



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

held on **Monday 8th November 2021** at 7.17pm

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

Present -

Councillors: Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Mark Evans, Dan Kinsey (Chair), Claire McIlvenna, Vince Merrick, Martin Perry, John Pike, Robert Reade, Mary Roberts, Daisy Tait, Ken Upton

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 38 members of public including PCSO Paula Wilkes and PC Tom Evans.

The Chairman welcomed all Members and members of the public.

66/21 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cheryl Davies, Elizabeth Keeling and Alan Peace.

67/21 – Declarations of Interest

Councillor Robert Reade declared an interest in planning and other discussions that refers to South Staffordshire Local Plan and the preferred sites. The Chairman noted he was a member of the BKV Committee.

68/21 – Public Participation

- a) PCSO Paula Wilkes and PC Tom Evans provided an update on the latest activity in Wombourne, which included 3 attempted break ins from vans in Hazel Grove, Ounsdale Road and Planks Lane – smart door bells had been given to the victims. There had also been incidents involving cars in Billy Buns Lane and Park Avenue. It had been quiet on the anti social behaviour front, with some activity in Walk Lane, and fireworks set off in the High Street, thankfully no reports from Brickbridge Playing Fields. Councillor Merrick thanked PCSO Paula Wilkes and PC Tom Evans for their update, and noted operation cable and operation lightening were very much ongoing and he looked forward to discussing these with Sgt Jason Dorrington upon his return to work.

The Chairman sought permission to suspend Standing Orders as it was clear public participation would extend beyond 15 minutes. Members agreed to this.

Councillor Robert Reade left the room.

- a) Resident from Wood Road – The resident explained she was spokesperson for the thousand residents who had joined a Facebook Group she had set up – Wombourne Planned Development Opposal. She said her objective was to express the disappointment of lack of clarity regarding this consultation on the Local

Plan and to ask the Council what they plan to do to ensure all residents are informed of the consultation and what is being done to oppose the housing developments.

She expressed grave concerns with the infrastructure, traffic, congestion, rise in crime, and the environment, and the impact the new homes proposed in the Local Plan would have on the village, and how it contradicts the National agenda with regards to climate change and more needs to be done to publicly address this.

She wanted to know what the Councillors could do about this, what brown field sites had been looked at, and why the onus was on the residents to provide alternative suggestions.

She felt there was a lack of transparency and visibility about the Local Plan in the village, and noted she had only seen 2 posters in windows, and had not received the Review magazine which she had been told contained an article on the Local Plan, and therefore had funded leaflets herself to distribute to residents.

She explained she started the Facebook group, which acquired over 1000 members in 3 days as people she had spoken to were not aware of the consultation.

She wanted it to be minuted that the Council oppose the plans and that they support her campaign and invited all Councillors to join them on Saturday at 12.30pm at the New Inn Public House for a group meeting.

Councillor Bond responded noting several District Councillors shared the frustration on the lack of public consultation from South Staffordshire Council on the Local Plan, noting that the Planners were refusing to meet with residents as they did in 2016/2017 when open sessions were held in the Council Chamber.

He noted that the sites put forward were most unsatisfactory and the presence of such a large number of residents at the meeting supported his views on that. He also noted that whilst Andy Street had been claiming there was enough brown field sites in the West Midlands, South Staffordshire were having to act as an overspill for housing from the Black Country and Birmingham.

Councillor Bond informed residents the land off Poolhouse Road and Orton Lane was safeguarded meaning it had been removed from the Green Belt already so there was little chance of opposing these developments, however, the land off Gilbert Lane and Billy Buns Lane had not and should be opposed. He went on to say that he felt the infrastructure issues in Wombourne had not been taken into account, and Wombourne Councillors needed to shout louder in order to ensure their voices were heard. There are significant issues at the Woodhouse Island and at the Himley junction, which would only be exacerbated if the new developments went ahead.

He noted the Local Plan was supposed to be infrastructure led, however, promises had been made in relation to the development at Beggars Bush Lane which had not been forthcoming, so he had no confidence in the infrastructure for the new sites, adding that GP surgeries were already full, and there were very few places in our schools too.

He finished by noting that Wombourne was already over stretched and couldn't possibly take any more development.

Councillor Mark Evans echoed Councillor Bond's sentiments and agreed he would do all he could to support the history of the village.

Councillor Ken Upton noted that with every new development, infrastructure concerns have been raised, but felt these had always been ignored and were impossible to change.

Councillor Claire McIlvenna noted the issue wasn't a local one, but a National issue and residents needed to bear that in mind for the future.

- b) Dr Meredith from Gravel Hill Surgery – She explained she was representing both Gravel Hill surgery and the Dale with concerns over a sound infrastructure plan to support the proposed new developments. She wanted to know if there would be a levy in place and if not, why not, noting they had taken more than 650 new patients since 2018 but had not received any levy at all.

She explained they had no spare spaces, no spare rooms and were struggling to cope with the patient capacity they have now. They wish to ensure that they are involved in any discussions regarding plans for Wombourne as they will massively affect their provision to provide healthcare to residents.

Councillor Barry Bond explained he supported everything Dr Meredith had said, noting unfortunately the CCG would say something different, and had always been cynical about the promised infrastructure assistance promised, but this proved it had not been forthcoming in the past.

- c) Resident from The Heathlands – The resident asked if the Parish Council could support the group by funding their flyers, having someone organise their protests and providing a free room for people to meet. In addition she wanted to enquire about the tree planting as part of the Queens Jubilee Green Canopy scheme, noting some substantial trees in the village had recently been moved, the one on the Wombrook off Walk Lane as an example.

Councillor Dan Kinsey agreed the tree planting was something Ryan Taylor at South Staffordshire Council was looking into. He agreed for the Parish Council to look into whether they could fund flyers for the Facebook group.

He thanked all residents for their attendance, noting that all comments to the consultation must be made to South Staffordshire Council by 5pm on Monday 13th December. He noted that the Council were holding one to one sessions for residents, and if residents wanted to oppose the plans they had to use sound planning reasons, so having a conversation with the planners really was worthwhile as they would be able to provide valid planning reasons for objections.

He noted there were 6 District Councillors at the meeting, who had all heard passionate views from residents, so urged them to have one to one conversations with them if they wished. He informed residents Wombourne Parish Council would be formulating their own response to the plan and some serious discussion and debate would need to take place to come to a common position.

Standing orders resumed at 8.07pm.

Councillor Robert Reade re-joined the meeting.

69/21 – Approval of Minutes

- a) It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meetings held on 11th October and 1st November 2021 having previously been distributed be signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Councillor Dan Kinsey formally welcomed both Councillors Mark Evans and Martin Perry to their first Full Council meeting.

70/21 – Reports from Committees

- a) Councillor Barry Bond presented a short report on the Civic Centre Management Committee meeting held on 18th October 2021. He reported that the tenant of the Smallbrook Room was due to send in additional quotations for the boxing in of some heating pipes. The roof had been discussed and was on the agenda for the meeting. A quotation had been sought from South Staffordshire Council for the removal of the tree in the garden of the Council's bungalow. The Committee had agreed for a mobile testing unit to use the Civic Centre car park for diabetes tests. Finally, he noted that he would discuss the findings from the Crime Prevention Officer with the Clerk.
- b) Councillor Alan Peace had given his apologies for the meeting, however, in his absence, Councillor Dan Kinsey noted that the responses were due to be considered later on in the agenda, and that he was disappointed to hear that the local shops were not displaying posters advertising the Local Plan after Councillor Mary Roberts and Councillor Alan Peace took them around.
- c) Councillor Ken Upton presented a short report on the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting, advising that he had attended the grand opening of the defibrillator on 17th October at Brickbridge Playing Fields and was very impressed at how easy it was to use and its capabilities. He explained Wombourne Wanderers and Wombourne All Stars had attended the Committee meeting to give their views on the future of the playing fields, and Wombourne All Stars in particular had big plans, including selling hot drinks and snacks, installing benches, cutting steps into the slope to the playing fields and marking white lines on the car park and extending it to accommodate more cars.
- d) Councillor Mary Roberts presented a short report on the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting, noting that the plans for the light switch on were well underway, with St Benedict Biscop School Choir and Cherry Trees Schools performing. They also hoped St Benedict Brass Band would perform. 4 or 5 marshals were required for the firework display, and 4 had been recruited from the Committee. Councillor Martin Perry volunteered to be a marshal. The deadline for feedback on the Queens Jubilee was today, although not many responses had been forthcoming to date. The Committee were awaiting costs for a wall plate in recognition of the Wombourne in Bloom displays in Walkers Way.
- e) Councillor Daisy Tait presented a short report on the High Street Recovery & Rejuvenation Committee explaining the meeting on 19th October had unfortunately been cancelled. She informed Members that the Guy Fawkes event on 30th October in Common Road went ahead, attracting small crowds of people by lunch time. 7 shops took part in the trail with 19 entries. She noted her thanks to the Methodist Church for putting on refreshments once again. The next event would be 4th December to coincide with Small Business Saturday.

