

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
 CASTLE BROMWICH PARISH COUNCIL
 HELD IN ARDEN HALL, CASTLE BROMWICH
 ON WEDNESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 2009
 AT 7.30 PM**

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr J Riordan

Councillors:	Cllr Mrs. P Allen	Cllr N Harris	Cllr Mrs. T Knibb
	Cllr R Amos	Cllr M Hayes	Cllr A Terry
	Cllr Mrs. A Haywood [Items 1- 20 only]	Cllr I Hiley	Cllr Miss J Ward
		Cllr E Knibb	Cllr Mrs. B. Wilkins

Guest Speaker: Ms. D Morley, Waste & Recycling Department, Solihull MBC

Officer: Mrs. C Tibbles

Public: 5 members of the public

1. Apologies.

The apologies from Cllr M Rashid and Cllr Mrs. J Smith were accepted for the reasons given.

2. Declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

None declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Cllr Amos, **SECONDED** by Cllr Terry, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday 29th July, 2009 and Wednesday 16th September, 2009 be accepted as a true and correct record of the Meetings.

4. Guest Speaker – Ms. D Morley on Waste and Recycling.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Morley apologized that Mr. Brant was unable to attend the meeting. She explained that over the next 12 weeks 78,000 black wheelie bins would be delivered to households to accommodate non-recyclable waste, with Castle Bromwich being scheduled for delivery at the end of November. The changes were being made to increase recycling to divert waste from landfill sites, give easy access for recycling, save space and make rubbish easier to move, less spillages to make cleaner roads. Some problems to overcome were accommodating bins at flats with no gardens or homes with steps, larger bins for homes with 5 or more residents or medical needs, agreed service for residents who needed assistance. Bins could be viewed at both Connect offices.

5. Questions from Councillors.

The Chairman invited members to ask their questions, which were clarified by the guest speaker. Topics raised included existing supply of black bags, excess rubbish, use of Birmingham tip and Bickenhill, increased flytipping at Chester Road and on the collector road, kerbside sorting, demand for waste being affected by recession, congratulations on the initiative. Cllr Hiley reported that a relative had questioned Birmingham City Council about permission being refused to use their tip, which was nearest to Castle Bromwich and had received a written apology and permission to continue using the facility for the immediate future. [Copy of these details would be available via the Clerk.

6. Questions from the Public.

Standing Orders were suspended so that members of the public could ask questions.

ACTION

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 appearing in the minutes, prior to asking their question. The Clerk gave feedback from a previous meeting and read the response from the Council's insurers clarifying existing cover for loss of hire facilities.

Mr. Gibbins, Kingsleigh Drive, questioned the parish council not paying enough attention to their approval of sales literature for Arden Hall and urged the Chairman to take decisions on behalf of the Council and report to members accordingly instead of the Clerk. He asked rhetorically why the parish council was here? The Chairman explained that councillors were not permitted by law to act individually which is why the Proper Officer had that authority and responsibility to investigate matters. The Chairman suggested the Hire Charge leaflet be referred to the Leisure Services Committee for review. Bor. Cllr Robinson said that work was being done to resolve waste issues and thought Birmingham City Council were trying to address boundary issues in other parts of the city. He hoped that reciprocal arrangements could be encouraged and was surprised by the letter referred to earlier by Cllr. Hiley. Mr. Siviter, Blandford Avenue, reported he'd had his car registration number taken the previous week at the tip and been instructed not to return. Also he had been told not to mix glass and tins again in the same recycling box which Ms. Morley apologized for and would refer this issue back to the collecting team. Mr. Woodhouse, Blandford Avenue, questioned how infirm people would cope with bins and worried about visual impact if they were stored in front of houses. Mr. Siviter asked is more bins would be supplied in future and Ms. Morley said that no more were envisaged. Mr. Woodhouse commended the parish council for asking the community about future community needs and questioned if a much larger hall would be needed to accommodate an aging community that would need more facilities than Arden Hall could offer? He then referred to the well attended Borough Council consultation meeting on the Chester Road when dangers and problems were explored, although he thought the questionnaire was too narrow. Mr. Holland, The Green, asked that when the results were known of the continued use of the Birmingham tip by Castle Bromwich residents that publicity by given by the Echo and the Gazette to prevent flytipping from increasing? If residents had previously been turned away they would need to be informed if it was to be open to them again. The Chairman said the Borough Council could be asked to publicise any agreement if one was reached.

7. Communications.

Members noted the information listed. Members agreed to refer the residents request to donate a memorial bench and the business request to occupy unused space at Arden Hall to the Leisure Services Committee.

8. Working Parties.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that in July and August she had worked with a volunteer from Pertemps. He had been very conscientious and achieved a great deal in his time by clearing rubbish, working outside, tidying indoor areas and moving rubble. She commended him for his superb hard work. The Table Top sale by the Events Working Party held on 13th September had gone well with the next event on 1st November, which would include a craft fair too. She had also attended the Macmillan Coffee Morning which the Chairman would report on later in the meeting.

9. Community Consultation by Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that copies had been distributed to all parish councillors, youth

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councillors, local community groups, three local schools, half of the houses in the Bradford Ward and sent to the local press and for inclusion on the website. Naturally, the more copies were distributed then the better response would be achieved and a list of roads in the parish was available after the meeting if anyone wished to help deliver more. She was seeking clarification about banners before placing an order.

Members asap

Clerk 7/10

10. Solihull MBC – Chester Road ‘Smart Route’.

The Chairman invited members’ views on the request to hold a joint meeting with other parish and town councils. Members were in agreement with this and the Clerk was asked to suggest 21st October as a suitable date to Solihull MBC. Members of working parties that were scheduled to meet that evening would be able to send their views with fellow councillors.

Clerk
1/10

11. Neighbourhoods Project (and Community Engagement).

Members noted the three questions posed in the document and members agreed they wished to be involved in this initiative.

Asst. Clerk
7/10

12. Open Spaces.

The Chairman read the invitation received from Castle Bromwich Youth and Community Partnership to be involved in the bulb planting initiative and after discussion, members were pleased to support this by identifying areas of suitable Parish Council as the Garden of Memory, park fence adjacent to Hungerfield Road, War memorial garden and underneath Arden Hall front windows. Other locations supported were the island at Whateley Crescent, Hurst Lane North green space, St. Clement’s church and the grass verge by former 452 garage. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hayes, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the 4 areas of parish council land identified be suggested to Solihull MBC. A meeting was taking place in the Committee Room at Arden Hall on Tuesday 6th October at 11 am and members were warmly invited to attend to express their preference for bulbs. Cllr Terry asked that the organizers alert Enterprise to the locations to avoid mowing over any flowers when they grew.

Clerk
1/10

Members discussed the existing byelaw prohibition of vehicles and overnight parking and noted their successful enforcement in recent years. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to continue to use existing byelaws. Mr. Holland commended the council for its vigilance and endeavours for prompt enforcement when necessary.

13. Solihull MBC – New Road Names – Development off Lanchester Way

After consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 11 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the suggested names of Jensen (not Jenson) Avenue, Bentley Court, Reliant Close and Park View be approved. A question was asked as to whether they would be located in Smiths Wood or Castle Bromwich.

Clerk
1/20

14. Standing Committees – Proposal to be debated at the September meeting.

As requested, the Clerk had sought advice from WALC on this proposal, which confirmed “the Chairman had been correct in the interpretation of Standing Orders that a change to the make up of the Committees was only possible following the procedure laid down in Standing Order 36, the Rescission of Previous Resolution as this was clearly referred to in Standing Order 42. If the Council votes that the matter is serious enough and cannot wait for the 6 months to expire, Standing Orders may be suspended. However, this is not good

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practice as the council will never move forward and will undermine the decision making processes of the council as a body, if it continually reverses decisions and it gives the impression to the public of an inefficient council. At the time of the original decision, it is assumed that the Council had good reasons for taking the decision.” Cllr Hayes withdrew his proposal and accepted the Chairman’s suggestion that it be tabled at the October meeting, standing adjourned for one month, to be duly considered at the November meeting, ensuring compliance with the six month rule.

15. Park Hall Annual Award – Commissioning of new Plaque.

[Mr. Gibbins stated he had alerted the Parish Council to this award in their name but said a plaque was not significant or appropriate for a child and wanted a prize of real value.] Cllr Hayes said that the school were in agreement with the plaque but would refer his suggestion to the next appropriate Committee meeting. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 12 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that an engraved plaque, with name, be commissioned and the quote for £30.99 be accepted.

FGP 15/10

Clerk
14/10

16. Local Government National Salary Award 2009 – Cost of Living Increase.

Members noted the pay award agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services for 2009-2010 and revised salary scales which would be applied from 1st April, 2009. The revised minimum hourly rate of pay would change to £5.819 and also met the national minimum wage effective from 1st October.

Clerk
asap

17. Solihull MBC – Solihull Partnership – Sustainable Community Strategy for Solihull 2008-2018.

18. Solihull MBC – Solihull Partnership – Solihull Safer Communities Plan for 2008-2011.

19. Solihull MBC – Solihull Partnership – ‘Compact Plus’ for Solihull.

These 3 items were considered jointly and, at the suggestion of the Chairman, members agreed to read the documents before the next meeting and to discuss these topics at the October meeting.

