

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **PARISH COUNCILS' FORUM**

Monday, 26th March 2007, at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor R. Hollingworth (Chairman)

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Representative(s)</b>
Belbroughton	Mr. C. R. Scurrall
Bentley Pauncefoot	Mr. L. R. Teague
Beoley	Miss P. Harrison (Clerk) Mr. B. J. Somner
Catshill and North Marlbrook	Mr. P. J. Baker (Chairman)
Clent	Mr. E. Sheppard (Chairman) Mr. D. Faraday
Cofton Hackett	Mr. B. Bridgewater
Hunnington	Mr. J. Peeney (Chairman)
Lickey and Blackwell	Mr. R. Brown (Chairman) Mrs. J. A. Casey
Lickey End	Mr. C. W. Bateman (Clerk)
Romsley	Mr. I. A. Hodgetts (Chairman)
Wythall	Miss P. Harrison (Clerk)

Observers: Councillors Mrs. J. M. Boswell, N. Psirides JP, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey and P. J. Whittaker

Also in attendance: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. P. Street and Mr. A. C. Stephens

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Hollingworth opened the meeting and expressed his apologies for having rearranged the meeting to take place a day earlier than previously agreed. He stated that this was due to a meeting of the Council having to be arranged on the original Forum meeting date of 27th March 2007.

Apologies for absence were received from:-

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Alvechurch	Mr. J. Puckering (Chairman) Mrs. Y. Goode (Clerk)
Barnt Green	Mrs. E. Buckett (Chairman) Mr. R. Westbury (Executive Officer)
Belbroughton	Mr. T. Cherry (Chairman) Mr. R. Copley (Clerk)
Beoley	Mrs. J. D. Luck

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Clent	Mrs. P. Harris (Clerk)
Dodford with Grafton	Mr. R. J. Oakes (Chairman) Mrs. C. Limm (Clerk)
Hunnington	Mrs. R. Mullett (Clerk)
Lickey and Blackwell	Mrs. J. A. Casey (Clerk)
Romsley	Mrs. P. L. Taylor (Clerk)
Stoke	Mrs. T. Roll (Chairman) Mr. P. D. Callaway (Clerk) Mrs. M. J. Birmingham
Tutnall and Cobley	Mrs. H. Davies (Clerk)

2. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Councils' Forum held on 14th December 2006 were submitted. There were no matters arising and it was **AGREED** that the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

3. **REDEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN CENTRE**

Mr. P. J. Baker, Chairman of Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council, referred to the item which had been placed on the agenda for the meeting at the request of the Area Committee of CALC, and asked whether the Council had considered the possible impact on the parishes in the event that the Victoria Ground should be located elsewhere. He stated that a number of his parishioners had seen reports in the local press, together with general public speculation of a possible relocation of the ground to an 'out of town' area.

Councillor Hollingworth responded by saying that, although the Council was investigating schemes to redevelop the town centre, currently there were no plans or proposals relating to, or which would affect, the relocation of the Victoria Ground. The Leader of the Council went on further to say that, whilst he was the Leader, he would oppose any proposals to develop on the site and if the Football Club did leave, then he would seek to ensure that it was returned to community use.

4. **PLAYING FIELDS AND RECREATION GROUNDS**

Councillor Hollingworth referred to the item on the agenda concerning this item and stated that, since the previous meeting of the Forum, a number of parish councils had expressed further interest in the possibility of entering into Service Level Agreements for the provision of a grounds maintenance service by the Council in respect of playing fields and recreation grounds which had previously been maintained by parish councils.

He cited questions raised by both Barnt Green and Alvechurch Parish Councils, relating to non-Council owned playing fields, and the possibilities of the Council maintaining the recreational facilities. He

also outlined the extent of the works which the Council would carry out under Service Level Agreements, and where the responsibilities lay between, for example, the Council, parish councils, Worcestershire County Council, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust, etc.

In order for the parish councils to make progress on this issue, the Chief Executive suggested that each parish council which may be interested in establishing services which could be provided by the District Council should write to him in order to form the basis of negotiating a suitable agreement for grounds maintenance and, where appropriate, other services.

5. **COMMUNICATION FROM DISTRICT COUNCIL TO PARISH COUNCILS**

The Chief Executive referred to the communication of information from the District Council to parish councils and stated that, as publication of the 'Briefly Bromsgrove' bulletin had ceased, copies of which had previously been forwarded to parish councils, arrangements were being made to produce a quarterly newsletter for parishes. In addition, he added that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, together with the Head of Planning and Environment Services were in the process of attending a parish council meeting in all of the parishes within the District, and stated that he would also be seeking to attend. It was hoped that, as a result, the communication flow of information between the Council and the parish councils would therefore improve.

It was suggested, however, that in view of the low level of parish representation in attendance at the meeting, this matter be included for further discussion at the next meeting of the Forum.

6. **CHRISTMAS 2007 - REFUSE / RECYCLING COLLECTION**

Mr. P. Street informed the Forum that, as a result of problems concerning the publicity of the refuse and recycling collection arrangements for the Christmas period in 2006, work had already taken place on preparing the 2007 collection schedule.

He stated that preparation work had commenced not only for the 2007 Christmas holiday, but for future years as well; for example, agreeing working arrangements with the refuse collection crews, devising a publication schedule to include the local media, the Council's web-site, Member Bulletin's and "Together Bromsgrove", etc. Mr. Street acknowledged that the short "lead-in" time to advertise the rearranged collection schedule for 2006 had not helped matters, but he added that every possible effort would be made to ensure customers would be aware of this year's refuse and recycling collection schedule.

Councillor Hollingworth reminded the Forum that the Council was also implementing a text message notification system which would assist with gaining maximum publicity of the collection arrangements. In

addition, it was suggested that, where appropriate, Parish Council notice boards could also be used to gain additional publicity.

Members of the Forum then gave consideration to the suspension, over the winter period, of the "Green Bin" garden waste collection. Mr. Street reported that the mild winter had not helped matters, but confirmed that it was the Council's intention to re-commence the garden waste collection in April each year. The general consensus was that the garden waste collection was a very useful service provided by the Council, but that there were still some areas which could be enhanced for the benefit of customers. Mr. Street stated that he welcomed feedback from the parishes so as to further improve the service.

7. **NEIGHBOURHOOD / AREA COMMITTEE PILOT SCHEME: UPDATE**

Councillor Hollingworth referred to the two current Neighbourhood / Area Committees which were being trialled in Beacon / Waseley, and Alvechurch. He stated that the pilot schemes were at two different stages, but that they had been meeting regularly during recent months, and developing proposals and initiatives.

The Forum was informed that related inception problems were still being dealt with and resolved, especially concerning the ownership of various areas of land and the associated maintenance issues, together with the effect of planning policies and the extent of the green belt applicable to different areas. It was anticipated that the scheme would be extended to the remainder of the district in due course.

Questions were raised about the proposed division of Neighbourhood Committee areas which would split parishes between Council Ward boundaries; for example, according to the areas outlined at the previous Forum meeting, it was suggested that some parishes may benefit from a grouping of Councillors from different Wards which would give an 'area committee' of the combined district councillors for specific Wards (in addition to the other agencies involved) and, therefore, keep parished areas together.

Councillor Hollingworth repeated his assertion that the area committees were still being developed on a trial and error basis and that arrangements were subject to change as the mechanics and intricacies of the proposals were developed.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman