



## **WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

held on **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023** at 7.00pm

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

#### **Present -**

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

#### **Absent without apologies – N/A**

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 2 residents from Walk Lane, 1 resident from Wombourne Park, 1 resident from Rookery Road and Sgt. Jason Dorrington and PCSO Paula Wilkes

#### **46/23 – Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, and Cheryl Davies.

#### **47/23 – 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. Councillors Martin Perry and Daisy Tait also noted they were members of Wombourne and District Community Association.

#### **48/23 – Public Participation**

The residents from Walk Lane explained they attended last September, wanted to give Members an update on their fundraising efforts for Compton Hospice. They pledged to walk 12 million steps and complete a double marathon this year, as well as raising £5,000. They have now completed 13 million steps, and have completed 9 half marathons this year, and have raised just over £4,900.

Members congratulated the residents on their fundraising efforts.

The resident from Wombourne Park expressed his anger at the poor financial management and poor asset management by Councillors, and also that the same people who he felt had contributed to the need to put the precept up by 36.9% were once again standing for election in May 2023.

He noted no apology had been given for the increase which he felt had not been published with any transparency, and in the 25 years he had lived in the village, said it was in the worst state he had seen it, and it would be even worse without the BKV volunteers.

He expressed his disappointment at the lack of face-to-face contact with the local MP, or his County, District or Parish Councillors, and noted he had no option but to pay his Council Tax, whilst the Parish Council did have the option to cut items out of their budget which he felt they should have done to keep the precept low.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM thanked the resident for attending, and noted Members were equally disappointed when they sat down to discuss the precept that it had to rise by such a substantial amount, however, they were required to deal with urgent and acute building repair issues which was a large contributing factor in the increase. He informed the resident Wombourne was still cheaper than other neighbouring authorities of a comparable size and in fact for 11 consecutive years did not increase the precept at all. He also noted that whilst the increase in percentage terms appeared high, it only equated to just over £17 for the year. He informed the resident a surgery was held last year in the South and reminded him their contact details were readily available should he have any concerns or wish to engage with his local Councillors.

Councillor Robert Reade noted the mere fact that the precept did not rise for 11 years meant we were charging residents less each consecutive year. He also noted the importance of protecting these important community assets.

Councillor Jan Evans reminded the resident that Parish Councillors were unpaid and therefore volunteering their time similar to those who the resident mentioned such as members of the Best Kept Village Committee.

Councillor Mary Roberts thanked the resident for attending, and wanted to inform him that the Parish Council had made adjustments to their budget, so whilst they kept in funding for the annual Christmas lights and switch on event, funding for other events such as a Coronation Party, High Street events, and those to celebrate volunteers were removed from the budget and will not go ahead.

The resident from Rookery Road wanted to raise the issue of cars speeding along Rookery Road. She explained she had been working from home for the past 3 years and had noticed a significant increase in the road being used as a short cut too.

The resident explained she had spoken to Parish, District and County Councillors and had been informed there was not sufficient evidence of cars speeding. She explained that the road was unique in that it had no footpath or street lighting, meaning pedestrians had to move onto driveways when they were met with oncoming vehicles. She had recently emailed the Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor David Williams, and had asked for 20mph speed limit to be adopted. She noted she was attending the meeting to request a new traffic survey to be completed, and to note her concerns that she feels a fatality will occur along the road if something is not done.

Councillors Dan Kinsey BEM, Mark Evans and Robert Reade all sympathised with the residents, and thanked her for attending the meeting. Sergeant Jason Dorrington agreed the road was used as a cut through, and agreed where possible to send staff out to conduct speed checks when he could.

Councillor Mike Davies in his capacity as a County Councillor agreed to fund another speed survey and agreed to keep the resident updated on the progress of this.

#### **49/23 – Police Report**

Sgt. Jason Dorrington provided the following report:

##### **Burglaries**

A dog had been stolen as a result of a personal dispute.

### **Vehicle thefts**

Cars were still being stolen, and unfortunately both during the day and at night. Thieves were using sophisticated electronic devices to steal cars without the need for keys.

During Operation Bulmus several arrests and convictions had been made, but this had been suspended temporarily due to staffing levels.

### **Anti-social behaviour**

Reports of youths gathering on benches, but they were not doing anything wrong, just sitting together as a group. The Boxing Club was still running on a Friday evening and is manned by Police Officers who are off duty. He hoped some progress would be made with setting up the youth club soon. He noted there were still motorbikes using the Railway Walk and they were trying to get patrol cars at entrance / exit points when reports are received on this.

Sergeant Dorrington shared his frustration at the lack of officers locally, noting his team all wanted to do a respectable job, but it was often made difficult by the lack of people to assist.

Councillors Dan Kinsey BEM, Robert Reade, Vince Merrick, Alan Peace, and Mike Davies all thanked Jason and his team for their dedication and hard work. Councillor Mike Davies insisted the Parish Council were 100% behind retaining a presence within the village, and had invited the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to meet with them, where they had pressed for longevity of the police presence in Wombourne.

### **50/23 – Approval of Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

### **51/23 – Reports from Committees**

- a) Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members the Civic Centre Management Committee had met on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 where the Committee went through the usual housekeeping, they discussed methods to assess the use of the car park and agreed to defer to the next meeting, they had received an update that work on the roof was progressing, and that asbestos had been found in the boiler house so they were receiving quotations for this to be dealt with, a matter resulting from the Charity Ball in February was not being pursued further, and the Clerk was making enquiries into expanding the approved catering list.
- b) No Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting had taken place since the last Full Council meeting.
- c) Councillor Mary Roberts noted a Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023, and the Committee had unanimously agreed on the winner of the Joan Williams Civic Award, they had seen social media posts to advertise street parties for the Coronation, they had also received an update on the HERS registration required for the installation of the Christmas lights, and had agreed a response to a letter received from a resident via Gavin Williamson's office.
- d) Councillor Mark Evans explained he attended the application hearing for the extension to the license at Morrisons Supermarket on Common Road, where the application was granted, so they are now able to sell alcohol 24 hours per day. He noted the applications the Committee had considered would be dealt with later on in the agenda.

Councillor Daisy Tait thanked Councillor Mark Evans for attending the hearing to represent the Parish Council.

### **52/23 – Planning applications**

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

### **53/23 – Correspondence**

None.

**54/23 – Next meetings**

- a) It was RESOLVED that the Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.30pm.
- b) It was RESOLVED that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7pm and any Councillors who are re-elected should attend at 6.30pm to sign their Acceptance of Office form in the presence of the Clerk so that they can participate in the meeting.
- c) Members were reminded the Parish Council office would be closed on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May for Bank Holiday and the Clerk would be on Annual Leave from Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May to Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

The Chairman closed the meeting by wishing all those candidates standing for re-election good luck and thanked those serving the Parish Council for the past 4 years for their hard work and dedication.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm.

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:** .....