



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCILS' FORUM

TUESDAY 24TH MARCH 2009,
AT 6.30 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

Copies of the Parish Councils' Forum Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on the Council's web-site at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/pcf

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Councils' Forum held on 6th January 2009 (Pages 1 - 6)
3. Matters arising from the last meeting (Pages 7 - 10)

Information is attached which gives further information in respect of:-

- (i) Public Speaking at Planning Committee
 - (ii) Certificates of Lawfulness Applications - Consultation with Parish Councils
 - (iii) Training Programme on Ethical Governance issues
4. Presentation - Town Centre Regeneration (Mr. R. Savory, Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager)
 5. Draft Concordat: what is happening about this and when is it expected?

This item has been placed on the agenda for the meeting at the request of the Area Committee of CALC (County Association of Local Councils)

6. Local Neighbourhood Partnerships: Is there going to be a Code of Practice to support the way these work? If so, when will it be ready?

This item has been placed on the agenda for the meeting at the request of the Area Committee of CALC (County Association of Local Councils)

7. Draft Core strategy: Planning for housing between Alvechurch and Redditch - what responses have there been to the consultation?

This item has been placed on the agenda for the meeting at the request of the Area Committee of CALC (County Association of Local Councils)

8. Proposals for the redevelopment of Bromsgrove Railway Station

(Item placed on the agenda at the request of Alvechurch Parish Councillor P. McHugh.)

9. Parish Council Casual Vacancies (Pages 11 - 14)

The Parish Casual Vacancy Summary is attached.

Note: The Combined European Parliamentary and Worcestershire County Council Elections will be held on Thursday, 4th June 2009 in all parts of the Bromsgrove electoral area and a leaflet outlining the key dates associated with these elections is also attached.

K DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

18th March 2009

Agenda Item 2

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCILS' FORUM

TUESDAY, 6TH JANUARY 2009, AT 6.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor R. Hollingworth

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Representative(s)</u>
Alvechurch	Mr. P. McHugh
Barnt Green	Mrs. J. Jagger (Chairman)
Belbroughton	Mrs. C. Limm (Clerk) Mr. C. R. Scurrall
Beoley	Mr. B. J. Somner (Chairman) Miss P. Harrison (Clerk)
Catshill and North Marlbrook	Mr. G. F. Witcomb (Chairman) Mrs. G. Lungley (Clerk)
Cofton Hackett	Mr. B. Hodgson (Clerk) Mr. B. Bridgewater
Dodford with Grafton	Mr. R. Harper (Chairman) Mrs. C. Limm (Clerk)
Hagley	Mr. S. R. Colella (Chairman)
Hunnington	Mr. J. Peeney (Chairman) Mrs. R. Mullett (Clerk)
Lickey and Blackwell	Mr. K. Woolford
Lickey End	Mr. C. W. Bateman
Romsley	Mr. I. A. Hodgetts (Chairman) Mrs. R. Mullett (Clerk)
Stoke	Mr. K. Strawbridge (Chairman) Mr. P. D. Callaway (Clerk)
Tutnall and Cobley	Mrs. H. Davies (Clerk)
Wythall	Miss P. Harrison (Clerk) Mrs. S. J. Baxter

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. D. Warren, Mr. D. M. Birch, Mrs. S. Mould, Ms. D. Parker-Jones, Mr. P. Murphy and Mr. A. C. Stephens

9/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. J. M. Bradley (Belbroughton Parish Council), Mrs. J. A. Casey (Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council), Mr. M. Keary (Stoke Parish Council), Mr. R. Levett (Acting Executive Officer, Worcestershire CALC), Mrs. S. Reynolds (Finstall Parish Council), Mr. L. J. Turner (Wythall Parish Council) and Mr. R. Westbury (Barnt Green Parish Council).

10/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Councils' Forum held on Tuesday, 30th September 2008 were submitted. It was **AGREED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

Arising therefrom:

1. Update on the re-development of Longbridge

Following a question in respect of the re-development of the former Longbridge site in the current economic and market conditions, the Chairman stated that the formal Inquiry, or Examination in Public, had been delayed, and would take place at the end of March / beginning of April 2009. He reported that this date may still be subject to change but, in the current economic climate, none of the parties involved in the redevelopment were seeking to expedite matters and that, essentially, the re-development was 'on hold' for the time being.

11/08 **TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR PARISH COUNCILLORS**

Mrs. D. Warren stated that the views of the Forum were being sought in respect of the development of a programme of training for parish councillors on code of conduct, standards and ethical governance framework issues, as defined by the terminology used by both the Government and the Standards Board. She added that the proposals for a training programme were first raised at the Area Committee meeting of the County Association of Local Councils (CALC) on 3rd December 2008, where it was considered that the issues which were of particular interest for training included:

- personal and prejudicial interests (including the register of interests);
- 'dual-hatted' members (where a member may be a parish councillor as well as a district and/or county councillor); and
- pre-determination and bias.

The Forum were informed that the District Council's Monitoring Officer, through the Standards Committee, had a statutory duty to the parish councils to promote ethical standards. It was expected that the support and training provided by the Council would meet this requirement, together with any additional training the parish councils may wish to undertake voluntarily, or by way of their association with CALC.

Mrs. Warren also reported that the training would focus on standards and ethics issues but suggested that it may be possible to provide separate training to cover other areas beyond ethical framework issues; for example, the possible future role of parish councils in respect of the determination of Certificates of Lawfulness for Existing Use or Development, as considered (and subsequently deferred) by a meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 5th January 2009.

12/08 **PLANNING ISSUES**

(Note: The following items were given consideration having been placed on the agenda for the meeting at the request of the Area Committee of the County Association of Local Councils (CALC)).

1. **Planning Consultations**

The Chief Executive reported that this issue had been raised by CALC as a result of the on-going implementation of the Council's Spatial Project. He stated that it was the intention of the Development Control Section to consult electronically with parish councils on planning applications but added that he was aware that some of the parish councils were not yet adequately resourced (in terms of, for example, electronic display facilities) to fully deal with the Council's aims in terms of electronic delivery of services.

In response to a question relating to the provision of support, especially to the smaller parishes, Mr. D. Birch, Area Planning Manager (East) gave details of the "Awards For All" Lottery Grants Scheme, which was aimed at providing funding for projects for the benefit of local communities. He referred to a parish council in Wiltshire which had received grant funding and briefly explained how to make an application, the information to include and how a grant would be an advantage to the local community. He added that he would make these details available to members of the Forum in order that they may wish to seek a grant towards the provision of electronic visual display equipment for use by the local communities in each parish.

The Chairman also stated that the Chairman of the CALC - Mr. D. Cropp - would also be keen for the parish councils within the district to maximise the use of any grant assistance which may be available, having spoken of the funding opportunities available at the series of Parish Seminars held at the Council House in May and June 2008.

It was considered that consultations by electronic communication was a promising step forward but it was recognised that the smaller parish councils were at a disadvantage at this early stage. It was reported that the Council's new database software and electronic communication systems had been installed within a very short period of time and that there would inevitably be issues with the 'roll-out' of the altered working practices. However, it was felt that, within a short space of time, the benefits of the electronic delivery of services would be of invaluable help to the parish councils within the district.

It was **AGREED** that the Chairman of the CALC - Mr. D. Cropp - be requested to assist those parish councils which may be seeking to improve their facilities to take advantage of the electronic consultations process in respect of applications for grant funding, with a view to ensuring that parish councils can improve community involvement and related facilities for community use.

2. Certificate of Lawfulness Applications

Mrs. Warren referred to the meeting of the Forum held on 30th September 2008 where it had been reported that the Council were investigating ways in which the parish councils within the district could contribute to the processes relating to the issue of Certificates of Lawfulness for Existing Use or Development (CLEUD).

She stated that a proposed process had been considered by the Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on 5th January 2009. However, because Members of the Committee were concerned about some of the legal technicalities involved (for example, the dissimilarities in the processes involved for an applicant from a parished area compared to those for an applicant in a non-parished area), it was considered that the Council may be exposed to the risk of a legal challenge in the event that the processes were not robust enough.

As a result, Mrs. Warren informed the Forum that the Planning Committee had deferred consideration of this matter to allow the Council's officers to consult with colleagues in other local authorities to determine how best to implement an effective system of consultation on CLUED applications received by the District Council, and that she would report on this matter again at the next meeting of the Forum.

3. Public Speaking at Planning Committee - Parish Councils

Mrs. Warren again referred to the meeting of the Forum held on 30th September 2008 where it had been reported that the Council was investigating the extension of public speaking at meetings of its Planning Committee to parish councils.

She stated that, at the Planning Committee on 5th January 2009, the extension of public speaking at Planning Committee meetings had been approved and that, because the decision involved a change to the Council's Constitution, the decision would need to be ratified by the meeting of the full Council on 22nd January 2009.

As a result, on the basis that the Council would be agreeable to this change, she suggested that each parish council nominate a spokesperson (for example, Chairman, Clerk or Chairman of the parish council's own Planning Committee) to speak at meetings of the Planning Committee on any application within each parish councils area.

13/08 **ELECTORAL MATTERS - BRIEFING NOTES**

Mrs. S. Mould referred to the briefing note she had prepared which had been attached to the agenda for the meeting and commented on the issues outlined therein relating to the new polling district codes and the publication of the new Register of Electors on 1st December 2008, the elections due to take place in June 2009 and the Casual Vacancies Summary for 2008.

In respect of casual vacancies, Mrs. Mould requested that she be contacted in the event of a vacancy arising at a parish council in order:

- (i) to enable the Electoral Services Team to prepare a formal Casual Vacancy Notice for publication;
- (ii) to ensure the statutory regulations are complied with; and
- (iii) for the 'significant dates' relating to the electoral procedures to be checked and / or correctly calculated.

14/08 **DISTRICT / PARISH CONCORDAT**

The Chairman reported that he had proof-checked a copy of the draft Parish Concordat and anticipated that a copy would be circulated to the parish councils within the District for consultation within the next two to three weeks.

15/08 **LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIPS**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. H. Bennett addressed the Forum and gave an update as to the current situation in connection with the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships initiative.

He referred to the recent stakeholder events held to obtain feedback on the consultation exercise for the parish councils and district councillors, and cited a number of key issues which emerged from the meetings:-

- that the District Council would be seeking to work with the parish councils, rather than imposing Local Neighbourhood Partnerships in particular areas without active support from the local community;
- that the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships in parished areas would be based on the relevant parish boundaries, rather than the District Council Ward boundaries or the County Council's Electoral Divisions; and
- that, subject to approval by the Council, the Local Neighbourhood Partnership initiatives would be well funded and resourced over the full 'roll-out' of the expected 12 partnership areas, thereby demonstrating the District Council's commitment to the initiatives.

Mr. Bennett explained that Local Neighbourhood Partnerships were based on the Local Strategic Partnership model, but that they would not be formal committees or subject to the District Council's Constitution and would not undermine the democratic legitimacy of the County Council, the District Council or the parish councils. Furthermore, as a result of the stakeholder events, it was felt that Local Neighbourhood Partnerships would enable the Council to target funding at specific local issues.

The Forum was informed that two further Local Neighbourhood Partnership pilots had been proposed, namely:

- (a) "Hagley and Rural", covering the Hagley, Clent, Frankley, Hunnington and Romsley areas, with a proposed budget of £20,000 (subject to the approval of the Council); and

- (b) Charford, covering an area contiguous with the District Ward boundary, with a proposed budget of £10,000 (subject to the approval of the Council).

The next stages in the process would be to develop and work with the two new pilot Partnerships, having gained an insight into any likely procedural problems and technical issues from the creation of the first two Local Neighbourhood Partnerships in Alvechurch and Rubery. Following this, it was proposed to repeat the stakeholder event type meetings in October / November 2009 to start the process of developing further pilot schemes in other areas of the district. However, Mr. Bennett emphasised that, such was the investment the District Council was proposing to contribute to the scheme, Local Neighbourhood Partnerships would only be established where the consultation processes with the local communities demonstrated that there was a demand for them. The Chairman re-iterated that the Council would not impose Local Neighbourhood Partnerships in those areas where the response to the community consultation indicated that there was no need or requirement for one.

In answer to several questions raised by the Forum, Mr. Bennett reported that it was anticipated that the new pilots would commence on 1st April 2009, and that inaugural meetings would be held in advance of that date with the relevant parties. He reassured members of the Forum that the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships were not an additional tier of local government and stated that they were a means by which to ensure the three tiers of local government were working together with a specific focus on particular areas. It was anticipated that the next pilot schemes would be determined by the consultation process in due course, details of which would become known later in the year.

16/08 **DATES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS**

It was **AGREED** that the next meetings of the Forum be arranged for 6.30 p.m. on the following dates:-

- Tuesday, 24th March 2009
- Tuesday, 23rd June 2009
- Tuesday, 22nd September 2009
- Tuesday, 5th January 2010

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.

Chairman

Agenda Item 3

1. Public Speaking at Planning Committee

The decision of the Planning Committee held on 5th January 2009 to extend the public speaking arrangements to parish councils was ratified by the Council at its meeting on 22nd January 2009.

An amended guidance leaflet, entitled 'Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings', has been published; a copy of which is attached for information.

2. Certificates of Lawfulness Applications - Consultation with Parish Councils

At its meeting held on 2nd March 2009, the Planning Committee considered the deferred report in respect of extending the role of parish councils in the consultation process involved in certificates of lawfulness.

It was agreed that parish councils will be entitled to participate in the process with effect from 1st April 2009 in the following way:

- (i) details of applications for 'Certificates of Lawfulness for an Existing Use or Development' [also known as CLEUDs] will be posted on the Council's website;
- (ii) parish councils will be entitled to provide information to the Planning Enforcement Officer within 14 days; and
- (iii) the parish council's comments or representations must relate to matters already known to the parish council and should therefore take the form of one of the following:
 - formal minutes of a meeting of the parish council (or one of its formally constituted sub-committees) at which the application site has previously been discussed; or
 - copies of correspondence between the parish council and another party relating to the application site

(The Planning Enforcement Officer will have a discretion whether or not to further investigate any representation.)

3. Training Programme on Ethical Governance issues

The development of a training programme on ethical governance issues for the parish councils is to be considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 31st March 2009 (brought forward from 2nd April 2009).

The Forum's views (from its last meeting) were to be considered by the Standards Committee arranged for 5th February 2009, but that meeting was cancelled due to the bad weather.

Therefore, any further information in respect of this matter will be reported to the Parish Councils' Forum meeting to be held on 23rd June 2009.

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The Council is responsible for deciding applications for planning permission. Some of the applications are decided by the Council's Planning Committee and these tend to be major, complex and the more controversial applications. Other applications are decided by an officer of the Council, the Head of Planning and Environment Services, under 'delegated powers' and these will not be considered by the Planning Committee.

The planning process allows members of the public to comment in writing on any planning application which affects them and letters of support or opposition will be considered when a decision is reached, whether that decision is taken by the Planning Committee or the Head of Planning and Environment Services.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to public involvement in the planning process and has introduced a public speaking scheme to allow members of the public to give their views in person about an application for planning permission which concerns them when it is being considered by the Planning Committee.

This guidance explains how the public speaking scheme works.

Who can speak at Planning Committee Meetings?

The person applying for planning permission (or his or her agent, or other representative) is entitled to speak in support of their application.

Any other member of the public (or his or her agent, or other representative) who has **already submitted their comments to the Planning Officer in writing** during the consultation process is entitled to speak either in favour of or against the application.

A representative of a parish council which has **already submitted its comments to the Planning Officer in writing** during the consultation period is entitled to speak either in favour of or against the application, provided that the property is situated within that parish.

Ward Councillors also have a right to speak at Planning Committee meetings.

How long can members of the public speak?

A maximum of 3 minutes is allocated for:

- all those wishing to speak in favour of the application;
- all those wishing to oppose the application;
- the parish council representative (if applicable);
- the Ward Councillor.

These time limits will be strictly adhered to and only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Chairman of the Committee agree to extend these time limits.

What if more than one person wishes to speak?

If more than one person wishes to speak, either in favour of or against a proposal, there are two alternatives:

- a spokesman may be appointed to speak on behalf of all those wishing to speak either in favour of or in opposition to the application; or
- the speakers can agree to share the three minutes between them.

What is the procedure for speaking?

The Chairman will announce the application and a Planning Officer will give a brief presentation of the application. Speakers will then be invited to address the Committee in the following order:

- objector (or agent / spokesperson on behalf of objectors);
- applicant, or their agent (or supporter);
- parish council representative (if applicable);
- Ward Councillor

Once speakers have finished they will be asked to retake their seats in the public gallery and will play no further part in the meeting.

What can I say?

Comments must be based on planning issues. These include: highway safety; traffic noise; amenity; privacy; pollution; historic buildings; conservation; wildlife; environmental effects; disabled access; Local Plan policies and proposals; the County Structure Plan; the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy; and Government Guidance.

Issues which cannot be taken into account include the developer's motives or morals, loss of views over other peoples' land, property values, private rights, covenants and boundary disputes. Speakers must not:

- make statements of a personal or slanderous nature;
- be abusive; or
- interrupt other speakers, or the Committee debate.

Speakers should explain or elaborate on the issues raised in their written comments but must not raise new planning or other issues which were not included in their written comments. Additional material such as photographs or plans cannot be handed out at the meeting.

As the time is restricted, speakers should ensure that all points are made concisely.

When will I find out the date of the meeting?

The Planning Officer will be able to advise on the likely date of the Planning Committee meeting, but all those with a right to speak will be informed of the meeting date well in advance of the meeting.

A calendar of meetings is available at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/meetings. Agendas are published about 10 days before each meeting on the Council's website and copies are also available at the meeting.



How do I arrange to speak at the meeting?

A person wishing to speak must contact the Committee Services Team by no later than 12.00 noon on the day of the Committee meeting, by email to publicspeaking@bromsgrove.gov.uk, by telephone on **01527 881410**, or by letter to:

Committee Services

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House, Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove B60 1AA

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information and advice, please contact us:

- by visiting the Customer Service Centre in School Drive, Bromsgrove, and speaking to one of our Customer Service Advisors.
- by telephone on 01527 881288.
- by fax to 01527 881414.
- by writing to:
Planning and Environment Services
(Development Control)
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House, Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove B60 1AA
- by contacting your Ward Councillor.
- by email to pec@bromsgrove.gov.uk
- by visiting our website at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Page 10



This leaflet can be provided in large print, braille, CD, audio tape and computer disc.



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

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e-mail: publicspeaking@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Bromsgrove District Council | **Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services**



Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL – CASUAL VACANCY SUMMARY 2008/09

Date of Notice	Parish	Co-Option/Election Outcome	Appointment Notification
2008 9 Feb	Catshill & North Marlbrook/ Marlbrook Ward	Co-Option	Yes
12 Feb	Beoley	Co-Option	Yes
21 Feb	Wythall	Co-Option	Yes
24 Mar	Finstall	Co-Option	Yes
7 April	Alvechurch/ Hopwood Ward	Election	Yes
15 May	Wythall/ Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath Ward	Co-Option	Yes
20 May	Stoke/ Stoke Prior Ward	Co-Option	Yes
4 June	Catshill & North Marlbrook/ Catshill Village Ward	Co-Option	Yes
17 June	Catshill & North Marlbrook/ Marlbrook Ward	Co-Option	Yes
25 June	Hunnington	Co-Option	Yes
8 July	Hunnington	Co-Option	Yes
23 July	Belbroughton/ Fairfield Ward	Co-Option	Yes
19 Sept	Lickey & Blackwell/ Shepley Ward	Co-Option	
7 Oct	Lickey & Blackwell/ Lickey Grange Ward	Co-Option	

Date of Notice	Parish	Co-Option/Election Outcome	Appointment Notification
21 Nov	Wythall/ Wythall South Ward	Co-Option	Yes
1 Dec	Stoke/ Stoke Heath Ward	Co-Option	Yes
22 Dec	Stoke/ Stoke Heath Ward	Co-Option	
22 Dec	Wythall/ Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath Ward	Co-Option	Yes
2009 29 Jan	Barnt Green	Co-Option	Yes
9 Feb	Bournheath	Co-Option	
13 Feb	Stoke Stoke Prior Ward	Co-Option	
26 Feb	Bentley Pauncefoot		
27 Feb	Barnt Green		
2 Mar	Hunnington		

As at 5 March 2009

Electoral Services Elections 2009

**Combined European & Worcestershire County Council Elections
to be held on Thursday 4 June 2009**

Nomination of candidates for the County Council Election must be received
by **4pm on Thursday 7 May**
(European candidates need to contact the Regional Returning Officer at
Birmingham City Council)

Applications for a postal vote or changes to existing arrangements must be
received by **5pm on Tuesday 19 May**

Registration applications must be received by **5pm on Tuesday 19 May**

Postal ballot papers will be issued 21 to 28 May

Applications to appoint a proxy (someone who can vote on your behalf) must
be received by **5pm Wednesday 27 May**

Hours of Poll are 7am to 10pm on Thursday 4 June

Check Registration & Voting on our Website

Tel: 01527 881421
Email: elections@bromsgrove.gov.uk



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Page 13



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