

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CASTLE
BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
ON WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2009
AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr J Riordan

Councillors:	Cllr Mrs. P Allen	Cllr M Hayes	Cllr M Rashid
	Cllr R Amos	Cllr N Harris	Cllr A Terry
	Cllr Mrs. A Haywood	Cllr I Hiley	Cllr Miss J Ward
		Cllr E Knibb	Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins

Guest Speakers: Mr. Tony Morrison, Designate Principal, Park Hall School, [Items 4-6 only]
Dr. Lesley Browne, Assistant Headteacher, Park Hall School, [Items 4-6 only]

Officer: Mrs. C Tibbles

Public: 5 members of the public [Items 1-16 only]

1. Apologies.

The apology from Cllr Mrs. T Knibb was accepted for the reason given. Cllr Mrs. J Smith was absent. The Chairman reported that a resignation had been received from Cllr Mrs. S. Baker and he formally thanked her for the work she had contributed to the Parish Council. A copy of her letter was available for members from the Clerk by request.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

None declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Rashid, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25th March, 2009 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

Due to the unavoidable delay in the arrival of the guest speaker, members raised no objection to items 4-6 being considered later in the meeting.

7. Communications.

Members noted the information listed.

8. Committees and Council Structure.

Comments from members were invited through the Chair. Cllr Hayes explained he had put forward this proposal to increase the public opportunity to participate with council matters and to prevent topics being repeated, thereby delaying the work of the parish. Members sought clarification which Cllr Knibb responded to and the following issues were raised: length of future meetings, nature of business at meetings, understanding of minutes, extra demand on members' time, potential length of agendas, practice by other councils with successful committee systems, potential for confusion and misguided decisions, existing access to committee meetings, reduction of workload for the Clerk, feeling of division by some members, working party suggestion for Arden Hall to shorten other agendas, length of existing committee meetings, acceptance of committee recommendations by fellow members, danger of change without greater understanding. Cllr Knibb said he wanted to be involved in all decisions, not just informed of them and that was the reason for the proposal. Cllr Harris felt the committee structure made the Council divisive. Cllr Hiley asked how long committees had been in operation and the

ACTION

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Chairman replied that it had worked well since 1960. The Chairman was concerned that a working party for Arden Hall management would reduce accountability as there would be no agenda, no public right to attend and the 3 existing opportunities each month for members of the public would be reduced to 2, which he felt was a backwards step. Cllr Amos asked what the statute required for meetings and the Chairman said 4 council meetings per year were required. Standing orders explained that committees increased efficiency. Cllr Knibb **PROPOSED** moving an amendment to remove the Arden Hall Working Party. There was no seconder for this amendment so no vote was taken. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, members considered holding full council meetings on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month, Arden Hall Management Working Party (consisting no less than 5 councillors, plus Hall Manager, to report to full council) to meet on the 3rd Wednesday each month. With 3 votes in favour, 9 against and no abstentions, the motion was not carried.

4. Guest Speakers: Tony Morrison, designate Principal and Dr Lesley Browne, Assistant Headteacher of Park Hall School.

The Chairman explained that Ann Green was not able to attend but was most pleased instead to welcome Mr. Morrison and Dr. Browne as guests to the meeting and invited them to address the Council. Mr. Morrison explained he had literally been appointed to the post 2 days ago and was most pleased to accept the Council's kind invitation. However, as Dr. Browne knew considerably more of the community activities that Park Hall School had been involved in, he would be interested to hear her report. Dr. Browne thanked everyone for the privilege of attending to talk about the students that she had been teaching for 21 years at Park Hall. She was immensely proud of them and was still personally excited each morning to go to school. Students had raised £6,000 to build a school in Namibia and after moving to the new Park Hall building, staff had organised for the old furniture and equipment to be shipped to Africa. Every child had been involved in planting 2000 small trees in the past, some of which were now 6 feet high. Over 2,500 daffodils had also been planted, although unfortunately some of these had since been built on. The school had links with Father Christopher (formerly of Castle Bromwich, now a Bishop in Malawi) and help was given to children there. The citizenship role was important for the school and students had been involved with homeless people, community initiatives like fundraising for cancer charity, pet aid and a gardening project at Little Bromwich Hospital for the past 2 years (supported financially by Asda donating £2,500 of baskets, compost, window boxes and garden furniture) students had worked to build a garden for patients with Alzheimers. This project had won a national award for the hospital. Last year the students helped make memory boxes with the patients, which Asda had again supported.

Dr Browne explained the new school building design had been helped by the School Council, involving 60 youngsters attending workshops with the architects. The students had organised community evenings for local people to attend and did very professional PowerPoint presentations. She liaised with the local primary schools whose pupils transferred to Park Hall School. 45 students every week went out on work experience placements, often to places where they could gain early years or elderly care home experiences. She recalled a particularly moving observation of a student working with a special needs child and was delighted at the efforts made to communicate with those less fortunate. Students often helped with cookery and swimming at special schools and in the care homes they helped teach computer skills to elderly residents. The school had been

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pleased to received letters complimenting students on the improvement to standards of uniform. Projects took place with Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens and students who had helped there in the past were now serving in the forces in Iraq. The school was split into 4 houses (mini-schools) and she was 'Head of Bradford'. The school worked on the 'Every Child Matters' basis and worked to keep students safe in their community. There used to be strong links with the Youth Parish Council and she hoped this could be re-established. There were lots of out of hours use of the school by community groups such as karate, line dancing and weight watchers. Castle Bromwich Women's Institute were hoping to work with year 7 students who needed reading assistance, although the necessary CRB checks were difficult to get done promptly. Students had learned about the war for their remembrance day assembly, with memorabilia and stories being supplied by a local resident. There had been improved relationships with the local police and when problems occurred the school had been supported by meeting jointly with parents. All year 7 students worked on a personal community initiative before Christmas. Citizenship was now a GCSE subject for all students who undertook community projects, some at Jubilee Gardens, a local home for the elderly. Staff from Castle Bromwich Youth Centre visited on Monday lunchtimes to do street dancing and anti-bullying workshops. Older students were working towards Youth Leaders Sports and First Aid qualifications, which involved being assessed whilst working with youngsters in other schools. Dr. Browne had been glad to share the opportunity to give a flavour of the work done at Park Hall school and hoped that the Parish Council and the community would respond favourably to either their Open Morning in July or the Garden Party in June.

Mr. Morrison endorsed the impressive achievements of the school in the community. He explained that from September there were plans to become an Academy through partnership with Arden School. Although there had been lots of changes in the past eighteen months there were four crucial ideas for the future: improving the attitude to life and learning; improve attainment, both academic and vocational; to develop employability skills like teamwork etc; to put work back into the community. He hoped there would be an opportunity to visit the school after September and see what plans were in hand for the future. If there were issues in the community that related to the school, Mr. Morrison asked to be contacted and told about problems so that a better relationship could be built.

5. Questions from Councillors.

At the invitation of the Chairman, members were invited to put questions to the guest speakers. Cllr Harris thought the school sounded fantastic and wished he was there. Cllr Terry asked if students still excelled at sport? Dr. Browne said there had been a joyous moment recently when one student played football for West Bromwich Reserves. The school's Head of Sport was currently the manager of the England U18 team and during a recent Sky Sport televised match mentioned the name of Park Hall School no less than 8 times – for those interested in the result - England beat Ireland in the Home Nations final. The Chairman asked for more information about the annual award made in the name of the Parish Council. Dr Browne thought that the award was to recognize service to the community and the school paid for the prizes but suggested the Chairman might like to come and present the award. The Chairman was most encouraged by what he had heard this evening and was sure the Council would be pleased to be more involved. He thanked the guest speakers for their presentations.

6. Questions from the Public.

Standing Orders were suspended 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 and to clearly say if they objected to their identity

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appearing in the minutes, prior to asking their question.

Mr. Siviter, Blandford Avenue, thanked Park Hall staff for the work they had achieved. He explained that in the past the school had suffered from a lack of discipline for many years but that in the last eighteen months he had not seen any real problems. He felt that staff were building discipline and he expressed his thanks. Mr. Holland, The Green, supported this view and felt that in the past eighteen months there had been a marked improvement in self-respect, self-esteem and self-value and the benefits were showing. The school had improved in a major way and when people were asked about the secondary school they would also say it was getting better. He hoped the improvements would be maintained. Dr. Browne added that when the local community raised concerns, the issues were now considered by the school council, who then cascaded the information to their peers, which was a system that worked with some success. Mr. Holland was pleased that the police were supporting the school and hoped that young people would understand the reality of what having a criminal record meant before it was too late. He knew that some problems in the parish were caused by external factors and not all offenders were from Castle Bromwich.

Mr. Gibbins, Kingsleigh Drive, referred to his written question asking on how many occasions during the past 5 years had the Council cancelled a room hire and for what reason? He clarified that he was referring to a cancellation of a firm signed booking, not simply the unavailability of a room when a booking enquiry was made. He thought the regulations were not clear enough and had drafted a new clause which he would leave for the Council to consider. He urged the council to take out an insurance policy to cover cancellation costs. The Chairman answered the question that to his recollection there had been 1 cancellation in the past 5 years due to a double booking. Cancellation insurance was not provided by the Council's appointed insurer but hirers were advised in the hire regulations to make their own arrangements. Cllr Harris added that in his filming work the insurance against inclement weather was so expensive it was cheaper to bear the risk and therefore suggested if there had been only one incident in 5 years the council should save the premium and address the problem should another incident occur. The Chairman referred the matter to the next Leisure Services Committee meeting.

LSC
06/05

9. Playground Improvements.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Miss Ward, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that an approach be made to Solihull MBC to assess the current play facilities to establish eligibility for Playbuilder funding and enable possible applications to the most appropriate organisations. Once a 'score' was known it would allow comparisons to be made with other locations.

Asst. Clerk.
8/5/09

10. Training.

Cllr Harris referred to the valuable training the previous week and felt every new member should have that opportunity as he now understood key issues better and many questions had been answered. Cllr Knibb thought that the agenda request had been prompted by knowing of specialist trainers of specific topics for individuals which might help the council serve the community better in the future. Cllr Harris asked if there was a list and Cllr Knibb replied that Cllr Mrs. Knibb had a brochure. The Chairman requested the

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brochure so that it could be made available to members via the communications listing.

11. Participatory Budgeting.

Members discussed the request of Cllr Mrs. Knibb, as detailed on the agenda. Cllr Knibb
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explained that this had followed a visit to an active northern community where the public asked for things the community wanted. Cllr Hayes felt it could be valuable if requests were made to the parish council, costed out and reported back to the parishioners to let them know the monetary effect on their precept. Cllr Miss Ward asked if the precept would increase and Cllr Knibb replied it could do if it was voted for. Cllr Hayes warned that high cost suggestions may not be supported by the wider community. Cllr Mrs. Haywood thought the principle was good but that more investigations would be needed to give clearer guidance and fuller understanding. Cllr Knibb said that Arden Hall was built in the same way - it was wanted and voted for by the parishioners and the precept set accordingly. He thought the Government wanted more involvement by Parish and Town Councils. Cllr Mrs. Wilkins referred to the Community Appraisal (completed in 2002) and felt the results could be revisited. The Chairman felt that compiling a Parish Plan would be the way forward. The Chairman, however, disagreed with the statement on current finances which were thoroughly planned and forecast to provide a sensible and responsible budget.

Council
Tba

12. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **SECONDED** by the Cllr Hiley, with 10 votes in favour, no votes against and 2 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 1st April 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

13. Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 11 votes in favour, no votes against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday 25th March and 8th April 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

14. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr Knibb reported that on 30th March he had attended a Castle Bromwich Junior School full governors meeting which heard and approved committee reports from earlier meetings. On 16th April he had attended the WALC County members meeting in Warwick when the retiring Chairman was honoured with the first ex-chairman's badge. Other business conducted was at regional and national level with no immediate impact on this council. On 27th April, he had attended a Curriculum and Community governors meeting at the Junior School with the main topic being a creative partnership with a link school in China and a new union in Gambia. A report was given on the effectiveness of a recent grant funded collaboration between Art and literature to engage the attentiveness and involvement of children in the formation of their own subject material. This was very well received and it was hoped that funding would continue next year to expand on the benefits gained.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that on Saturday, 11th April she had attended Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens on behalf of the Council to judge the Easter Bonnet Parade with the Mayor of Solihull. There had been a very warm welcome and it had been a lovely occasion to take part in.

Cllr Terry reported that the Solihull Tree Wardens had successfully had input into a recent Section 106 agreement that would replace trees lost on a 2:1 basis. A 50 hectare woodland was also being planned somewhere in the Borough.

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15. Report of the Officer of the Council.

Members noted that the Clerk had not received replies from the 2 guest speakers invited for future meetings, which was especially disappointing with the disruptions to bus services currently being experienced by parishioners. A valuable update meeting had taken place with Sgt. O'Reilly and it was hoped to have the police base back in action shortly following the unfortunate flood.

16. Report of the Chairman

The Chairman reminded everyone of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6th May in the Spencer Hall at 8 pm.

17. Land Matters.

Under confidential terms, members considered the professional advice received and **ON THE PROPOSITION** of the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, with 10 votes in favour, no votes against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to defer the matter until further advice and clarification had been received.