
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH 2007
AT 19.30 HRS**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr P Scriven

Councillors:

Cllr A Buckley
Cllr J Dutton
Cllr J Gibbins
Cllr D Kettle
Cllr E Knibb
Cllr S Ward
Cllr Mrs. B Wilkins

Officers: Mrs. C Tibbles (except Item 11) **Public:** No members of the public.

1.

Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr J Riordan were accepted for the reasons given.

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

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting.**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Ward, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesdays 31st January and 14th February, 2007 be signed as a true and correct record.

4. **Planning Applications.**

Planning Applications and any Decision Notices received since the last Meeting were considered by the Committee, and the recommendations thereon are set out overleaf. Members were notified of a Planning Inspectorate Appeal Hearing on 1st May at 10 am relating to Application No 2006/1940 by Revelan Group at 362-364 Chester Road.

5. **Licence Applications.**

The Licence Application for Londis store, 202 Bradford Road, was considered. Cllr. Mrs. Wilkins objected to the longer hours of opening and questioned the need for an outlet as there was an existing pub. **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to object to this application as it was likely to exacerbate the acknowledged anti-social behaviour problems which had necessitated the police to invoke a dispersal order on the Village Green and surrounding area. Members felt granting this application would not prevent further crime and disorder and would not prevent public nuisance to neighbours, residents, businesses and visitors to the Village Green. Members were notified that Solihull MBC had arranged a Panel meeting on Thursday 5th April at 6 p.m. to consider the application by the Spitfire PH to vary their premises licence.

6. **Resident's Concerns.**

Noted with interest.

7. Communications.

Routine communications received since last meeting: Letter from Cllr Dutton notifying not standing for re-election / Election Nomination Papers and Instructions from Solihull MBC / Castle Bromwich Gazette / Standards Board research / Flooring Company specialist services / Village Halls Newsletter / SCVS Newsletter / Solihull Times / Drug Outreach Services and sample Sharps Policy / Opportunities Bulletin / Phoenix Fire Services leaflet / Customs & Revenue Year End information / Pension Fund Year End Information / Changes to Green Garden Sacks for 07/08 / e-on Central Networks Parish Council Emergency Pack (for powercuts) / Country Matters newsletter / Yellow Pages information / Children's Centre Stake holders meeting 28/3/07 10 am at Castle Bromwich Library / Revised Model Contract of Employment for Clerks / request by local business for re-instatement of bollard to prevent damage to grass (including photographs) / letter from resident objecting to Spitfire application for extended hours / insurance certificate for new grounds maintenance contractor / Clerks & Councils Direct Journal / Opportunities Direct / Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Parish Biodiversity Action Plan / Foster Care Association publicity / suppliers catalogues / Local Council Review / Heart of England NHS Trust journal / The Clerk journal. Also received: Opportunities Bulletin / Your Solihull quarterly magazine / Civic Street winter bulletin / WM Pension Fund scheme information / copy of Council Tax information leaflet / SAC invitation to attend "Planning Control and Enforcement – how it works" presentation at the Civic Suite on 22nd March 6.30 p.m. / NALC Election pack / Solihull MBC Trading Standards information.

8. Resolution Moved on Notice.

Members had received the following resolution from Cllr Kettle for amendment to Standing Orders:

Duties of Chairman

The Chairman remains in office, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, until his successor becomes entitled to act as Chairman.

If the Chairman is present at any Parish Council, or Parish meeting, he will chair that meeting.

The Chairman is expected, where possible, to attend functions he is invited to as Chairman, where he will represent the Council. And is expected to report back to the Council at the next full Council meeting.

The Chairman will sign or countersign documents on behalf of the Council as requested by the Clerk. He will also sign full Council minutes as approval of their correctness. The Chairman will liaise with the Chairmen of committees, so as to ensure the decisions of the Council are carried out. But he may not issue instructions to Council employees not approved by the Council.

He will take notice of the booklet entitled "Supplementary notes on Chairmanship" taken from the Parish Councillors Guide.

He is expected to take advantage of training courses on Chairmanship provided by W.A.L.C.

Cllr Gibbins understood that the resolution was not for discussion at this stage but wished to make a statement. He thought this was a most serious document during his time on the Parish Council and wished to be free from the constraints of Chairmanship to allow him to speak from the floor so he resigned as Chairman with immediate effect.

Following an earlier suggestion by Cllr Gibbins, members were asked by Cllr Kettle to insert a comma after 'employees' in order to improve clarity. Cllr Kettle said that the items

included originated from the Local Government Act 1972 and the NALC supplementary notes for Chairman. Cllr Buckley knew that the items were embodied in Acts of Parliament. Cllr Kettle **PROPOSED** the resolution for an amendment to Standing Orders as detailed above. The motion was not seconded and therefore would not be considered further. Cllr Gibbins stated he wished to withdraw his resignation as Chairman of the Council but Cllr Kettle believed that regulations did not permit this.

Cllr Knibb asked for clarification of why the change was put forward and Cllr Kettle said for some time he had felt it advisable to regularise what the duties of Chairman of the Council involved and had also referred to the valuable 'Parish Councillor's Guide'. Cllr Gibbins asked if it was empowered in legislation why had he re-written it three times and Cllr Kettle replied it was to make it straightforward. Cllr Knibb asked if it was an accusation of the Chairman and Cllr Kettle replied no. Cllr Gibbins said he would explain in the fullness of time.

9. Website.

After discussion and suggestion by Cllr Knibb to include more information on representative roles by members and if a 'hit counter' could be included, **IT WAS RESOLVED** to publicly launch the website on 2nd April, which would include ratified minutes of recent meetings. A press release would be distributed and invitations to local groups to send in links to their community websites. Cllr Knibb reported that the Youth Council wished to canvass views of local young people and hoped this could be done via the website. Cllr Dutton stated that Cllr Riordan had done an excellent job in writing the information and Cllr Mrs. Wilkins commended the response to changes suggested by experts and had found the site easy to use.

10. Review of National Minimum Wage and Leisure Services Committee recommendations.

Councillors considered the tabled information on imminent national negotiations for the National Pay Award, the notified Minimum Working Wage increase to £5.52 from 1st October 2007 and under confidential terms, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Dutton, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the recommendations of the Leisure Services Committee be endorsed. Also under confidential terms, members were updated on another staff issue.

11. Review of Council Office Staff salaries.

In the absence of the Clerk for this item and under confidential terms, Councillors reviewed the salaries of Council Office staff. The Chairman said members appreciated the difficulties of the current staffing situation and **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that an on incremental award be recommended for the Clerk.

12. Lottery Funding Application – Arden Hall and Community Regeneration.

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that full delegated authority be given to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to approve the final application for Lottery Funding as final costings from the quantity surveyor should be available for consideration by 12th April.

13. Accounts.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Buckley, **SECONDED** by Cllr Dutton, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the accounts, as circulated, should be approved. Members noted the latest budget printout that had been tabled.

14. Clerk's Report.

Following consideration of the draft Precept statement prepared by Cllr Riordan **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that this be forwarded to parishioners who had asked about the reason for the precept increase and displayed on noticeboards. Election forms for prospective Parish Councillor were available from SMBC website and copies tabled.

Guidance information should be strictly followed, with advice being available from the Elections Office if required. A donation of £125 has been kindly received from Cllr Gibbins for his charity fund. The Clerk had found the meeting with Ch Supt Scobbie very valuable, which included helpful suggestions by Insp. Lee for using Hob Farm as a venue for the Fusion project (sports coaching) which he thought could ease any potential locking up problem by timing the project to end at 8 pm when Hob Farm would be closed in the summer. She had attended the funeral of James Cain, a longstanding member of British Legion and condolences on behalf of the Parish Council had been sent to Frances Nicholas, Branch Secretary. An opportunity had been given for some residents near the Spinney to discuss the ASB problems with Borough Council officers. The Clerk and Mrs. Haycock would be taking some of the time owed to them by working additional hours within Arden Hall so the answerphone could be in more frequent use. Enquiries were still being received from exhibitors for the forthcoming Bridal Fayre and although the Marketing working party had agreed to give free alcohol to members of the public, another option has been suggested and **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that allowing an exhibitor to give complimentary bucks fizz was a more cost effective option and the hire regulation prohibiting bringing own alcohol be suspended by members on this occasion. The WALC Briefing day had been an excellent opportunity to gain valuable insight with useful workshops. As requested, the Clerk had managed to prepare information on possible hours and duties of a Deputy or Assistant Clerk to work either 6 hours per week (duties could include scrutiny of bar takings, stock reports, cash handling on Fridays, audit preparation) or 12 hours (additional duties could include preparation of agendas, minutes, research for meetings and associated correspondence).

This was discussed further under confidential terms and members were also informed of a staff disciplinary matter.