
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CASTLE
BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2007
AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins

Councillors:

Cllr Mrs. P Allen
Cllr D Feasey
Cllr E Knibb
Cllr Mrs. A Haywood
Cllr M Rashid
Cllr J Riordan
Cllr Mrs. J Smith
Cllr A Terry
Cllr Miss J Ward

Officer: Mrs C Tibbles

Guests: Ms. Alison Lush, Neighbourhood Manager, Solihull MBC [Items 1-3]
Sgt. P. O'Reilly, Castle Bromwich Neighbourhood Team, WM Police

Public: 8 members of the public [Items 1-13]

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that contributors stand up when addressing the meeting and to speak up clearly for the benefit of everyone present. A reminder was also given about switching off mobile phones.

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr A Bull, Cllr D Franklin, Cllr S Ward were accepted for the reason given.

The Chairman informed members that she had received a resignation from Cllr J Gibbins and took the opportunity to recognize and thank him for his dedication, service and hard work over the past few years on behalf of the Parish Council, both as a former Chairman and as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, together with time serving on working parties. She acknowledged his skills in marketing would be missed, together with his unique sense of humour and members agreed with the Chairman that his contributions be publicly recognized.

2. Declarations of Pecuniary or other interests.

There were no interests declared.

3. Guest Speaker: Alison Lush, Neighbourhood Manager, Solihull MBC.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Lush explained the work she did in Castle Bromwich in conjunction with colleagues, such as the police and explained that although boundaries differed slightly it was important to work together. Handouts were supplied to members and Ms Lush explained the Borough was covered by 3 Neighbourhood Managers, each area having 4 Co-ordinators and she appealed for the Neighbourhood Team to be kept informed of what problems residents had and what areas they wished to see improved. Steve Crook was the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and he was already well established in Castle Bromwich. She explained how recent projects were used to tackle problem areas, like the anti-graffiti day by the Spitfire shops, and said there would be a zero tolerance with graffiti at the Village Green for the next six months. She also commended the 'Environmental Champion' volunteers who were helping in practical ways with litter picking and re-painting cable boxes. There had been 2 arrests from the 'Blag a Tagger' scheme and 35 referrals. She also highlighted the 60+ young people from the Grace Academy who were working every half term to improve the local environment, which she hoped

would be extended to include Park Hall students in the future, encouraged by Sgt. O'Reilly. A new scheme was also encouraging Junior Rangers in some parks. Anti-social behaviour in Castle Bromwich, which was an area of mostly owner occupied housing, did not have the same level of involvement from Solihull Community Housing and she hoped this could change in future. A dome hawk camera in Hazlehurst Road was making a difference. Sgt. O'Reilly added that the police supported the work of the neighbourhood teams and he publicised the 'Partners and Communities Together' meeting being held at Arden Hall on Wednesday 5th December at 7 pm. He asked people to come and air their views but in a constructive way so that future priorities and partnerships could be established.

The Chairman invited comments and the following topics were discussed in more detail: severe graffiti problem on bus shelters at Parkfield Drive, which prevented you seeing the buses coming; failure to remove dog mess, graffiti and leaves in Clevedon Avenue; role of PCSO's when pedestrian nearly knocked down by car driving on pavement; civil parking enforcement role recently taken over by the Borough Council; request by residents for lights/camera by empty factory unit at the Village Green (explanation by Ms. Lush that lights sometimes encouraged more young people to congregate as they felt safer but acknowledgement by Sgt. O'Reilly that mischief makers preferred darker areas to conceal what they were up to); graffiti problem on main road at former County Garage buildings even though well illuminated by street lighting; problems of graffiti on private property; damage to tarmac and oil spillage seeping onto Bradford Road from car washing business; explanation of criteria required to get dome hawk camera and request for one in alleyway from Springfield Road to Whateley Crescent; explanation by Sgt O'Reilly that areas with most complaints would trigger a feasibility study requiring logs to be completed by residents (many requests received for the 12 cameras available) and he urged people not to suffer in silence and to report problems to the police at the time they were happening; youth problems at Hob Farm open space and ways to prevent problems; possibly use by the police of arrest powers during the few remaining weeks of the dispersal zone, following a successful 3 hour operation by the police on a recent Friday evening.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Lush for her enlightening talk and most useful information. She also urged members of the public to attend the police meeting the following Wednesday.

4. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 31st October, 2007 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

5. Questions from Councillors.

There were no questions.

6. Questions from the Public.

Standing Orders were suspended for a maximum period of 15 minutes so that members of the public could ask questions. Following an explanation of procedures by the Chairman, members of the public were invited to state their name and address prior to asking their question. There were no questions.

7. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Riordan, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Smith, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 7th November 2007, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

8. Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesdays, 31st October and 14th November 2007, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

9. Report and future meetings of Working Parties/Friends of Arden Hall.

Cllr Riordan reported that Cllrs Mrs. Allen, Feasey, Knibb, Terry and Mrs. Wilkins had attended the Budget Working Party meeting on the morning of 24th November to draft the financial information for each of the 3 cost centres. The Clerk would undertake further research to enable both Committees to consider detailed cost centres and a draft budget plan at the January meetings.

10. NALC Advice on Public Participation during meetings.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Clerk explained that regulations were being reviewed nationally due to changes in the Code of Conduct for Members and that the Parish Council would be considering Standing Orders accordingly. She felt sure that public participation would continue to be most welcome by the Parish Council, as it had been in the past, but it was important for people to be aware that their comments were being made in a public arena and if appearing in council minutes would become a legal and public record that was widely available and accessible via the internet. However, the Parish Council would not wish to accept responsibility or liability for the accuracy or content of contributions by members of the public, who were normally identified in the minutes in line with current procedures. The NALC advisory document was available if anyone wished to read it or request a copy.

11. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr Knibb reported that on Monday 5th November he had attended the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Governors of Castle Bromwich Junior School, when a presentation had been made of National School Benchmarking and comparison which was now securely available to all schools via the internet. This would allow Headteachers to compare 'like for like' performances with one another according to what criteria was programmed in, although some governors felt it would enable government and LEA's to manipulate figures to represent what they wished in future years. Normal business was then conducted including review of finances, purchasing policy and terms of reference, as required by audit.

On Tuesday, 6th November, Cllr Knibb had attended the Youth Council meeting and a new councillor was co-opted and duly signed in. Again the Council moved on through business and most importantly the ongoing survey of the requirements of young parishioners for the future. Survey forms were to be returned by 14th December and one member had agreed to collect them and collate the responses ready for presentation at the January meeting of the Youth Council.

Cllr Knibb reported that on Sunday 11th January, as Vice-Chairman, he had the honour of laying the wreath for the Parish Council at the War Memorial during Solihull's service of remembrance hosted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Solihull and the Borough Council members in their ceremonial robes. He had been most impressed with the whole event, including the professional manner of the organisation and was pleased to add that the threatened rain held off until the ceremonies had concluded.

On Monday, 12th November, Cllr Knibb had attended a governor's Curriculum and Community meeting at Castle Bromwich Junior School, which analysed feedback on both literacy and numeracy based on governor inspection visits to subject leaders in relation to assessing pupil progress as required under the governor pilot scheme for constant monitoring. A host of other topics were discussed along with reports on visits and use of benchmarking data that was now available between schools. On Thursdays 15th, 22nd and 29th November he had attended a series of courses on Special Educational Needs at the Civic Suite in Solihull, as part of his governor responsibilities on behalf of the Parish Council.

On Wednesday, 14th November Cllr Knibb and Cllr Mrs. Allen had attended an all day seminar at Carrs Lane in Birmingham for councils and councillors aspiring to become Quality Status councils in the next few years. He felt it had nothing to do with becoming a Quality Council but was about the need for parish councils to ensure that they were represented at regional level because that would be where all major consultations and decisions would be formulated or made. The Government White Paper on Parish Council had now become law and there were a great many

changes due which were exciting, provided we become a quality status council. There were eight guest speakers and all emphasised the effect of government legislation over the next 10-15 years, with power resting with the unelected regional bodies and local Parish Councils.

Cllr Mrs. Smith reported that she had that day attended her first meeting of the Airport Consultative Committee as the new representative of the Parish Council and topics discussed included air pollution and the proposed revisions to the runway extension. As the agenda had been 70 pages long she would endeavour to summarise business conducted for the next Council meeting. However, she did encourage everyone who was available to visit the Exhibition Bendibus, which would be at Arden Hall the following morning between 10 am and 1 pm to share information about the runway changes.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on Tuesday, 27th November she had attended a West Midland Regional Assembly event with a drop-in opportunity to discuss a draft project concerning green spaces, the environment and conservation, which she had found most useful. She thought it was important to protect green spaces, which were needed for both old and young parishioners.

12. Report of the Officer of the Council.

The Clerk had no urgent matters to report.

13. Report of the Chairman.

The Chairman said that she had the regrettable duty earlier to announce the resignation of Cllr Gibbins and had with her his letter of resignation, which councillors could request a copy of from her at the end of the meeting if they wished. She had found him a font of advice and would miss him greatly.

The Chairman reported that on Sunday, 11th November she had laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Sunday Service at the Village Green, along with the members of the Royal British Legion, other organisations and members of the Parish Council. The cadets from local groups mustered at the far end of the Green and marched up to the War Memorial. Following the departure of our Rector Michael Sears to another living on the Norfolk Broads, the service was conducted by Rev Shepherd, who was (as he put it) 'a roving rector'. The service was extremely well attended by members of the public and well organised. She thanked the Clerk for all her hard work in organising the occasion, volunteer marshals, input and help from other councillors and the staff at Arden Hall in helping to make this a very successful occasion. A short reception was held afterwards at Arden Hall, which seemed to be well enjoyed.

On Monday 12th November, the Chairman had attended a meeting of the Trustees of the Richard Knight Charity and decisions were taken on the division of funds available to be donated to various organisations in Castle Bromwich and vouchers for £25 each to be used at Morrisons, for the provision of some extra help towards Christmas for those in need within the parish.

On Saturday, 17th November, the Chairman had attended a meeting of the Trustees of the Dame Mary Bridgeman Trust where again the funds available were donated to various organisations within Castle Bromwich. This meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Trust – the Earl of Bradford - where our new cups and saucers were used.

On Wednesday 21st November, along with other members of the Council, we started the task of reviewing our Standing Orders. She had taken on the task of putting together our suggested amendments and hopefully would have these ready before too long for councillors to read, digest and come back with further suggestions and amendments.

On Saturday, 24th November she had started to help with the Budget setting for the following year but as she felt unwell, she apologised and left early, hoping no-one caught her nasty cold.

On Tuesday, 27th November she had attended the Carol Concert that was put on in conjunction with Albert and Margaret Turner MBE for Age Concern in Castle Bromwich. She was sure that the proceeds of the collection as always would be put to very good use. The children from Castle Bromwich Junior School and the Reception Class from St. Mary and St. Margaret's Infant

School, along with the Castle Bromwich Singers, provided the audience with a very entertaining evening and she thanked them all. The Chairman also thanked John Gibbins for his hard work in organising the event and being MC for the evening and hoped he would continue to support the Parish Council in this event next year. She also thanked Cllr Mrs Haywood for her help in setting out the hall and organising the collection. There had been one or two sticky moments before the tree lighting as the children from the infant school arrived before their teachers – however when the moment came to light the tree, everything started to go to plan and she hoped all those who attended enjoyed the night as much as she had.

Finally, the Chairman urged everyone to seek volunteers to consider applying for the two vacancies on the Parish Council.

14. Minutes of the Council Meeting on 26th September, Item 10.

At the request of the Chairman, under confidential terms, members were asked to consider the revised document. Cllr Riordan expressed his unease about why the matter was being discussed under confidential terms as the meeting discussion and debate on the minutes had taken place in public. Following further discussion, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the amended Minute for Item 10 (as below) be accepted. Cllr Riordan abstained from the vote. The Clerk pointed out that a resolution had never been made to accept the Staff Panel minutes for 17th and 31st July, as proposed by Cllr Mrs. Haywood on 26th September. The Chairman asked that this omission be placed on the next Council agenda.

REVISED MINUTE:

10. Report of the Staffing Panel.

Cllr Mrs. Haywood **PROPOSED** the Minutes of the Meetings of the Staffing Panel held on Tuesday, 17th July and 31st July 2007, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Cllr Gibbins objected to the wording of the draft terms of reference. He felt a panel of three councillors should not be allowed to assume power and responsibility for staff matters.

Cllr Gibbins felt the emphasis of the Panel should be on offering advice and support and he objected to the Council's previous resolution.

Cllr Riordan was against this objection as the Panel had been approved by full Council following legal advice which clearly specified that a Panel of 3/5 persons was required and that it should not comprise of 15 councillors.

Cllr Gibbins repeated that the Clerk was the Proper Officer with sole responsibility for taking decisions on staffing matters and that her powers should not be superseded by a panel of 3. Cllr Franklin stated that in his experience any Panel or Committee was subservient to the Council and should report to the Council.

Cllr Riordan agreed but said that it was dependant on the powers delegated to any Panel or Committee by the Council. He stated that if the Clerk had sole authority with no support or advice from members then any decision taken by her must not be criticised afterwards by the Council.

Cllr Riordan queried why Cllr Gibbins wished to ignore legal advice taken by the Council with regard to establishment of a Panel.

Following further comments by Cllr Gibbins, Cllr Mrs Haywood summarised the position with regard to the Clerk's delegated powers in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act and that if the Clerk acted within her delegated powers then Councillors should not be seen to criticise her. The Chairman felt that the Panel was a way of offering support to the Clerk and acknowledged her sensible manner. She suggested the Council could consider revising the wording on the draft terms of reference for the Panel to meet to discuss staffing matters when any issues were raised by the Clerk for the Panel to deal with. Cllr Franklin said that staff would have grievance rights and that procedures followed should be legal. Cllr Mrs Haywood agreed that re-wording the draft terms of reference may be helpful and the Chairman consequently called for

a reserve member and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to accept Cllr Terry's offer to assist the Panel when required.

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

Clerk
24/12

ACTION

ACTION

JS
19/12

All members
29/11