



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on **Monday 5th December 2022** at 7.15pm

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, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick, Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Daisy Tait

Absent without apologies – N/A

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 12 members of the public, PCSO Alexandra Rathbone, and Harvey Bains, Locality Enabler from South Staffordshire Council.

145/22 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cheryl Davies, John Pike, Mary Roberts, and Robert Reade.

146/22 – 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, and Councillor Alan Peace noted he was a Member of the Wombourne Best Kept Village, 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.

147/22 – Public Participation

- a) A resident from Apse Close informed Members he joined the online Q&A session held by South Staffordshire Council on 23rd November, and his feeling from that meeting was that the Planners were dead set on not making any changes to the plan, and would not take into consideration any comments made during the previous consultation, including the Parish Council's 62 page response. He went on to explain the Planners repeated any remarks made during the current consultation should be on the soundness of the plan, and the onus put on Wombourne District Councillors if they feel a site is not sound to provide evidence and submit alternatives to the Planning Inspector. The resident asked whether the Parish Council should look for early guidance from an independent Planning Expert to seek advice on what should and can be done in the short term, the need for professional / legal advice for public sessions held by the Planning Inspector, and a timetable of events. He noted sites on Poolhouse Road, and Orton Lane had already been removed from the green belt, and he feared this was the last opportunity to save the sites off Billy Buns Lane within the green belt. The resident noted the Planners had remarked several times they were 'proceeding at pace' with the process.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM confirmed this consultation was indeed on the soundness of the plan, and the last consultation was site specific and therefore it would not look at previous responses. He noted it was the intention of the Parish Council to determine whether to earmark funds to pay for legal representation and this would be discussed later in the meeting.

Councillor Barry Bond MBE noted it was likely the Planners were proceeding at pace as they believed if they got to the Planning Inspector before the Black Country plan was put forward, the Inspector could not enforce additional housing onto South Staffordshire once the plan has been agreed. He noted he believed previous consultations on the plan should have been face to face rather than via MS Teams.

Councillor Alan Peace noted the introduction of the local plan states infrastructure will be at the heart of the plan, however, the infrastructure in Wombourne is struggling at best, and unless this is addressed it will only get worse. He noted unless you were computer literate it was very difficult to obtain information on the local plan which was a failing of South Staffordshire Council.

148/22 – Police Report

Members had received a copy of the Police Report which PCSO Alexandra Rathbone went through as follows:

Burglary –

- **Bridgnorth Road** – 05/11 - At approx. 2030hrs, unknown offenders have accessed a residential property by smashing a window, before making an untidy search inside. High value clothing, rings and watches stolen. Offenders possibly travelling in a dark coloured saloon vehicle. *Investigation ongoing.*
- **Crane Hollow** – 28/11 – Overnight, offenders have forced lock on rear door, gaining entry to property. Keys to vehicle have been taken from within and offenders have left, stealing the vehicle (BMW X3) *Investigation ongoing.*

Burglary Business –

- **Heath Mill Road** – 12/11 – At 1110hrs, a male has entered a business premises at the stated location. 2 x laptops and personal items from desk drawers have been stolen. Offender believed to be travelling in a black Audi A3. *CCTV obtained.*

Vehicle Crime –

- **Bridgnorth Road** – 04/11 – Offenders have stolen a Toyota Rav 4 from the driveway of a property at the location, without keys.
- **The Broadway** – 08/11 – Offenders have stolen a Ford Transit van from the driveway of a property, without keys. Vehicle located a short while later on WMP area, via tracker. Van returned to owner and a further van on false plates was seized by officers from the found location, for forensic examination.
- **Stourbridge Road** – 13/11 – During the afternoon / early evening, offenders have stolen a Lexus NX from the car park of a public house, without keys. Vehicle recovered the following day on WMP force area and returned to owner.
- **Stourbridge Road** – 25/11 – 3 x offenders have attended the address after agreeing to purchase vehicle for sale. Offenders claimed to have paid for the vehicle and have then driven away in same. Transpires no money had been exchanged. *Investigation ongoing.*
- **Forge Valley Way** – 28/11 – Overnight, a Ford C-Max has been stolen from the driveway of a property, without keys. *CCTV obtained – Investigation ongoing.*

ASB hotspots –

- **High Street** – Calls re nuisance youths causing issues after school at various business premises / residential properties. Youths identified via CCTV, and all visited at home and spoken with in front of parents. *No further reports since Police visits.*
- **Venerable Bede** – Reports of nuisance youths gathering of an evening. *Local officers to patrol the location at problem times.*

Proactive news –

- **Lloyd Hill / Beggars Bush Lane / High Street / Windsor Road** – Over the period covered in this report, vehicles at the above locations have been seized by officers on pro-active patrols for document offences / no insurance. All vehicle seized from the road and drivers reported for relevant offences.

In addition, it was noted that a camera van and officers with speed guns would be in the village this month. Due to the volume of vehicle crime seen in the area as well as West Midlands and West Mercia a new team had been set up to focus on this, they have seen good results so far with 3 arrests being made in the last week.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM thanked PCSO Alexandra Rathbone for the report and noted how pleased he was to hear of the dedicated team looking at vehicle crime in the area.

149/22 – Locality Enabler Update

Harvey Bains introduced himself as the Locality Enabler for Locality 5 for South Staffordshire Council. He was responsible for business and locality growth, and he managed a commercial profile of properties. He noted 60%-70% of the High Street in Locality 5 was closed at one stage or another during Covid-19 lockdowns. He worked hard during this time to provide grant advice, business support advice, and built-up relationships with retailers and local businesses to support them to re-open. He acknowledged there were a lot of barriers for businesses at present, including business rates and energy bills, but he was able to assist with growth and funding where required. 96 shops and businesses had signed up to the virtual High Street, and they were working to increase that number meaning they were able to provide additional support to businesses. He noted he had spoken to Councillor Daisy Tait appointed as Retail Liaison for the Parish Council and would be pleased to work closely with her in the future to ensure that the businesses in Wombourne were supported.

Councillor Barry Bond MBE noted that there had been a vacant shop in the High Street for more than 2 years and asked for consideration to be given by South Staffordshire Council to take this on as a pop-up shop where people such as those coming through the Princes Trust could rent a space to showcase their small businesses. He also noted that the Lidl development had caused a loss of a number of small business units, and he asked what South Staffordshire Council were doing about this.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted when he recently toured the Lidl development site, he was informed South Staffordshire Council were investigating making some of the smaller units business units rather than retail ones, and this investigation was still ongoing.

Councillor Alan Peace remarked how he found it fascinating that South Staffordshire Council had employed a Locality Enabler to support small businesses in the village, but at the same time had used false information to approve the development of a Lidl supermarket in the village which will no doubt have a detrimental effect on the smaller businesses.

150/22 – Resignation of Councillor Claire McIlvenna

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted his thanks to Claire for the 3.5 years' service she had provided to the residents of Wombourne in her role as Parish Councillor, particularly noting how supportive she had been at all of the previous High Street events.

He went on to explain that the Parish Council now needed to decide whether to go down the co-option route to fill the vacancy, or whether to leave it open pending the elections in May.

Councillor Mark Evans proposed the position be left vacant until the elections in May, Councillor Mike Davies seconded the proposal, and all Members were in favour.

151/22 – Local Plan

Members agreed the following:

- a. The submission to be sent in response to the current consultation
- b. The production of a flyer to be sent to every home in the village – some discussion took place for and against this, however, the matter went to a vote and 5 Members voted for the flyer, 1 against and 1 abstained from the vote.
- c. The opening of the Council Chamber for meetings with residents on Saturday 10th, and Saturday 17th December from 10am to 1pm.
- d. The earmarking of funds to pay for a barrister once public sessions are held by the Planning Inspector.

152/22 – Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings on Monday 7th November 2022 and Monday 21st November 2022.

153/22 Reports from Committees

- a) Civic Centre Management Committee – Councillor Barry Bond MBE reported Jon Tiley from Churches Together attended the last meeting and preparations were all in hand for the Carol Concert on Thursday 8th December at 6.30pm. A number of groups planned to participate, and the event was going to be more family friendly this time with Father Christmas in attendance. He reported he was still looking into the youth café, and the warm spaces hub. CCTV monitors were being fitted in the Parish Council offices, and a hatch was being installed in the foyer to improve security. There had been an issue with bar stock which had been taken up with Plyvine Ltd. Cherry Hill, daughter of the late May Griffiths had sent a thank you letter for housing her mother's history collection at the Civic Centre. The Committee had agreed the price for New Year's Eve functions and agreed to a Summer and Christmas ball for 2023.
- b) Finance and General Purposes Committee – Councillor Mike Davies reported the Committee had recommended the spend of £13,500 on a used van instead of an ongoing lease. A working group was to be set up to discuss how to celebrate the King's Coronation, and Councillor Jan Evans had been appointed as Trustee of Wombourne Village Hall.
- c) Recreation & Amenities Committee - Councillor Martin Perry informed Members CCTV had been installed at Brickbridge Playing Fields and training was outstanding. Additional signage had been ordered to be installed. He explained he had met the Park Warden and Parish Warden at Brickbridge Playing Fields to identify which areas needed to be pruned. An additional bin had been requested from South Staffordshire Council who had agreed to monitor the use of the existing bin over a period of several months. A request had been received to install a step to the slide at Bratch Park, but this had been denied, and a request to metal detect there which had also been denied. Instructions had been given to Kris Rohland for repairs at Poolhouse Play Area and this would be carried out in due course according to the weather over the next few months. Solicitors for the Parish Council and South Staffordshire Council had been appointed in respect of the lease at Brickbridge Playing Fields. Members had agreed to purchase perennial plants for the planters in 2023 and had enquired with Wombourne BKV as to whether they were interested in adopting all the planters in the village. Councillor Mark Evans had provided an update on S106 funding, and the Committee had been asked to consider what project(s) they wanted to propose to South Staffordshire Council to spend the funding on.
- d) Planning & Development Committee – Councillor Evans informed Members 2 applications and 1 appeal had been discussed at the last Committee meeting, in addition to the Local Plan. He noted his thanks to

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM for the amount of time and effort he had put into the Parish Council's response to the consultation, and the flyer.

154/22 Report from Staffordshire County Council

Councillor Mike Davies informed Members as we were moving into winter, the repair crews for Staffordshire Highways will now start to work night shifts as they complete winter maintenance work. The focus at present for the department is on flooding, and work had been carried out in Bridgnorth Road to alleviate issues there. The team were trialing a new way of working and had carried out their trials on the Giggetty Estate. A report had been made into the state of the road in Heath Mill Industrial Estate which was being looked into.

155/22 – Reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies

- a) Club at the Day Centre – Councillor Mark Evans informed Members the club seemed to be reaching the end of its life with the lady who previously pledged time to it unable to commit to it fully. There were still 5-6 gentleman using the room on Tuesdays to play pool.
- b) Locality Forum – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members a meeting had taken place last week with the emphasis on 3 tier working.
- c) Wombourne and District Community Association – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members the next meeting would take place on 25th January 2023.
- d) Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee – Councillor Barry Bond MBE provided an update in the absence of Councillor Mary Roberts. He informed Members there had been the usual complaints made since the last meeting. The application for development at the airport had been refused. The airport was making a good trade selling fuel to passing aircraft.
- e) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members there had been no meetings as the Chairman had recently had a baby.
- f) Wombourne Charity Trustees – Councillor Mike Davies informed Members the meeting of the Trustees took place 3 weeks ago, there was still no Rector appointed at St Benedict Biscop Church, so he was still acting as Chairman of the Trust for now. He encouraged Members to refer anyone within Wombourne and Swindon who may be in hardship who they may be able to assist.
- g) Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members no meetings had taken place.
- h) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members there had been a successful Small Business Saturday event which she assumed the Chairman would discuss within his whereabouts report.
- i) Police Liaison – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members he had been pressing the Police for some action in relation to the amount of vehicle crime over the last two months, and as PCSO Alexandra Rathbone had reported earlier in the meeting a dedicated team had been set up to look at this issue.
- j) Giggetty Action Group – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members Tony Norbury had resigned from the group, but a Chairman was now in place and the group had a constitution in place and were continuing to work hard to make improvements for the residents of the estate.

156/22 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members approved the payments for November 2022.

157/22 – Parish Council van

Members approved the purchase of a van costing up to £13,500 with a maximum of 50,000 miles to be sourced by Councillor Mary Roberts, Councillor Mike Davies and the Clerk.

158/22 – Planning applications

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

159/22 – Correspondence

- a) An email had been received from a resident of Lower Penn congratulating the Parish Council on their response to the current consultation in relation to the Local Plan particularly around engagement with residents.

160/22 – Chairman’s Business

- a) The Chairman advised Members his official engagements had been as follows:
 - i. Armistice Day service at South Staffordshire Council offices on 11th November followed by a service at St Benedict Biscop Church on 13th November and refreshments kindly hosted by Wombourne Cricket Club after.
 - ii. High Flyers and St Benedict Christmas Fayre’s on 19th November.
 - iii. Christmas Light Switch On and Winter Wonderland at Kingsway Church on 25th November.
 - iv. Dinner Dance at the Civic Centre on 2nd December.
 - v. Small Business Saturday visiting businesses across the village to have photographs taken from 9.30am to 4.50pm. He noted the addition of Father Christmas and the naughty elves added to the event, and thanked Councillor Daisy Tait for her efforts in organising the event. He also attended the panto at the Civic Centre on the same evening.
- b) It was RESOLVED the date of the next Full Council meeting will be Monday 16th January 2023.
- c) It was RESOLVED the dates of other meetings would be:
 - i. Budget and Precept Meeting – Monday 9th January 2023.
- d) Members were reminded of the following:
 - i. Christmas Carol Concert – Thursday 8th December 2022 at 6.30pm
 - ii. The Parish Council office will close at midday on Friday 23rd December 2022, and will re-open at 8.30am on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

The Chairman asked Members and representatives from Friendly Faces, Giggetty Action Group, and Wombourne Best Kept Village to join him for light refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Signed:

Dated: