



## **WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

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

held on **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 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 (Chairman), Ed Hughes, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick (Vice-Chairman), Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Daisy Tait

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 1 resident from Bull Lane, 1 resident from Apse Close, 1 resident from Gravel Hill, and Mike Wood MP.

Councillor Mark Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking Mike Wood MP for Dudley South for taking an interest in finding out how Wombourne Parish Council's meetings are run.

#### **138/23 – Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, Andy Clay, Matt Powell, Mary Roberts, and Ian Sadler.

#### **139/23 – Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted he was a Member of Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee and a trustee of Wombourne and District Community Association. Councillors Martin Perry and Daisy Tait also noted they were members of Wombourne and District Community Association. Councillor Alan Peace noted he was a member of Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee, Wombourne Carnival Committee, Wombourne and District Community Association, Santa Sleigh Committee, the Volunteer Bureau, and South Staffordshire Narrowboat Association. Councillor Mike Davies noted a non-pecuniary interest in planning application 23/0053/FULHH.

#### **140/23 – Public Participation**

The resident from Apse Close asked for an update on the quarterly ward walks and open sessions in the Council Chamber, and whether they could be advertised on Wombourne Online as well as the Parish Council's social media outlets.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed the resident dates were due to be set soon. The Clerk informed the resident the Parish Council could request a post be shared on Wombourne Online, but as it was run by volunteers it was at their discretion as to whether they were published or not.

Councillor Mark Evans informed the resident the Parish Council were developing a good strategy for engagement with residents, which included the ward walks, as well as a newsletter in the immediate future.

The resident noted his concerns regarding the extra traffic, particularly HGV's visiting the construction site at Wombourne High School, noting that as part of the planning permission an approved Construction and

Environmental Management Plan would be implemented in full prior to any works commencing on site, and residents who lived near the site would be given prior notification of the work. The resident asked how and who will make the wider community aware of the need to take care due to extra HGV traffic using Ounsdale Road and the possible impact on road safety and congestion. He also noted when speaking to local residents to enquire as to whether they had received notification of the work, one mentioned concerns over HGV's using Ounsdale Road in contravention of the Traffic Regulation Order in place. Through Councillor Mike Davies, he had asked Highways to check the traffic signs covering this Order, as it appeared there may be an issue on Ounsdale Road, in the vicinity of Bumblehole Meadows.

Councillor Mark Evans encouraged the resident to continue to liaise with the Planning Officer, Lucy Duffy, around his concerns regarding the development at Wombourne High School and agreed for the Parish Council to seek clarification as to whether either the District or County Council would be publishing any notices on social media regarding the traffic.

Councillor Mike Davies noted he had a response from Highways in relation to the Traffic Regulation Order, which he would pass onto the resident.

Finally, the resident noted he was pleased to see the pothole on the village side of the canal bridge near the Round Oak has been filled, and work has started on Bull Meadow Lane. He noted he appreciated not all topics he wishes to speak about are Parish matters, however, he raises them in case Parish Councillors have other residents speak to them about the matters concerned.

Councillor Mark Evans thanked the resident for attending the meeting, noting the issues he was raising all had a positive outcome for the village, and he welcomed the interaction with the resident.

The resident from Bull Lane reported that footpath in Bull Lane adjacent to the school has a 12ft hedge growing along it from a residence, and it is out of control. He noted 3 residents had fallen on the footpath as a result of the hedge being out of control.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM agreed to look into the issue to see if anything could be done, noting the advice from Councillor Mike Davies regarding applying to the District Council for a tidying up order.

The resident explained he had a further query, however, it required presence from the local Policing team of which there was no one at the meeting, so he would save it for another meeting.

### **141/23 – Police Report**

It was noted there were no officers on duty to attend the meeting, however, a Police Report had been sent to the Clerk which she had shared with Members earlier in the day.

Councillor Alan Peace asked the Clerk to seek clarification as to whether the Police attended either the incident with offroaders along the Railway Walk or the incident with rowdy youths near Poolhouse Play Area.

Members agreed the officers did not generally have resources to attend offroaders, although Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted that recently an individual and his son were arrested following a similar incident along the Railway Walk.

### **142/23 – Presentation from Councillor Daisy Tait**

Councillor Daisy Tait explained she was going to give a short presentation about Wombourne becoming a Fairtrade Village in the future, as she had been the Fairtrade representative at her workplace for the last 6 years and she felt passionately about the village becoming Fairtrade.

She informed Members there were 5 goals to be met to be accredited, which included passing a resolution to support Fairtrade, getting Fairtrade into retailers, making Fairtrade part of the community, engaging, and informing members of the public, and forming a Fairtrade Steering Group.

Councillors Mark Evans, Elizabeth Keeling, and Ed Hughes thanked Councillor Daisy Tait for her informative presentation, noting they would all be happy to support the initiative. Councillor Mike Davies suggested it would be beneficial to discuss it again at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM asked what the retailers get back from agreeing to sign up to sell Fairtrade products, and who gives them accreditation. Councillor Daisy Tait informed him the accreditation comes from the Parish Council's application to become a Fairtrade Village.

### **143/23 – Approval of Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **144/23 Reports from Committees**

- a) Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed Members no meeting had taken place since the last Full Council meeting, however, following the Goal Setting Session, work was actively ongoing to achieve better efficiency of the Centre.
- b) Councillor Martin Perry informed Members no meeting had taken place since the last Full Council meeting, however, since that meeting work had been completed on the upgrade of Brickbridge Playing Fields Changing Rooms following receipt of S106 funding via South Staffordshire Council, noting that he and the Clerk had visited site to inspect the completed work. It was noted an additional CCTV camera was being installed and a PIR light installed to improve the security for staff at the site. There had been a noticeable improvement in the quality of the pitches both from an appearance and playability perspective following the new grass cutting contract in place. The lease at the Playing Fields is still outstanding, and the Clerk continues to follow up directly with the Solicitor, as well as discussions he has had with the Chief Executive of South Staffordshire Council. He noted Poolhouse Play Area had been closed during the summer holidays following the annual safety inspection report, and subsequently new beams had been fitted to the tyre swings, along with new tyres and sand, new bars for the toddler swings, and new drainage under the nest swing. He thanked Robert Wright for his assistance in closing and re-opening the equipment. Quotations were being sought for new play equipment, and proposals will be put forward to the Committee at the November meeting. Finally, he informed Members new bark had been put down at Bratch Park.
- c) Councillor Jan Evans reported the Finance and General Purposes Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, when they asked the Committee to consider items for their budget wishlist, a rota had been circulated for the Christmas Lights Switch On event and plans for Small Business Saturday had been discussed. Kingsway Scarecrow festival was discussed, but it was unlikely Members would be able to participate due to lack of time, feedback was being sought about the new website, before it's launch to the public, and the new Staffing Committee met before the meeting.
- d) Councillor Mike Davies informed Members whilst the Planning and Development Committee had not met in person, they had responded to 8 planning applications, 2 tree preservation orders, 1 appeal, and had made

comments regarding the removal of a phone box on A449. The majority of the comments made were no objections, however, he thanked Members for their detailed comments upon the development of the garage site at the rear of Bull Lane.

- e) Councillor Mike Davies informed Members the Staffing Committee had met for the first time, however, he would not go into detail the content of the meeting, as it excluded press and public, but Members could see the minutes for a brief summary.

#### **145/23 Report from South Staffordshire Council**

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM reported that a High Street Audit had been completed, and that along with the current consultation by Triquest should mean District Councillors receive some feedback on funding for the High Streets in the District in the next month or so.

In relation to closed churchyards, the new Cabinet Member responsible, Councillor Kath Perry had sourced a previously unallocated pot of money, and had now allocated it as a sinking pot, with the commitment to add £25,000 to it annually to deal with any future issues, she is keen to work with Parish Council's to determine any foreseeable issues in the future.

The Local Plan is moving forward slowly, with a number of options on the table, which may follow as a result of changes to the National planning system, he noted he hoped it meant good news for Wombourne.

New Challenge Panels had been set up, and would consist at looking at the issue of climate change, which he noted was taken very seriously by South Staffordshire Council.

Finally, he encouraged all Members to attend the next Parish Summit if they are able to, noting they are always informative events.

#### **146/23 Reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies**

- a) Club at the Day Centre – The Clerk informed Members the gentlemen who play pool were continuing to meet at the club.
- b) Locality Forum – Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed Members no meeting had taken place following a goal setting session for the Forum.
- c) Wombourne and District Community Association – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members herself, Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM, and Councillor Alan Peace attended the last meeting which was the AGM and social evening. She noted all officers were re-appointed, except the Vice-Chairman's position which was left vacant following the very sad passing of Jane Wherton. Grants had been given throughout the last year to Blakeley Heath Primary School and Giggetty Action Group. Two new benches had been purchased to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Thanks were given to Bridge Manor Care Home for their donation to the Association following their fundraising efforts, and it was noted how positively they had integrated into village life. 63 groups were on the Association's directory, and feedback had been sought from them as to how they use the Library/ Community Centre following discussions on its lease with Staffordshire County Council.
- d) Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee – No Councillors were present to provide an update.
- e) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Jan Evans informed Members no meetings had taken place since the Carnival.
- f) Wombourne Charity Trustees – Councillor Mike Davies encouraged Members to inform him of any residents they felt were suffering financial hardship as the fund was available to help those in need. An example was £5,000 spent recently on house adaptations for a family with a disabled child.
- g) Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members no meetings had taken place, but Members continued to be active around the village, notably, Jane Evans, Councillor Alan Peace, Helena Plater, and himself.
- h) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members there was nothing to report.

- i) Police Liaison – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members there was nothing to report as no meetings had taken place with officers being pulled onto the Crooked House incident.
- j) Giggetty Action Group – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members the group would be meeting at the end of the week.

#### **147/23 – Parish Council Finances and Administration**

Members approved the payment schedules for July and August 2023.

#### **148/23 – Planning applications**

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

#### **149/23 – Code of Conduct**

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Code of Conduct.

#### **150/23 – Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

Members noted the completion of the AGAR with no negative comments or feedback from the auditor.

#### **151/23 – Correspondence**

None.

#### **152/23 – Meeting Schedule**

Members noted:

- a) The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- b) Other meetings will be held as follows:
  - Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 – Planning and Development Committee Meeting
  - Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting
  - Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Civic Centre Management Committee meeting
  - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 – Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting

#### **153/23 – Reminders**

- a) Members noted tickets were available for the matinee performance of Aladdin on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023.
- b) Members noted the Clerk would be on Annual Leave from 6<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October and amended office hours would be published on social media.

#### **154/23 – Chairman’s Closing Remarks**

The Chairman gave his thanks to Members for their hard work over the last few months, noting the Parish Council had a very positive feel about it and had an exciting future ahead.

He noted he had attended the welcome service for Rev. Julia Codey, and thanked Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM for supporting him at that event.

He had also attended the Boating Rally at Bratch Locks, noting the organisers had mentioned the possibility of the event being held elsewhere in future years, but he had welcomed them to Wombourne at any time.

Councillor Alan Peace noted at a recent South Staffordshire Narrowboat Meeting, it had been indicated that the event would be held annually, and they had hoped to break even this year following a loss of 8p last year.

The Chairman noted he had attended the opening of Beholder a new business in the village, he encouraged all Members to visit retailers frequently to show their support to the young entrepreneurs in the village.

He noted he had attended High Flyers recent Fete and had had the privilege of attending the funeral of the late Jane Wherton, commenting it was a beautiful and emotional service and something everyone in attendance would remember forever.

Finally, he congratulated Councillors Daisy Tait, and Martin Perry on the news of their recent engagement. With the Chairman’s permission, Councillor Mike Davies reminded Members he had funding available through his County Council Community Fund, and Climate Action Fund.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm.

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:** .....