

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE
BROMWICH ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUNE 2015
AT 7.30PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr B Upton

Councillors: Cllr Mrs. P Allen Cllr Mrs. A Haywood Cllr G High
Cllr M Hayes Cllr I Hiley Cllr J Horne-MacDonald

Officers: Mrs. C Tibbles, Clerk to the Council/RFO

Public: 1 member of the public [Items 1-10 only].

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr E Hicks, Cllr J Riordan and Cllr A Terry were accepted for the reasons given.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or conflict of interests.

Nondeclared at this stage but 2 members later declared an interest at the start of Item 12 as they had connections with the local organisation applying for a grant (see page 2).

3. Dispensations.

None requested.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman.

The Clerk confirmed to members that Cllr Riordan and Cllr Terry had volunteered for this position. In addition, Cllr Hayes was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Horne-MacDonald, **SECONDED** by Cllr High. Cllr Riordan was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by the Chairman. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that Cllr Hayes be elected as Vice-Chairman for this civic year.

5. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesdays, 25th March, 8th and 29th April, 2015 having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

6. Clarification of Chairman's Attendance.

Members noted the WALC advice which confirmed that Standing Orders did not require the Committee Chairmen to serve on both Committees, only the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, although the agenda always stated it was expected (in line with custom and practice). In recent years there had been an increasing number of members choosing to serve on both committees and although Chairmen confirmed they had personally felt it was advantageous to serve on both Committees, members felt it should not present a barrier or continue to be an obligation. Committee information was routinely supplied to all members. Cllr Upton announced his resignation from the Leisure Services Committee.

7. Terms of Reference.

Following consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the single order threshold should be increased from £10,000 to £25,000 gross, in line with the new financial regulations. The document would be amended and referred to full council.

8. Questions from the Public.

Under Standing Order 3(d), the Chairman adjourned standing orders to invite questions from members of the public but there were none asked. Standing orders were then resumed.

9. Planning/Licensing Applications.

ACTION

Clerk
17/6

Council
24/6

ACTION

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Hiley, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the following recommendation be submitted to the Borough Council:

Application No	Applicant	Location
Recommendation to the Borough Council		
PL/2015/51051/MINFHO		5 Woodford Avenue B36 9BD

Clerk.
11/6

Could be approved subject to any neighbours comments.

The Clerk informed members that no opinions were submitted by members in response to her request. Therefore a delegated decision was not taken and her response on behalf of the Council to the following applications was “no views expressed”:

Application No	Applicant	Location
PL/2015/50837/MINFHO		12 Marlborough Road B36 0EH
PL/2015/50734/MINFHO		125 Water Orton Road B36 9HB
PL/2015/50713/MINFHO		1A Marlborough Road B36 0EH
PL/2015/50797/MINFHO		16 Springfield Road B36 0DT
PL/2015/50750/MINFHO		228 Bradford Road B36 9AA
PL/2015/50682/TCA		Rectory Gardens B36 9DG

Members noted the receipt of NALC legal topic on Appealing Planning Decisions. Members also noted two licensing changes/transfers that had been granted by Solihull MBC in relation to Castle Convenience Store at 202 Bradford Road. It was reported that positive measures had at long last been put in place at the Tesco store on Green Lane, as suggested and requested several times by the police. Security guards were now working in the store which would help protect staff and customers, reduce crime and prevent antisocial behaviour from escalating in that location. Members were pleased to hear that the concerns of the council and the police had eventually been acted upon by higher management at Tesco.

10. Computer Training.

Following consideration, members felt this was not a matter to explore any further.

11. Draft Media Policy.

Deferred to the June meeting.

MH 30/6

12. Small Grants Applications.

Cllr Mrs. Allen declared a conflict of interest in this application as she was a Trustee of the organisation applying. Cllr High declared a conflict of interest in this application as his wife was a Trustee of the organisation applying.

Following discussion and careful consideration, a grant of £200 was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Hayes and **SECONDED** by Cllr Horne-MacDonald. £300 was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hiley. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the application should be met in full by granting £300 under Section 144 of the Local Government Act 1972, to Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, towards the cost of hazel wattle fencing to reduce vandalism to the pool project started last year. Cllr Mrs. Allen and Cllr High did not participate in the vote.

RFO
25/6

13. Unity Bank bulletin and Electronic Banking processes update.

Members noted that cautionary advice had been given by the bank about all members acting as authorisers but they had confirmed that ‘view only’ access was available to everyone if wished. The Chairman confirmed he had started to prepare a short demonstration for the July council meeting that could be given to all members. Members noted the new opportunity to deposit cash with Nat West bank, the nearest location being at the Fox and Goose. The Chairman undertook to start researching processes and systems for weekly wage processing to transfer over to Unity.

14. Financial Regulations – procedural guidance.

ACTION

Members noted the helpful documentation that had been circulated and **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED BY** the Chairman, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to accept the draft guidance by the RFO providing interpretation of financial regulations on official purchase orders (F1), budgets (F1), delivery notes (F2), bar stock orders and deliveries (F3) and minor purchases (F4) but with the thresholds being increased to £500 in line with figures in financial regulations. The Clerk reported that a valuable meeting had taken place with the Hall Manager to review this guidance, with some further clarification being requested e.g. which staff were ‘officers’ (NALC guidance confirmed this description applies to all staff). Further meetings would be taking place and the Chairman undertook to speak to the Hall Manager regarding the revised procedures for minor purchases, commend her for the profitability and measures she had previously taken with the bar purchases and seek her continuance. Members agreed with the RFO that ideally the guidance should have been issued with the new regulations but this had been difficult to achieve with the deadline set by council for internet banking to start from 1st April and the current workload for many existing staff working on reduced capacity. Following discussion, it was **FURTHER AGREED** that the Clerk should write to the Hall Manager and staff to clarify the guidance, approved by council, should restore their confidence to continue to work as before.

BU
Asap

Clerk
Asap

15. Website Review.

Members discussed the information circulated, noted that some information was out of date and that some youth council information had been outstanding for a long time. Members felt the current structure remained potentially relevant and it was **AGREED** to requests ‘view only’ admin rights to the website for a member to use, for a member to take photographs of parish Open Spaces in the summer, to defer review of compliance recommended in WALC document until later in the year and to endeavor to establish a customer database of email addresses to publicise events. Utilization of Facebook and Twitter by the council was also deferred. Members noted that some updates would be actioned by the Clerk now that the annual appointments had been completed.

Clerk asap
GH – tbc
MH – Aug

FGP Oct

FGP – tbc

Clerk
11/6

16. Award Plaque.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Hiley, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to purchase a shield to present to a local youth organisation in the name of the parish council that they would then award annually to the best junior cadet. This would be paid for by utilizing the Chairman’s Allowance.

Clerk
30/6

17. Complaints Policy Review.

The Chairman undertook to research the documents available and extend the existing policy to meet the additional criteria now required after changing legislation. He commended the brief format and would endeavour to retain its simplicity for a draft for the Committee to consider.

BU – tbc

18. Access to Parish Archives.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Hiley, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Hayes, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that serving members would be granted permission to use council archives off-site for a limited period of time.

Clerk
11/6

19. Working Parties.

No meetings had taken place.

20. Residents’ Concerns.

Members noted the list of concerns previously circulated and discussed the background to some matters, particularly noting the locking of the Garden of Rest that had prevented visitors from gaining access, causing distress. Members requested that signage be displayed showing no dogs or ball games were allowed in the garden and undertook to monitor from their own personal visits in future that full access was allowed from 8.30 am until wardens started locking up 15/30 minutes before closing time. It was noted that Wardens were

Wardens
Asap

ACTION

authorized to lock the Garden when necessary but this should only be when details had been put in their log book to alert the Hall Manager, e.g. after ASB incidents had occurred. Reports should be made to the police if serious or repeat incidents happened.

21. Training.

No reports had been received. Following a discounted opportunity, the Clerk had sought advice from Chairmen to utilise her delegated powers to attend a one day conference for £60 at Stratford, as the agenda items were topical with revised council priorities. Therefore a place had been booked and would be reported on at the next meeting. Only two members of council staff had asked to attend the free defibrillator course organised by a hirer and now taking place in July. The Clerk would liaise with new councillors to set dates for the first of two induction meetings.

22. Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported that a Solihull MBC consultation on Early Help had been launched but the closing deadline brought forward from 30th August to 10th July. Members noted this change but did not wish it to be an agenda item for full council. The Clerk had discussed with the Hall Manager the flag flying procedures to be followed by Wardens, suggested an alternative process and following acceptance of her help, she had accordingly actioned some changes. Suggested review of policy in 2017 and would diary the administration required again in 2019. New financial regulations had been brought in for award of contracts in England over a certain threshold and this would need to be included when the Financial Regulations were reviewed in September. Members noted the report on staffing costs and for the benefit of new members, the Clerk explained the system of time off in lieu that was operated (before and since her appointment). A member referred to only 11 hours being allowed to be carried forward but the Clerk confirmed that this was not a rule ever in operation by this council.

Clerk
GH/KS
asap

FGP
2017
Clerk
2019
FGP
09/15

DRAFT