Members to
circulate or
read via SMBC
website

20. Motion by Cllr Harris.

Cllr Harris asked to amend his motion as previously detailed on the agenda. **ON THE PROPOSITION OF** Cllr Harris, **SECONDED** by Cllr Knibb, members were asked that the council consider a full and proper investigation to be undertaken into the finance arrangements of the Council that allowed £215,000 deficit over a period of 7 years and to discuss and form plans to stop similar losses in this financial year and beyond as this is questionably a serious waste of public money and one in which the Council needs to be seen to be addressing in a responsible manner. Cllr Harris further stated he was not suggesting any blame of impropriety on individuals. [Mr. Woodhouse recalled previous financial decisions in the 1990’s that were questioned by parishioners and felt the present precept was peanuts in comparison to the Borough Council.] Cllr Harris felt it was unacceptable for 31% of the precept to be spent on Arden Hall which was highly underused by the community and was an expensive commodity that he thought should be stopped, not condoned. He asked if members knew that Arden Hall cost £70,000 a year? The Chairman said that members democratically considered the budget, line by line, before agreeing the precept and were fully involved and aware of the decisions being taken. Cllr Harris thought the council should subsidise Arden Hall as a community facility but that 10% was a more reasonable figure. Cllr Hayes asked if Cllr Harris wanted an external investigation or if it would be acceptable for him to undertake it as the current chairman of

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Finance and General Purposes Committee and recent new member? Cllr Mrs. Knibb thought it best to make a decision openly to move forward. Cllr Hayes reminded members that it had already been agreed to study hire details from a sample 4 month period to ascertain facts. Cllr Knibb reminded members of the need for adequate reserves to enable the council to meet its responsibilities, e.g. trees, and that it needed to be fully independent of the Borough Council when setting the precept, if it was to survive the recession. The Chairman felt the figures quoted did not reflect the investment in the building. The expenditure over 7 years was nearer £202,000 which had included £181,000 invested in the fabric of the building. The relevant subsidy therefore was closer to £20,000 over 7 years, which equated to £2,900 per year. Cllr Harris thought the council was obsessed with Arden Hall and thought other things were better for the community. [Mr. Woodhouse reminded members that long ago the community entered a pact to build and support Arden Hall and the general consensus was it was needed and likely to be more so in the future with increased leisure time, especially with other organisations facing more serious financial hardship. He suggested better financial understanding would help.] Cllr Mrs. Knibb respected both views but thought a bigger debate was needed to see how the council should manage it. The Chairman did not see the need for an investigation as budget decisions were openly and publicly made. Cllr Amos felt the Hall was the hub of the community and that the council should listen to parishioners. Budget planning for next year would start soon and the Responsible Finance Officer would alert members if there were issues with the current budget. The Chairman added that the Hall Manager also reported every month to the Leisure Services Committee with bar income comparisons to targets previously set. Cllr Harris and the Chairman referred to listening to the views of parishioners and Cllr Hayes asked that no personal comments be made. Cllr Harris had not been involved in the budget process before and just wanted to know what was acceptable. The Chairman clarified that overall expenditure for Arden Hall was within budget and that the precept paid the difference between income and expenditure. The Clerk re-read the amended motion and with 8 votes in favour, 3 against and no abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that Cllr Hayes conduct an investigation and report back to members in due course.

Cllr Hayes

21. Guest Speakers.

Members noted the speakers planned and the further requests received. **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Terry, with 11 votes in favour, no votes against and no abstentions, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that further speakers be invited.

Asst. Clerk
Oct.09

22. Staff Appraisal Scheme.

Members noted the existing policy had been reviewed by the Staff Panel.

23. Report of the Leisure Services Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Mrs. Wilkins, **SECONDED** by Cllr Hayes, with 8 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on Wednesday, 2nd September 2009, having been circulated, be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

24. Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 10 votes in favour, no votes against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on Wednesday 29th July and 9th September 2009, having been circulated,

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be received, approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

25. Report of the Staffing Panel.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Terry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Amos, with 10 votes in favour, no votes against and 1 abstention, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 17th September 2009, having been circulated, be received and noted.

26. Representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr Mrs. Allen reported that she had attended two meetings in August and September of the trustees of Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens on behalf of the Parish Council.

27. Report of the Officer of the Council.

Members noted that the Clerk, under her delegated powers and in line with previous council decisions, had authorized the Fusion playscheme in the Park from 26-29th October, from 1 pm to 3 pm for soccer coaching. In the absence of the Events working party meeting, she had continued with arrangements for the Remembrance Parade which had now been agreed with the police and the Highways department. The Carol Concert was next on her list for action. She confirmed the vacancy for a parish councillor had been advertised. Members were given a copy of an email she had received from the external auditor for their information.

28. Report of the Chairman

The Chairman reported that on August 6th he had represented the Parish Council at the funeral of Rifleman Joseph Murphy killed on active service in Afghanistan on 10th July. The Council had agreed to send a wreath but it was floral tributes from the family only so a donation had been duly made to his regiment, 2 Rifles, and a letter of condolence had been sent to the family. On Friday, 25th September he had attended the Macmillan coffee morning at Arden Hall and thanked all those involved in the event, especially Cllr Mrs. Allen and Rachel Gorton, Duty Manager, for the work they had done to organise this very successful morning. £664 had been raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

29. Land Matters – Village Green and Hob Farm former entrances.

Under confidential terms, members considered the professional advice received. After discussion, the Clerk was asked to instruct the surveyor to continue with his endeavours.

Clerk
8/10