



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on **Monday 13th March 2023** at 7.00pm

This meeting was held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, WV5 9HA.

Present -

Councillors: Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Jan Evans, Mark Evans (Vice-Chairman), Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM (Chairman), Vince Merrick, Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Robert Reade, Mary Roberts

Absent without apologies – N/A

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 1 resident from Apse Close, 1 resident from Wombourne Park and Sgt. Jason Dorrington

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reflected on the sad news of former Councillor John Pike's passing, noting he was a very good friend and colleague of 6.5 years who always made a meaningful contribution to Parish Council meetings. He remembered sitting next to John when he first joined the Parish Council as he would put him at ease and give him advice, which was very welcomed when he first joined.

He explained when he stood as Chairman, John agreed to stand as his Vice-Chairman, a role he went on to carry out for 3 consecutive years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, when they spoke several times a week to ensure residents were fully supported by the Parish Council. He noted John would always be remembered for his one liners, and no matter what the occasion reminding him when his next article was due for the Grapevine Magazine.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM welcomed other Members to share their memories of John.

Councillors Alan Peace, Mike Davies, Barry Bond MBE, and Martin Perry all spoke of the friendship they shared with John as far back as 35 years, mutually noting what a true friend and gentleman he was, how he would tell people what a wonderful life he had, and sending their condolences to Doreen and family.

The resident from Wombourne Park also noted he had known John for many years through the Methodist Church, and explained what a great man he was, and his passing was a very sad loss.

A minute's silence was observed by all.

28/23 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cheryl Davies, and Daisy Tait.

29/23 – Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dan Kinsey noted he was a Member of Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee and a trustee of Wombourne and District Community Association. Councillors Alan Peace and Mary Roberts noted they were Members of the Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee, Wombourne Carnival Committee and Wombourne and District Community Association. Councillor Martin Perry also noted he was a member of Wombourne and District Community Association.

30/23 – Public Participation

The resident from Apse Close noted he had received his council tax bill and the Parish Council's contribution had gone up by 37%, whilst in monetary terms it did not equate to a lot, he wanted to know why the increase was so high.

He also noted a news article suggesting an additional £30m funding for maintaining and improving the highway network in Staffordshire, on top of the £50m already in place and £20m from the levelling up fund and wanted to know how this additional £30m would be spent.

In addition, he noted Councillor Mike Davies was due to meet with Highways on 28th February to discuss end of year work and he wanted to know what the outcome of this meeting was, in addition to an update on the highway repairs both on the A449 and the potholes in the village.

Councillor Mike Davies informed the resident a group meeting had taken place at Staffordshire County Council and the Highways Department had been asked to turn the £30m into an action plan so Members could see what could be achieved with it.

He confirmed work along the A449 would be completed this year and was disappointed that the large pothole in the High Street still had not been repaired, but agreed to follow the matter up.

In relation to the meeting on 28th February, he confirmed some work would be taking place on the footways on the Poolhouse Estate, and he would be funding 2-3 days' work on the Giggerty Estate in the new financial year.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM thanked the resident for raising the matter of the precept increase, noting it still did not make Wombourne Parish Council anywhere near the highest precepting authority in South Staffordshire. He explained the Parish Council were dealing with some acute structural problems which needed urgently addressing. He directed the resident to the Parish Council's website which addresses the increase, and he encouraged residents to view it.

Councillor Barry Bond MBE explained during COVID-19 the Parish Council received almost no income and were not entitled to relief on the rates they pay for the Civic Centre which amounted to £52k per annum which had not helped the financial situation.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed the resident over an 11-year period the Parish Council kept their precept increase at 0%, however, they did not anticipate a global pandemic or war returning to Europe, which have impacted on their costs, and the precept.

31/23 – Police Report

Sgt. Jason Dorrington apologised that a report had not been submitted this month, he had been on Annual Leave and was attending the meeting in his own time.

The period he was discussing was running from 20th February to 10th March, and included 4 burglaries across 24th, 25th, and 26th February where cash, jewellery and bank cards were stolen. The bank cards had not been used so no CCTV had been obtained.

On 21st February thieves were disturbed whilst attempting to steal a Land Rover Discovery from Woodlands Close.

On 5th March 2 electric bikes had been stolen from Ladywell Close. Enquiries into this were still ongoing.

