
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 9TH JANUARY 2008
AT 19.30 HRS**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr A Bull

Councillors:

Cllr D Feasey
Cllr E Knibb
Cllr Mrs. T Knibb
Cllr J Riordan
Cllr A Terry
Cllr Mrs. B Wilkins

Officers: Mrs. C Tibbles **Public:** None.

1.

Apologies.

Cllr D Franklin and Cllr S Ward were absent.

2. **Declarations of Personal or other interests.**

None declared at this stage.

3. **Election of Vice-Chairman.**

Cllr Mrs. Wilkins volunteered. Members **RESOLVED** to accept this offer.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held 12th December.**

Cllr Mrs Wilkins **PROPOSED** these Minutes be signed as a true and accurate record.
SECONDED Cllr Knibb, **RESOLVED** and signed.

5. **Planning Applications.**

Planning Applications/Decision Notices received since last Meeting were considered. See Appendix.

6. **Residents' Concerns.**

Noted with interest.

7. **Communications.**

Routine communications received since last meeting were noted.

8. **Financial Accounting and Control.**

Members considered extending the RBS Software package and the Chairman referred members to the tabled information (selected by the Council previously as the preferred supplier of integrated software). The first phase had been the Bookings system at the beginning of 2005. Current costs would be:

Cash Book Management Accounts and Budget Package	£595 (All prices plus VAT)
Set up costs	£225
Hotline support (includes upgrades)	£200
Purchase Ledger (suppliers invoices)(compatible with BACS)	£295

Sales Ledger (module already installed with Bookings)	no cost	(saves £295)
Training (2 days-Accounts, +1 day for other modules)		£885
£295 per day		
Purchase Order processing (optional but good control measure)		£295

The Clerk said that a demonstration could be arranged and commended the overall benefits of better budget planning, greater controls, reporting and monitoring which the Chairman agreed with. The Clerk thought access to the hotline support was not time limited but was concerned about the time resource needed to manage the changes, training, support to staff and disruption to routine. However she felt that as the Council was proceeding with new financial commitments and the agreement by the Council to proceed with an application for a PWLB loan of £1,000,000, this would be a sensible requirement, costing £1905 initially and £590 later. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins thought the whole package should be purchased at once and members requested a demonstration at 7 pm on 13th February if possible. Cllr Feasey **PROPOSED** all the RBS software programmes be purchased as itemized at a cost of £2495, with training. **RESOLVED** by members as agreed.

9. Budget Preparation 2008/09.

The Chairman led members through the draft budget for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and by consensus some amendments were agreed – additional £4000 to employ part-time bookkeeper, reduce £2000 from audit budget; reduce grant aid by £60; reduce capital projects by £75 and to reduce the contingency by £15000 (but with a view to increasing it steadily in future years.) The Chairman **PROPOSED** the revised budget for recommendation to the Council, **RESOLVED** by members as agreed. The Chairman then stated his serious concern regarding the newly formed AMP Committee and urged that all options be considered including release of capital, anti-graffiti issues, extra bollards, building a new pavilion, reviewing the regeneration project and the proposed sponsorship of the Village Green. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins added her concerns about the financial costs of running Arden Hall and requested the future of Arden Hall be an agenda item at the next meeting but Cllr Riordan stated that the future of Arden Hall had already been agreed by full Council and budgets set for Arden Hall and Open Spaces based on the regeneration project responsibilities delegated to the Arden Hall Management and Promotion Committee. Cllr Mrs. Knibb said all possibilities should be looked at in case there were better options but she had been told by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins that the AMP Committee should be the first to hear of their shared concerns. It became apparent that serious discussions had taken place out of Council. The Clerk asked what budget discrepancies were being referred to but clarification was offered after the meeting by Cllr Mrs. Knibb. The Clerk raised concerns about her impending absence and Cllr Mrs. Wilkins said any media queries could be directed to her, with the response being “no comment”. Cllr Riordan was concerned about the contingency fund when doubts were raised about the PWLB Loan.

10. Grant Aid – application from Castle Bromwich Scouts.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to confirm the award of the Grant of £250 to Castle Bromwich Scout Group, as agreed at last full Council meeting.

11. Payments.

Cllr Riordan **PROPOSED** that the payments be approved. **SECONDED** Cllr Mrs. Knibb, **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**.

12. Clerk’s Report.

Outstanding action points: induction replies from new members still required so that a date could be arranged – suggest defer until latest vacancy filled; Lanchester Park regeneration information still awaited. Extra meetings were being accommodated but this was difficult to manage, particularly with staff sickness since Christmas. Support of Assistant Clerk has proved most valuable and she was adept at resolving unexpected issues, however this meant that outstanding work was not being addressed. The Youth Council had met the

previous evening but was only just quorate due to absences and 7 vacancies. An enthusiastic Manager's meeting had been held with Cllr Mrs. Knibb to discuss the regeneration of Arden Hall and other staff meetings needed to be arranged. Several training courses had been booked for councillors. Assistance was requested for the forthcoming Quiz Night. The Clerk raised a request from the Assistant Manager with regard to handling booking enquiries for family parties. Councillors were reminded by the Chairman to return their Allowance Claim forms to the Clerk (appended to the policy already circulated).

13. Staffing Matters.

No matters to report.

ACTION

ACTION

Asst. Clerk/
RBS
01/08

TK/Clerk

Members
6/2/08

