



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held on **Wednesday 26th April 2023** at 7.30pm
This meeting was held in the Council Chamber.

Present -

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

Clerk: Rachael Wright.

Public: 9 members of the public.

01/23 – Welcome from Chairman of the Parish Council – Councillor Daniel Kinsey BEM

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking residents for taking the time to attend, noting they would be hearing exciting updates from various community groups who had been working hard for their community during the past year. He encouraged residents to stay for tea and coffee after the meeting.

02/23 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, Jan Evans, and Robert Reade.

03/23 – To approve minutes of the last meeting held on 27th April 2022

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April 2022 were approved and adopted.

04/23 – To receive an update on the restoration of the Village Hall from David Collins

Mr Collins addressed residents and Members stating he was a Trustee of the Village Hall, and during the past year, he and two fellow Trustees had worked hard to recruit five new Trustees, have new double glazed safety glass windows and three doors costing £15,000, new guttering costing £1,540, new carpets costing £800, a new microphone system costing £300, new tables and chairs costing £820, a new external sign costing £500, new under stage storage and shelving costing £750, as well as securing their finances to cover the cost of any emergencies, and recruited many new users to the Hall.

He explained they had been able to secure much of the work from grants they had applied for, including a National Lottery Grant of £9,800 towards the new windows, a South Staffordshire Community Foundation Grant of £2,480 towards heating costs enabling them to keep their hall hire costs consistent to user groups despite a 300% increase in their bills, a South Staffordshire Community Foundation Grant of £950 towards new storage, and various donations via South Staffordshire Council and Councillors of £1,300.

The hall is completely booked out for various groups including kick boxing, karate, knit and natter, various baby and toddler groups, Women's Institute, Dementia Singing Friends, and Wombourne Players. It is available for private hire on weekends, for children's birthday parties, baby showers, Christenings, training, and craft fayres.

The projects they are working on currently, include refurbishment of the toilets to include a high toilet, and baby change facility, costing £10,000 with grant applications outstanding for this. Installation of a defibrillator costing £1,500 with funds being raised by various events being held by hall users and charitable donations. Quotations have been sought for new front doors, with a final security design still to be agreed. The main hall is being re-painted the first weekend of June, and quotations are being obtained for the recladding of the external walls of the hall, so they become maintenance free and more energy efficient. This is likely to cost £35,000 and grants for this are being identified.

Their wishlist for the future, includes new carpet / alternative flooring in the main hall, refurbishment of the kitchen and a car park and sensory garden.

Councillors Dan Kinsey BEM and Mike Davies congratulated Mr Collins on the amazing job him and his fellow volunteers have done on restoring the Village Hall, noting they were immensely proud of what they had achieved.

05/22 – To receive an update on policing in Wombourne from Sergeant Jason Dorrington

Sergeant Jason Dorrington apologised for being unable to present comparable figures over a twelve-month period due to system issues, but informed residents and Members that the local team had two bases, one in Codsall and one in the Civic Centre in Wombourne. The aim for blue light runs in South Staffordshire was to respond within 13 minutes, and in 2019-2020 they achieved this 60% of the times, currently, that rate is down to 51% so there is significant room for improvement.

He explained they were still recruiting, but when the Government said they were recruiting 20,000 more Police Officers, they did not consider the number retiring or leaving the force, and therefore the numbers are likely to be the same or slightly less, despite the ongoing recruitment. 50% of the officers now have 2 years or less experience, which also impacts the overall performance.

Special Constable numbers have gone from 25 in 2019 to now just 6, which also has an impact on providing police presence at community events.

Sergeant Dorrington explained the local Policing team had been collaborating with partner agencies to deal with anti-social behaviour in the area. An example of this was the work they had been doing with the Community Centre with them installing new lighting, cameras and using up vacant space to try to prevent the anti-social behaviour outside the building.

Residents and Members thanked Sergeant Dorrington and his team for their hard work and dedication. Members reiterated their support for the local team in maintaining and presence in Wombourne, and that would consistently remain the case.

06/23 – To receive an update on the work being undertaken by the Giggetty Action Group

The Clerk read out the following update:

The Giggetty Action Group are sorry we are unable to attend as we are helping on a course at Kingsway Church.

We would like to thank this Council for their support and the work put in by its Members who have helped us at short notice on many occasions, and are helping in our quest for some tool storage on the Giggetty so that we can spend the money we've raised, partly from a generous donation from Wombourne and District Community Association to get on with tidying the estate.

Thank you all again and we look forward to working with you in the future.

07/23 – To receive an update on the grant funding provided last year from 3rd Wombourne Girl Guides

The Clerk read out the following update:

3rd Wombourne Girl Guides continues to be a thriving company who meet at Hallam Hall, Mill Lane, Wombourne.

Since receiving a grant from the Parish Council, the Guides have planted and enjoyed two seasons of colourful flowers. First came our summer patriotic red, white, and blue geraniums and lobelia last year which saw us well into the Autumn. At present we have wonderful Spring flowers in the form of colourful yellow daffodils, tulips, and grape hyacinths to name a few from our display.

The grant has encouraged many of the Guides to take up gardening at home too. Also, we've had many positive comments from passers-by.

We've also been able to permanently honour our former leader, Sheila Standish, with two perennial roses called Sheila's Perfume, and a bench with a plaque in her memory.

Once again, many thanks to the Parish Council for the opportunity to do this and the joy that it has brought to not only the Guides, but the wider community as they pass the hut.

Thank you all also for the continued hard work that you all do for our community.

08/23 – Parishioners Questions – An opportunity for Parishioners to ask questions or raise any matters of local interest

A resident from Apse Close noted he was still concerned about the Local Plan, and the loss of Green Belt and greenfield sites, together with the damaging effect that extra traffic will have on the nature and character of the village if the plan goes ahead. He said the consultation on the Publication Plan ended immediately before last Christmas, and he assumed there were many hundreds if not more objections and suggestions from local residents regarding issues with infrastructure, housing supply numbers & duty to co-operate, but despite this the District Council had said they were proceeding at pace with the process and intended to submit the plan to the Planning Inspectorate in the Spring or Summer of this year.

He noted that a stay of execution arose when proposals were announced to reform the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Government carried out 10 weeks of consultation with Local Authorities ending on 2 March 2023, however, he was not aware of the outcome of this consultation.

He remains very concerned about comments made by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Business Enterprise in his response to Lower Penn Parish Council, dated 23rd February 2023, as part of the last sentence of his letter reads "the council will consider the best course of action once any changes to the National Planning Policy Framework are finalised, rather than in consultation form." He is also worried that the Strategic Planning Team Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Business Enterprise, has delegated authority to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination at any time.

The resident went on to say he understands that consultations from about 5 years ago, or more, had little to no effect on the District Council's Site Allocations Document in particular with regards to Safeguarded Land which he felt was a bit of a misnomer. He asked what this land is safeguarded from, when it is in fact land that has been removed from the Green Belt, such as the 3 sites along Poolhouse Road and 1 off Orton Lane. He noted these sites are, according to Planners, suitable for possible future housing development, so unless there is a method of reclassifying land as Green Belt, the Billy Buns Lane sites will have to be removed from the Local Plan before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, otherwise there will be no chance of preventing houses being built on these fields.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM thanked the resident for attending the meeting and raising the issue as the purpose of the meeting was for residents to express concerns, and he was pleased that the Local Plan was still very much at the forefront of people's minds.

He noted that the pre-election period we were currently in limited what could be said on the matter, however, he did note that the District Council were still waiting to hear the outcome of the Government's Framework Review, however, there would inevitably be changes as a result of the next election as the Cabinet Member for Planning and Development was not re-standing for election. He noted he was unable to comment on any future decisions the District Council would make on the Local Plan as it was dependent upon who was elected to the Council but encouraged the resident to continue to ask the same questions following the election.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, noting what a vibrant and support community we lived in. He thanked fellow Members for their support during his four-year term as Chairman and encouraged residents and Members to stay after the meeting for tea and biscuits.

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm.

Signed:

Dated: