



## **WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**

held on **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023** at 7.00pm

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

#### **Present – Committee Members-**

Councillors: Mike Davies, Jan Evans (Vice-Chairman), Mark Evans, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick, Matt Powell, Mary Roberts (Chairman)

**Clerk –** Rachael Wright

#### **55/23 – Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Barry Bond MBE.

#### **56/23 – Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **57/23 – Approval of last Committee Meeting minutes from 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

Members approved the minutes of the last meeting.

#### **58/23 – Matters arising from 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

None.

#### **59/23 – Budget**

- a) Members agreed engagement with residents was worthwhile, however, there wasn't sufficient time to create a survey for the 2024/2025 budget, so agreed to review the matter again next year.
- b) Members noted from the goal setting session, that the items to be considered for the 2024/2025 were:
  - i. Renewal of Christmas lights
  - ii. Newsletter
  - iii. Heritage Fund (earmarked reserves)
  - iv. Fairtrade Village
  - v. Village events
  - vi. Bus Shelters
  - vii. Village Orderly

#### **60/23 – Christmas Lights**

Members considered the tender as set out. They agreed to exclude any indication of budget from the tender, and request a minimum of 3-year contract, and costs for a longer-term contract.

#### **61/23 – Christmas Lights Switch On Event**

- a) Members considered the proposal from Victoria Bratt regarding a Winter Carnival. They agreed the Light Switch On Event should remain a Parish Council event, but that the ideas she had suggested were excellent, and some may enhance other festive events such as Small Business Saturday. They asked the Clerk to write back to suggest they come together in the new year when preparing for next year's Small Business Saturday event.

- b) Members noted the installer had raised an issue with the installation of the lights around the village green due to the growth where the lights are installed.
- c) Members noted the Clerk was seeking 3 quotations to deal with the matter.
- d) Members agreed delegated authority would need to be given to the Clerk in partnership with the Chairman, to approve the quotation to deal with the issue, noting there was no budget in place to deal with it.
- e) Members approved the Risk Assessment and Event Management Plan as set out.
- f) Members noted the rota and site plan for the event.
- g) Members considered hiring walkie talkies for the event, but noted there was no budget to do so, so agreed to review the matter for the 2024/2025 budget.
- h) Members considered purchasing branded high vis vests for the event, but noted there was no budget to do so, so agreed to review the matter for the 2024/2025 budget. Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members he had a contact who may be able to provide them, so would update the Committee at the next meeting.
- i) Members noted the Chairman of the Parish Council wished to ask a couple of members from High Flyers to turn on the Christmas Lights this year. The Clerk asked Councillor Mark Evans to inform her of the timing of their arrival so that the Risk Assessment and Event Management Plan could be updated.

### **62/23 – Small Business Saturday (Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

- a) Members agreed timings of 11am to 2pm for the event.
- b) Members agreed to performances from Got 2 Sing Choir and the Mentless. They asked the Clerk to check whether access to electricity is required.
- c) Councillors Mike Davies, Dan Kinsey BEM, Elizabeth Keeling, Mark Evans, Vince Merrick, Matt Powell, and Mary Roberts confirmed they would be available to assist on the day. They asked the Clerk to check which other Councillors will be available. Tasks will include being in photos, taking photos, speaking to the public, visiting the craft fayre, and being on hand to assist the performers.
- d) Members asked the Clerk to check if Councillor Daisy Tait would organise a trail around the shops.
- e) Members agreed to the Air Ambulance having a stall at the event, and asked the Clerk to check if Rory Antonio would mind them setting up outside their shop.
- f) Members agreed to the craft fayre at the Methodist Church from 11am to 2pm, noting the hall hire was £15 per hour. They agreed to charge £10 plus VAT for tables, with set up from 10am. They asked the Clerk to advertise event and stalls.

### **63/23 – Scarecrow Festival**

- a) Members considered the request to take part in the festival, agreeing to ask friends and family if they knew of anyone who may wish to create a scarecrow on their behalf. They agreed to support the event by putting posters of scarecrows in the Parish Office window and assisting to promote the event on social media. They asked the Clerk to include a provision for the event in the 2024/2025 budget.
- b) Not applicable due to what was agreed in a) above.

### **64/23 – Website**

The Clerk informed Members the old website would cease to exist at the end of September, and she and the Administrative Assistant had been working hard to create the new website. She asked Members to review it and provide feedback. It was noted the old domains would remain in place.

### **65/23 – New email system**

Members agreed the new system was much more user friendly than the old one and they enjoyed having more mobile access to their emails.

### **66/23 – Belt up Saturday**

Members noted the agreement from the Neighbourhood Policing Team to take part in this event. They asked the Clerk to check if they were available to run it to coincide with Small Business Saturday on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023.

### **67/23 – Newsletter**

The Chairman informed Members the Working Group had not met but had shared ideas via email. She suggested the newsletter would be too onerous to issue monthly, and the content should be about the village, and not just focussed on the Parish Council. She agreed to email her thoughts back to the Working Group and to set a date to meet in person.

### **68/23 – Internal Audit**

- a) Members noted the email from Sandra Morris re the internal audit for 2023/2024.
- b) Members agreed to appoint Sandra Morris to complete the internal audit for 2023/2024.

### **69/23 – Legal Advice**

- a) The Clerk informed Members she had taken some advice from South Staffordshire Council's legal team regarding use of the Parish Council's land by any new lease holder and customers to access the car park attached to the old Barclays building. She advised the Committee that it was recommended the Council take some legal advice on the matter so that they were fully informed of their rights once the building is occupied. Members considered the Clerk's advice, but decided not to take it, noting it could be some time before the building was occupied. Members agreed to consider the cost of legal advice when forming the 2024/2025 budget.
- b) Not applicable due to what was agreed in a) above.

### **70/23 – Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete issue (RAAC)**

- a) Members noted the request from a tenant.
- b) Members noted the email from the Roofing Surveyor regarding the structure of the roof, and that it did not contain reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete.
- c) Members agreed they would not be seeking to appoint a surveyor to assess the walls, given the building was a prefab they knew it would not contain reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete.
- d) Not applicable due to what was agreed in c) above.

### **71/23 – Training Schedule**

- a) Members noted the training schedule to date.
- b) Members who had not yet signed up to the budget training were encouraged to do so. The Chairman informed Members she wanted to ensure that all Members of the Committee had a good grip of the budget for 2024/2025.
- c) Councillor Mark Evans informed Members he had found the budget training very useful and encouraged other Members to sign up. Councillor Elizabeth Keeling noted she found the training to be at a basic level, however, she thought it would be useful for all Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to say they had attended. She commented that it highlighted how well prepared the Parish Council's budget was.

### **72/23 – Policies**

- a) Members requested an up-to-date budget comparison report before agreeing to the reserves policy. It was noted this would need to be agreed at the next meeting prior to budget setting beginning.
- b – i) Members approved the policies en-bloc.

The meeting closed at 8.21pm.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....