71/21 – Reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies

- a) **Wombourne and District Community Association** – Councillor Alan Peace had provided a written report for Members which detailed that the committee met on 2nd November 2021, and discussed a possible location outside the shops on Windmill Bank for a bench funded by the Friends of The Bratch. The Rotary sleigh is now stored in a rented garage adjacent to the one in Penn owned by the WDCA. Simon Williams is to be asked about the situation with the crisp packet scheme as the funds raised by it should be going to the WDCA to be administered. The organisations directory preparation is progressing with an online form now prepared ready to be sent out. As groups are now beginning to meet again, bookings for the use of the Kurling set are coming

in and the booking form which is presently only in hard copy is to be made available online.

The WDCA AGM meeting and informal cheese and wine evening will take place in the Allen Memorial Hall on Thursday 2nd December. It was agreed to give a grant of £50 to a new sewing group beginning at the Catholic Church to enable them to purchase some equipment needed to get started. It was agreed to give a grant of £100 to the Wombourne Guides to kick start their activities post pandemic. It was agreed to give a grant of £1000 to the Allen Memorial Hall to enable a new boiler to be purchased.

- b) **Police Liaison** – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members that his meetings had been postponed due to family bereavement with one of the Officers.

72/21 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

- a) It was **RESOLVED** that the finances for October 2021 be authorised.

73/21 – Planning and Development Responses

Members noted the responses.

Councillor Barry Bond asked that Members of the Planning and Development Committee take note of any planning officer comments as he had noted a large number of ‘no objection’ responses recently, where he had had strong objections to the applications, and therefore he felt that the Committee could be jeopardising the District Council’s position if the case went to an appeal.

74/21 – Civic Centre roof repairs using earmarked and general reserves

Councillor Barry Bond explained there had been issues with the roof for some years, which had previously been patched over, however, they now had a surveyor working with them to ensure that the repairs were of good quality and could stand the test of time. He proposed taking circa £49,836 from general reserves, as well as using earmarked reserves, to get the flat roof of the Civic Centre repaired. Councillor Robert Reade seconded the proposal, and all Members were in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to take out circa £49,836 from general reserves as well as using earmarked reserves to pay for flat roof repairs.

75/21 – Correspondence

- a) Email from Local Government Boundary Commission for England regarding the electoral review of South Staffordshire District Council – Members agreed to refer this to the Planning and Development Committee.
- b) Thank you card from Councillor Cheryl Davies for the gift given to her by Members and staff for her 60th birthday.

76/21 – Chairman’s Business

- a) The Chairman gave a breakdown of his whereabouts as follows:
- i. 17th October 2021 – he attended the grand opening of the defibrillator and watched a demo on CPR and it’s use. He noted how impressed he was to see so many children playing football there.
 - ii. 27th October 2021 – along with Councillors Barry Bond and John Pike hosted the girl guides for them to find out more about the Parish Council, and hold a debate on whether the centre of the village should be pedestrianised – their conclusion, he noted, was no.
 - iii. 30th October 2021 – he attended the High Street event in Common Road, which was greatly enjoyed.
- b) The date for the Co-option Meeting to interview candidates would be Monday, 1st November 2021.

- c) It was **RESOLVED** the next date for the Full Council Meeting would be Monday 6th December 2021. It was noted due to prior bookings in the Wodehouse Suite and Bourne Room that refreshments would not be put on that evening, and he would update Members on that shortly.
- d) It was **RESOLVED** the dates for the Committee Meetings would be:
 - a. High Street Recovery and Rejuvenation Committee – Monday 15th November 2021
 - b. Civic Centre Management Committee – Monday 15th November 2021
 - c. Planning and Development Committee – Monday 15th November 2021
 - d. Recreation and Amenities Committee – Monday 22nd November 2021
 - e. Finance and General Purposes Committee – Monday 29th November 2021
- e) Outdoor Remembrance Service – Sunday 14th November 2021
- f) Christmas light switch on – Friday 26th November 2021.

Signed: **Dated:**