Reports of anti-social behaviour had been made from Wombourne Library, which included intimidating behaviour and smoking weed. Officers attended and found four 15-17 years olds in the location, one of whom was carrying a knife. Appropriate action was taken.

Sgt. Dorrington explained the importance of maintaining a Police presence in Wombourne, and expressed his frustration with officers being deployed to Codsall which was some 8 miles away from Wombourne, and a further 8 miles still to Kinver.

He provided reassurance for businesses in Planks Lane that no other premises had been targeted following the incident where a shop owner was threatened with a knife.

He explained Operation Bulmus is still ongoing with regular patrols in the village.

Councillor Mark Evans asked if the Police had made representations for Samy Ltd to sell alcohol 24 hours a day at the new Morrisons on Common Road. Sgt. Dorrington explained he had no grounds to make representations given any issues that had occurred at or near the premises, including anti-social behaviour and robberies had occurred before 10pm. He suggested he would like to see the license granted in line with other businesses in the village, but if a full license is granted, the premises would be closely monitored, and any issues immediately reported into the Licensing Team at South Staffordshire Council.

Sgt. Dorrington explained he had been in touch with Black Country Ales who have taken over The Old Bush, and whilst they currently have a license until 2am they do not intend to use it, and will not tolerate drug use, or anti-social behaviour and have formed a good working relationship with the Police.

Councillor Robert Reade asked Sgt. Dorrington to look into the inconsiderate actions of people using the highway scaring horse riders in Union Lane into Showell Lane. This included groups of motorbikes doing wheelies past the horse riders. Sgt. Dorrington asked for any head / body cam footage to be sent to him, and explained officers from Stafford could be deployed to check areas such as the Railway Walk.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM asked about contact with a resident from Giggetty Lane following a burglary, noting they had informed him it had taken 10 or 11 days for any contact to be made by the Police. Sgt. Dorrington explained officers attended the scene the day of the report and made house to house enquiries including notes through letterboxes asking for CCTV. They had then followed up with the resident at a mutually convenient time for them both. He explained he was campaigning for more face-to-face service in a timely manner but the more officers who move to Codsall, the less chance of being able to offer that service in Wombourne.

32/23 – Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 20th February 2023.

33/23 – Reports from Committees

- a) Councillor Barry Bond MBE explained no Civic Centre Management Committee meeting had taken place since the last Full Council meeting.
- b) Councillor Martin Perry explained a Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting had taken place on 6th March 2023, where Members were informed the renewal of the lease at Brickbridge Playing Fields was still outstanding and with Solicitors. The last camera at Brickbridge Playing Fields was being fitted, and the work at the changing rooms following the burst pipe was still ongoing. A group of Members from the Committee would be meeting with the football teams to ascertain how they could work together for the benefit of the facility. 4 applications for S106 funding would be submitted to South Staffordshire Council to include an upgrade to the changing rooms at Brickbridge Playing Fields, improved drainage at Poolhouse Play Area, new benches at Brickbridge Playing Fields and new exercise equipment there too.
- c) Councillor Mary Roberts noted a Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting was held on 27th February 2023, and the Committee dealt with a request for compost from St Bernadette's Primary School

which Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM had agreed to look into, they approved a quotation for tree work at the bungalow, and agreed to a fact sheet which has been circulated to all Members in relation to the precept increase.

- d) Councillor Mark Evans explained he would be attending the hearing for the licence at the new Morrisons store on Common Road tomorrow and would be speaking on behalf of the Parish Council. Any planning applications would be dealt with later in the agenda.

34/23 - Report from South Staffordshire Council

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM reminded Members the elections were forthcoming and there was a change this year which required voters to produce ID. He asked Members to remind residents of this when interacting with them. He also informed Members the District Council had launched a new website and encouraged everyone to take a look at it and to provide feedback. Councillor Robert Reade added the planning portal was being updated and would be an improvement on the old system.

Councillor Barry Bond MBE informed Members there had been a sad incident prior to Christmas at Baggeridge Country Park whereby a dog ran across ice and fell into a pool of water, sadly the dog did not survive despite his owner going in to save him.

35/23 – Reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies

- a) Club at the Day Centre – Councillor Mark Evans informed Members several gentlemen continued to play pool at the club.
- b) Locality Forum – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update.
- c) Wombourne and District Community Association – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update.
- d) Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee – Councillor Mary Roberts informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update.
- e) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Mary Roberts explained the Committee met on 22nd February, she had been unable to attend and was therefore waiting for the minutes to be distributed to receive an update.
- f) Wombourne Charity Trustees – Councillor Mike Davies informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update.
- g) Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update.
- h) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Daisy Tait had sent her apologies for the meeting so there was no one present to provide an update. Councillor Barry Bond MBE requested some feedback from the retailers via the Liaison, Councillor Daisy Tait, as to whether they thought the High Street events had been successful and if there was any indication as to whether they would be hosting something similar in the future. He also requested feedback as to what the retailers would be doing to mitigate any impact on them in relation to the Lidl supermarket development, with the addition of 4 retail units.
- i) Police Liaison – Councillor Vince Merrick agreed to pursue rumours around the Police office from Wombourne being moved to Codsall.
- j) Giggetty Action Group – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members South Staffordshire Housing Plus had been on the estate conducting an environmental clean.

36/23 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members approved the payments for February 2023.

37/23 – S106 funding

Members approved the recommendations from the Recreation and Amenities Committee for the following projects to be submitted to South Staffordshire Council for S106 funding:

- a. Changing room alterations to provide for male/female facilities at Brickbridge Playing Fields
- b. Improved drainage for Poolhouse Play Area to allow better use of the nest swing
- c. New benches at Brickbridge Playing Fields
- d. New exercise equipment at Brickbridge Playing Fields

38/23 – Planning applications

Members noted the responses to planning applications made to South Staffordshire Council in lieu of a meeting.

39/23 – Update on the improvements for residents of Himley Meadows

Councillor Jan Evans informed Members she wanted to address comments made on social media regarding her input into the improvements for residents of Himley Meadows. She explained when canvassing the area ahead of her election, residents informed her the need to reduce the speed of the road outside their estate to 40mph and the need for a grit bin to prevent residents from skidding into the main road from the estate when there was ice on the road. She explained she worked closely with Bloor Homes on the need for a grit bin, and pursued Highways at Staffordshire County Council on the matter of the speed limit. She explained the changes were made as a result of her persistence in following up the matter.

40/23 – Items deferred from the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 9th May 2022:

Members agreed:

- a. Inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment:
 - i. 2021/2022 asset register – the re-stated sum of £348,380
 - ii. 2022/2023 asset register – the sum of 349,944
- b. Council's employment policies and procedures:
 - i. Absence Policy
 - ii. Disciplinary Policy
 - iii. Employer Pensions Discretions Policy (LGPS)
 - iv. Equal Opportunities Policy
 - v. Grievance Policy
 - vi. Lone Worker Policy
 - vii. Pension Policy
 - viii. Training and Development Policy
 - ix. Health and Safety Policy

41/23 – Financial Risk Assessment

Members approved the Financial Risk Assessment.

42/23 – Risk Register

Members approved the Risk Register.

43/23 – Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference

Members approved the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

44/23 – Correspondence

None.

45/23 – Chairman's Business

- a) The Chairman advised Members his official engagements had been as follows:
 - i. 24th February – a fundraiser bingo event at the United Reformed Church

- ii. 1st March – a charity darts evening at the Cricket Club where £100 was raised and donated to Dementia Singing Friends
 - iii. 13th March – Commonwealth Day Event at South Staffordshire Council, and a drop-in session at Wombourne Library to discuss their Arts Council bid.
 - iv. He had attended the Friendly Faces Café each week, noting its growing popularity.
- b) It was RESOLVED the date of the next Full Council meeting will be Monday 17th April 2023 at 7pm.
- c) It was RESOLVED the dates of other meetings would be:
- i. Monday 20th March 2023 – Planning and Development Committee at 7pm (if required)
 - ii. Monday 27th March 2023 – Civic Centre Management Committee at 7pm
 - iii. Monday 3rd April 2023 – Finance and General Purposes Committee at 7pm.
- d) Members noted that the Parish Council office would be closed on Friday 7th, Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th April for Easter.

The meeting closed at 8.36pm.

Signed:

Dated: