



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL MEETING

held on **Monday 30th October 2023** at 7.00pm

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

Present -

Councillors: Jan Evans, Mark Evans (Chairman), Ed Hughes, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick (Vice-Chairman), Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Matt Powell, Ian Sadler

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 1 resident from Apse Close, 1 resident from Bratch Lane, and PCSO Lee Mason (until 157/23)

Councillor Mark Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting.

155/23 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Mary Roberts and Daisy Tait.

156/23 – 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. Councillor Martin Perry noted he was a member 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.

157/23 – Public Participation

The resident from Apse Close informed Members he had been trying to raise awareness about the construction traffic associated with the building works taking place at Wombourne High School, which is being funded by the Department for Education, at a cost of £12.4m and commenced 16 weeks ago. He explained temporary classrooms had been delivered to site and are being fitted out for students to use. His understanding is that the next stage of the project is planned for February 2024 when demolition of the existing buildings will take place. This will result in tipper trucks removing materials off site, and from July 2024, the size of the vehicles making deliveries will increase significantly. He explained he had recently asked if Westfield Primary School and St Benedict Biscop Primary School, and residents along Ounsdale Road and School Road would be notified of the extra HGV's using the roads, and County Highways had informed him no contact had been made and it was not their responsibility to do so. South Staffordshire Council have also indicated it is not something the local planning authority would become involved in, and it is down to the contractor to notify residents in accordance with the planning permission given. The resident expressed his doubt as to whether this would be done. In view of this, he wanted to ask the Council to consider whether a small Action Group or similar could be set up until the end of the contract, and whether an elected Member could take a lead role in steering public awareness of the project, and any other suggestions that may help to raise awareness.

Councillor Mark Evans thanked the resident for his interest in this local matter but commented that he did not feel that there was a large volume of local residents demanding information on the matter. Other Members agreed, and suggested Councillor Ed Hughes may be able to seek information from Invictus Trust and wait to see if public interest developed once the project moved to the next stage.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM suggested the Parish Council could invite the contractor, Reds10, to the next Full Council meeting to provide an update on the project and answer any queries from residents. The Clerk agreed to send them an invitation to attend.

The resident from Bratch Lane asked for thanks to be passed onto the three Councillors who recently helped to clear weeds along Bratch Lane, although he commented he was disappointed it had taken so long for that piece of work to be completed. He raised a number of issues, including tree overgrowing the road signs on Station Road protruding visibility of the junction, as well as the lack of proactivity by the last 6 County Councillors in assisting with issues including lorries travelling on Bratch Lane, lack of signage, no speed signs and overgrown weeds. He also complained about the plastic guard barriers at the top of Windmill Bank, asking exactly what Staffordshire County Council were doing to improve infrastructure in the village.

Councillor Mark Evans informed the resident as Chairman of the Parish Council he would personally liaise with him on the issues he had mentioned and would contact him outside of the meeting to try to resolve them.

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.

158/23 – Police Report

It was noted PCSO Lee Mason was in attendance initially, but had to be called away. A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Vince Merrick provided a summary of the report for Members, noting there had been 5 resident burglaries between 23rd September and 26th October, 3 incidents of vehicle crime, and 8 reports of anti-social behaviour. He also noted the Bormus team had been covering Wombourne and surrounding areas in the past week, and will continue to support local patrols in the coming weeks.

Members agreed it was good to hear the Police had managed to take action in relation to off-roaders, but queried whether these vehicles would be picked up by ANPR cameras if they had no registration plate. Councillor Mark Evans confirmed ANPR will not ping if no registration plate is present. Councillor Vince Merrick encouraged Members to report any crime to 999.

Councillor Dan Kinsey requested the Clerk write to Wombourne High School to encourage parents to park sensibly when there are any events at the school. A few weeks ago cars were parked all over surrounding streets, and in some instances blocking driveways and making it unsafe for emergency vehicles to access the street when there was an event on at the school. Members agreed for the Clerk to write to the school. He also noted it was a shame that PCSO Lee Mason was called away from the meeting after several where the Police had been unable to attend, and suggested the Parish Council invite the Chief Inspector, Chris Cotton, to attend in the future. Members agreed for the Clerk to send him an invite to the next meeting.

159/23 – Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 25th September 2023.

160/23 Reports from Committees

- a) Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed Members the Civic Centre Management Committee had met on 16th October 2023 where they had noted the latest reservations, and till receipts, lost and found and the accident book, they had also approved two additional venue dressers albeit that item would be raised at the next meeting following an issue with one of them. He explained the Committee had approved a recommended DJ in lieu of a set fee and agreed to increase the fee for PRS/PPL which was also due for further discussion at the next meeting, updated Terms and Conditions had been approved, an update given on the improvements to the heating system, and a budget wishlist had been agreed. Members had also reviewed a request from a tenant in relation to their lease and discussed car parking arrangements for Gravel Hill Surgery.
- b) Councillor Martin Perry informed Members the Committee met on 9th October 2023, when they reviewed the annual safety inspections, noting the high-risk items had already been rectified, and the remaining moderate to very low items would be dealt with by seeking quotations for repairs. It was noted the reports were significantly more detailed than those sought before. The lease at Brickbridge Playing Fields remained outstanding but was continually being followed up by himself and the Clerk. He noted the changing room upgrade at Brickbridge Playing Fields had been completed using S106 funds, and other maintenance work, primarily to the external structure of the building needed to be considered for the next budget. Members noted two emails had been received from residents in relation to parking at Brickbridge Playing Fields, and they had agreed to seek a quotation for consideration in the next budget to improve the parking on site. Members had agreed a site visit to review where new exercise equipment would be sited, but the dark nights had prevented that meeting from going ahead, so that was being re-scheduled. Members discussed new drainage at Poolhouse Play Area funded by S106 monies and noted new cross beams and tyres for the swings which had been identified as high risk in the recent safety reports. Members approved social media posts in relation to wishlist for new play equipment, and noted quotations for new equipment at Poolhouse Play Area would be reviewed at the next Committee Meeting. In relation to Bratch Park, he informed Members the Committee had considered an email from a resident in relation to overgrowth and a vermin issue, and they had agreed to use remaining funds within the budget for plants to purchase spring bulbs for the planters. The meeting concluded by the Committee creating a budget wishlist for the Clerk to seek quotations for.
- c) Councillor Jan Evans reported the Finance and General Purposes Committee met on 23rd October 2023, when they reviewed the reserves policy, and had asked for it to be re-worded before being approved. They noted the trees around the village had been pruned in anticipation of the Christmas Lights being installed, which were now in place.
- d) It was noted Councillor Mike Davies had provided his apologies for the meeting, but no Planning and Development Committee Meeting had taken place, and the planning applications made in lieu of a meeting would be covered later in the meeting.
- e) The Clerk informed Members no Staffing Committee meeting had taken place since the last Full Council Meeting.

161/23 Report from Staffordshire County Council

Although he had sent his apologies for the meeting, Councillor Mike Davies had shared an update on the County's new seven year strategy for employment and skills with the Chairman, which he read out as follows:

“As Staffordshire’s economy continues to grow and with high demand from employers for skilled workers it is essential that we have a population ready to take advantage of new opportunities.

Developing people’s skills before they embark on their careers and then upgrading them throughout their working life means they can play an active part in a modern and evolving economy. Having relevant skills to our key sector industries will enable Staffordshire people to enjoy working in high value jobs within the County.

The County’s employment and skills strategy is truly collaborative between Councils, learning providers and businesses aiming to make the world of learning and skills as easy to navigate as possible. This includes the County’s Job and Career Services matching people’s skills with jobs or training relevant to them.

The strategy draws on our collective expertise and sets out a shared vision and approach. The County are confident that it will help improve people’s lives, the communities and the County’s economy long term.”

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM asked for the Clerk to seek an update from the County Council via Councillor Mike Davies on the trailer in the layby of the A449 being removed.

Councillor Ed Hughes informed Members he was concerned about the surge of water in the brook and had recently seen grey water in it suggesting foul waste was being discharged into the brook. He noted the water was coming through the village via the Wodehouse estate and wanted to know if Staffordshire County Council could act on the matter, particularly around aluminium oxide sitting under the surface and being disturbed by recent storms. Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed him the Environment Agency would be responsible for this, and he would be happy to put him in touch with Ryan Taylor at South Staffordshire Council who works closely with them on matters relating to the Wom Brook.

162/23 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 so there was no update to provide.
- c) Wombourne and District Community Association – Councillor Martin Perry informed Members no meeting had taken place so there was no update to provide.
- d) Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee – No Councillors were present to provide an update.
- e) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Jan Evans informed Members no meeting had taken place since the Carnival in July.
- f) Wombourne Charity Trustees – No Councillors were present to provide an update.
- g) Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members the Committee finds itself in difficulty in managing the group and setting up regular meetings, but he hoped he was getting somewhere in suggesting a couple of people who may be key to moving that forward. He reported individuals were still out litter picking and carrying out other activities such as weed clearance. A grant had recently been received from Councillor Mike Davies, and a date to remove leaves from around the village centre was being discussed by the group.
- h) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Matt Powell informed Members there was nothing to update them on.

- i) Police Liaison – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members the Crime Commissioner had a fund available, and Codsall Parish Council had recently been awarded some funds from it, so the Parish Council may wish to consider applying. Members agreed to add it as an item to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.
- j) Giggetty Action Group – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members some alleyways had recently been cleared, and a meeting had recently taken place so the minutes would be circulated shortly.

163/23 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members approved the payment schedules for September 2023.

164/23 – Planning applications

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

165/23 – Correspondence

None.

166/23 – Meeting Schedule

Members noted:

- a) The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 27th November 2023.
- b) Other meetings will be held as follows:
 - Monday 6th November 2023 – Staffing Committee Meeting at 6.15pm (Brook Room)
 - Monday 6th November 2023 – Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting at 7pm
 - Monday 13th November 2023 – Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting at 7pm
 - Monday 20th November 2023 – Civic Centre Management Committee Meeting at 7pm

167/23 – Reminders

- a) Members noted the Remembrance Sunday Service would take place on Sunday 12th November at 10.30am at St Benedict Biscop Church. The Clerk informed Members the Cricket Club had offered to put on refreshments for anyone attending.
- b) Members noted the Christmas Lights Switch On would take place on Friday 24th November 2023 and a rota had been issued already. Any issues should be flagged with the Clerk ASAP.

168/23 – Chairman’s Closing Remarks

The Chairman gave his thanks to Members for their hard work, noting issues were very often resolved with residents either over the telephone or face-to-face.

He noted he had attended Wombourne School of Music’s 10th anniversary celebrations at the United Reformed Church, which was a spectacular event, and he thanked those who supported it.

He informed Members Councillor Barry Bond MBE was still in good spirits despite his health difficulties and had recently enjoyed an event he had attended in the village.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed:

Dated: