future. One of the sections in the Plan was Children and Young people and the Parish Council had formed links with the local Children's Centre, being keen to do more to help young families in the area. A successful recruitment campaign had seen an intake of new members to the Youth Parish Council. Plans were also well underway for a major football tournament in the Park this summer together with sports activity training for both boys and girls. For the Older Generation we had already trialled an Age UK advice surgery here at Arden Hall and in July were set to meet with the Chair and Chief executive of the Solihull Area to discuss a regular and substantial means of supporting the older members of our community. In the area of Sport and Leisure, whilst the upgrade or replacement of the Sports pavilion remains a longer term objective, steps were in hand to attempt to open a café on a trial basis and also provide public toilets once again. The two tennis courts had been upgraded to a very good standard and the first tranche of fitness equipment had been installed under the guidance of a team led by Cllr Amos. The Parish Council wished to consolidate the good work of all our sports hirers, principally the Cricket Club and Bromford Lions FC. The council were encouraged that a good level of co-operation was developing and looked forward to the ultimate formation of a Castle Bromwich Sports Association embracing other sports and interests. The Transport and Infrastructure element of the Plan referenced the difficult traffic conditions around the Hurst Lane junction and the Parish Council had been represented at the working parties which had developed the Hurst Lane Place project plan. Residents would see work start later this summer in creating a more pedestrian friendly area with hopefully improved traffic flow and more parking spaces. On the subject of HS2 and it's possible impact on Castle Bromwich, the Plan committed to work to mitigate any impact. The Parish Council had now had talks with, and would rely in the first instance, on the Borough's Petition to Parliament and the work of our local MP to mitigate the impact particularly of any construction traffic on Water Orton Road. These are just a few of the 59 recommendations contained in the Plan. The immediate projects for the council were: to raise our Parish profile through the erection of Welcome Signs around Castle Bromwich and the erection of a Parish Notice Board on the village green; to engage in the campaign against speeding motorists on the Water Orton Road and to work to establish more colour and attractive floral features around the village. In summary, work had started but there was a long way to go, our intention was to help maintain and improve the standing of Castle Bromwich and the lives of its residents.

#### **8. The Chairman's Address - Cllr J Whelan.**

Cllr Whelan thanked everyone for attending the 120<sup>th</sup> annual parish meeting and also thanked his fellow Councillors for their support during the year. In particular he thanked his Vice Chairman, Councillor Pauline Allen, for all the help she had given to him. He then thanked Councillors Mrs. Haywood and Hayes for the excellent way in which they had led the two standing committees. As already reported, he was delighted the council had a very strong and active Youth Council and he was very proud of their achievements this year. Finally, he thanked the Clerk for her dedicated work and expert knowledge and to all the staff of the parish council who had worked to serve the people of Castle Bromwich in the past year.

The Chairman reported he had thoroughly enjoyed his year, when he had met some very interesting people and seen first hand some of the organisations and activities which made Castle Bromwich somewhere to be proud of. His first engagement on 24th May was outside the parish at Smiths Wood for the Chairman's Charity Dance, an excellent evening hosted by Councillor Rashid which raised money for a hospital in Bangladesh and for the victims of the collapse of a clothing factory. On 7th June he spent an enjoyable afternoon at Park hall school as one of the judges for a philanthropy competition where teams representing various charities competed for a prize of £3500. This was a competition sponsored by the founder of the MAC cosmetic company and the Park Hall students put on some very impressive presentations highlighting the range of specialist skills encompassed in the modern school: music, dancing, drama and IT were all put to use. The winning entry was Dream Makers, an organisation which sends sick children and their family on holiday. On 9th June the Civic service was held at the Parish Church and he

expressed thanks to all who attended, in particular the Borough Councillors, the Mayor of Solihull Cllr Joe Tildesley and his wife Joan and Caroline Spelman, the local MP. Thanks also were expressed to Rev. Gavin Douglas for conducting the service and delivering a very interesting sermon. On 29th June the Chairman visited Yardley Rugby Club where he presented the trophies at a soccer tournament hosted by Bromford Lions. This had been a very successful event and as you have already heard this year will be held here at Arden Hall Park and on a much bigger scale, over a period of weeks and attracting several hundred youngsters. Castle Bromwich Lions had done a lot to help the Parish Council throughout the year and he had been pleased to repay that support by attending an awards ceremony on 22nd July at the Youth Centre in Hurst Lane. Young people who had worked on projects including clearing the church graveyard received recognition. It had also been a chance to see the facilities and activities at the Centre which were very important to the youngsters who attended there. He hoped that the Centre would continue to be staffed and supported in the future to the same extent.

In September Cllr Whelan had drawn the raffle at Dantanas Hair Salon where money had been raised for a debilitating children's illness called CVS. He also attended the rededication of the Chapel of Rest at Painters Funeral Directors in Green Lane, accompanied by Youth Cllr Kieran Cronin, the Vice Chair of the Youth Council, and they had cut the ribbon together. The 10th November saw the Remembrance Service where he had the honour of laying a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council. This event grew each year and for a brief interval brought together a large number of residents all with the common purpose of honouring those who have fallen. Without the steadfast planning of the Clerk and her team of volunteers it would not be possible to hold such an event. He recorded his thanks to everyone who helped make it such a success and in particular to Cllrs Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Haywood who worked with others to keep the area around the memorial in such good order. We could all be proud of the manner in which this service was supported. The annual Carol Concert on 26th November saw the start of the Christmas season. He had been delighted to comper the evening which once again saw children from St Mary and St Margaret and Castle Bromwich Junior Schools perform. Father Christmas had kindly agreed to switch on the Christmas tree lights and presented the children with a small gift at the end of the evening. He gave thanks to Cllr Mrs. Haywood and her team of organisers and helpers, especially Castle Bromwich Lions, who made this event a success. Money raised from this event had been split between the two schools and the Chairman's Charity Fund which he would be distributing shortly. On 12th December, together with Cllr Mrs. Allen and the Clerk, Cathy Tibbles, he had attended the annual awards evening at Park Hall Academy which saw a large number of pupils celebrate significant success in their studies.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> [February] March, at the invitation of Cllr Mrs. Haywood as the District Commissioner, he had attended the annual Thinking Day celebration at St Clements Church. It had been an inspiring afternoon with contributions from Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. The month of April was very busy, starting with 11th when he attended the Friday morning session of Little Gnomes, which is a play group for infants run by Chris Beebee and his family who did so much for the community. It had been his pleasure to distribute Easter eggs to the little ones. On 12th April he had attended the Fordbridge Town Council Chairman's Charity Dance which was a most enjoyable evening and raised funds for a Prostate Cancer charity. Perhaps the most difficult job this year had been judging the children's Easter Bonnets at the Hall Gardens on 19th April. Fortunately Cllr Mrs. Allen knew about these things and everyone seemed happy with the selections. He had been at the Hall Gardens again on 30th April to see the opening of the Mirror Pond which had been completely restored. It was intended that this feature and the adjacent wild flower area would be used as an educational feature to teach children from local schools more about horticulture – children at the opening had certainly enjoyed scattering seeds.

In addition to the money raised from the Carol concert, two Chairman's Charity Quiz events had helped to generate funds. Both were very well attended and Cllr Mrs. Allen worked hard to make them a success, including organising a fish and chip supper for 130 or so people. He was also grateful to the Beebee family for a donation from the proceeds of their New Year's Eve raffle. Sadly he had represented the Parish Council at the funeral of two past Councillors and

Chairmen - Margaret Turner and Jerry Dutton. Both contributed greatly to Castle Bromwich life and would be sadly missed.

**9. Questions from Parishioners.**

The Chairman invited questions from members of the public present. No questions were asked.

**10. Presentation of Cheques.**

The Chairman was pleased to present the annual Chairman's Charity Fund donations which were shared among a large number of local organisations.

Cllr Whelan then thanked all Youth Councillors for the hard work that they did and presented Service Certificates to Youth Councillors who were present. The Chairman concluded by expressing thanks to everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

**Castle Bromwich Parish Council**

**DRAFT Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31 March 2014**

31st March 2013		31 March 2014
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
61,498	Arden Hall	56,586
60,101	Bar	46,805
600	Theatre Workshops	504
9,843	Pavilion	13,476
14,213	Open Spaces	6,359
227,757	Democratic Services	227,124
<u>374,011</u>	<b>Total Income</b>	<u>350,854</u>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
108,723	Arden Hall	141,504
35,399	Bar	27,584
393	Theatre Workshops	447
45,117	Pavilion	62,270
32,562	Open Spaces	47,458
86,613	Democratic Services	100,441
0	Council Reserves	0
<u>308,807</u>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>379,704</u>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
135,270	Opening Balance	147,702
374,011	Plus : Income for Year	350,854
<u>509,281</u>		<u>498,556</u>
308,807	Less : Expenditure for Year	379,704
<u>200,474</u>		<u>118,852</u>
52,772	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	5,216
<u>147,702</u>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<u>113,636</u>

### Financial Information – Annual Parishioner’s Meeting

As always, the records of the Parish Council (both financial and general) are available for personal scrutiny and I am willing to answer any questions as the person responsible for preparing Year End accounts. However, if a detailed answer is requested I may not have the full information or specific background to individual transactions at this meeting.

The accounts for 2012/13 were scrutinised locally by our own independent auditors and the Annual Return satisfactorily accepted by the External Auditor (appointed by the Audit Commission) on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013, details being displayed on our Notice Board at the front of Arden Hall, as required.

On Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013 a full day’s briefing opportunity was provided to all parish councillors to enhance understanding of the financial responsibilities and restrictions with budget setting. This was well received by members who agreed it was most helpful to know more details about the structure of the budget, it’s purpose, the legal responsibility and the process.

#### 2013/2014

Financial Year End information for 2013/14 is still being prepared and subject to both independent and external audit. A draft breakdown of income and expenditure is overleaf. Expenditure has been higher in most areas but this is mainly due to refurbishment work and continued capital improvement projects deferred from previous year. Improvements to buildings have removed some of the difficulties that hindered customers and have led to some new regular customer bookings. Water rates, heating and waste collection charges were higher than budgeted for, and greatly increased when compared with last year. Hire facilities continue to be well used and support is given to local community groups with substantially discounted prices, and on regular occasions completely free room hire. Staff and councillors work hard to prioritise the needs of hirers where possible but these needs are varied and wide ranging. The council offices have been relocated to the ground floor, funded by earmarked reserves, which will release space within Arden Hall for new hire usage. Footpath repairs have also been commenced and refurbishment work completed on the tennis courts. With the kind support of local residents, security costs at Hob Farm have been reduced. In addition to the £9170 Big Lottery funding received and set aside last year, £4,492 was spent from reserves on the installation of the adult keep fit equipment in the park,.

Income forecasts were reduced in most areas due to the economic climate and mostly met and in some cases exceeded the cautious targets, with the exception of bar sales. The Parish Council always strive to ensure that ‘value for money’ is obtained and interest from investment of earmarked reserves and contingency monies has been beneficial.

#### Vandalism and Anti Social Behaviour

Additional security measure have reduced the cost of vandalism but much physical time by staff is spent on issues like unauthorised parking, litter picking and dog fouling/disputes between owners. Incidents have occurred but support by the police and partnership working by the parish council means we strive to reduce problems for all Castle Bromwich residents.



Mrs. Cathy Tibbles.  
Responsible Finance Officer.

2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2014