



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL MEETING

held on **Monday 22nd January 2024** at 7.00pm

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

Present -

Councillors: Andy Clay, Mike Davies, Jan Evans, Mark Evans (Chairman), Ed Hughes, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick (Vice-Chairman), Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Mary Roberts, Ian Sadler, Daisy Tait.

Clerk: Rachael Wright.

Public: 6 residents and PCSO Lee Mason accompanied by a colleague from West Mercia Police.

Councillor Mark Evans welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

01/24 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE and Matt Powell.

02/24 – 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 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 Mary Roberts noted she was a member of Wombourne Carnival Committee, Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee, Wombourne and District Community Association and the Santa Sleigh Committee.

03/24 – Presentation to Members from High Flyers

Two members from High Flyers attended the meeting at the request of the Chairman, following their involvement in turning on the Christmas Lights in November.

The Chairman thanked them for their contribution to such an important village event, noting they played a big part in the festivities by switching on the Christmas Lights. He asked Councillor Mary Roberts and the Clerk to present them with a certificate to mark their involvement.

One member expressed his thanks to the Parish Council on behalf of himself, his friend and High Flyers for letting them be part of the Christmas Lights Switch On, noting his gratitude to the Chairman for his kindness and consideration in asking them to take part.

5 members of the public left the meeting.

04/24 – Public Participation

A member of the public from Apse Close noted Councillors would be aware he had emailed them via the Clerk 3 weeks ago regarding the Local Plan and had been told District Councillors may be able to provide an update on the Local Plan at the next Full Council Meeting in February.

In the meantime, he wanted to make some observations after reviewing a document produced by the Strategic Planning Team of the District Council, titled Local Development Scheme September 2023, which he had noted three specific items, namely - 1. The active involvement of District Councillors is essential to the successful preparation and adoption of Local Plans, 2. In January last year, the Council paused working on the Local Plan Review, whilst waiting for the outcome of the Government's changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, however, they resumed work on the Review in July 2023, 3. The Second Publication of the Local Plan will take place in Spring 2024.

He presumed the new National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2023 will result in a delay to the Second Publication of the Local Plan and he looks forward to the update from District Councillors.

The Chairman agreed that whilst the Local Plan had been on hold, District Councillors had been to a number of briefings and there were a number of options available for consideration, which he hoped would be made public towards the end of the year. He noted there was strong interest in the Local Plan and a lot of hard work and intense conversations were happening behind the scenes. He informed the resident that when an update was available it would be shared with the wider community.

05/24 – Police Report

Members noted a report had been shared with them ahead of the meeting, which covered a period of 23rd November 2023 to 18th January 2024, owing to the fact there had been no meetings to provide an update in December 2023.

The report noted 4 incidents of residential burglary, 2 incidents of business burglary, 11 incidents of vehicle crime, 11 reports of anti-social behaviour and that the Bormus team continue to support local officers in dealing with vehicle crime.

The report also contained screenshots from social media posts and updates from in and around Wombourne, including engagement with residents and school children, updates from Operation Bormus, updates from routine patrols and breath tests carried out over the festive period.

PCSO Lee Mason was available to answer any queries in relation to the report, however all Members agreed it was comprehensive and, therefore, they had no questions.

PCSO Lee Mason and his colleague left the meeting.

06/24 – Budget and Precept 2024/2025

Councillor Mary Roberts noted at last Monday's Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting, an 8% increase to the precept for the forthcoming financial year was proposed and agreed by Members.

The Committee included the re-development of the Poolhouse Play Area from their wishlist, so the budget for 2024/2025 would be £434,713, with a precept of £358,390.

With a base rate of £5,232.59, Band D properties in Wombourne would pay £68.49 annually, an increase of £5.13 per annum. This would be equivalent to 1.32p weekly, which is an increase of 10p per week, compared to 2023/2024.

She proposed this recommendation be adopted by the Council. Councillor Mike Davies seconded her proposal and all Members were in favour.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve a budget of £434,713 and a precept of £358,390 for financial year 2024/2025.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mary Roberts and the Clerk for their efforts in preparing the budget and Members for their contribution to the active discussion.

Councillor Mary Roberts noted thanks to the Clerk for preparing the comprehensive budget and the time consuming task of preparing estimates from the wish lists submitted by the Committees. She also thanked Councillor Jan Evans as Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for her time in attending the meetings with herself and the Clerk before last week's meeting.

07/24 – Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 27th November 2023.

08/24 Report from Staffordshire County Council

Councillor Mike Davies informed Members Staffordshire County Council were continuing the mammoth task of filling potholes, considering how large of an area the County spanned over. He noted, understandably, the number of potholes filled at this time of year may decline, due to crews working evening shifts gritting the roads. If Members had any particular concerns, he would be happy to raise them with the County Council on their behalf.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mike Davies for his ongoing work as a County Councillor representing the village.

09/24 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. The Chairman noted this was an important facility for the group and he hoped the Council would continue to support them using the room.
- 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) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Mary Roberts informed Members the AGM had taken place on 29th November 2023 and the proposed theme for the 2024 Carnival was Sports For All. The next meeting would be taking place on 22nd February 2024.
- e) Wombourne Charity Trustees – Councillor Mike Davies informed Members the Trustees had dealt with one or two items since his last update, including funeral expenses.
- f) Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee – Councillor Dan Kinsey informed Members individual members of BKV, including Councillor Alan Peace, Jane Evans and Helena Plater continued to litter pick and tidy up on a regular basis, however, no formal Committee meetings had taken place for some time.

However, a meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 24th January at the Civic Centre and he would provide an update from that meeting next month.

- g) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Daisy Tait informed Members there were no updates, but asked the Clerk if she had received any feedback from the village audit, to which the Clerk confirmed she had not.
- h) Police Liaison – Councillor Vince Merrick remarked he hoped Members could see the improved monthly report and noted the Chief Inspector would be leaving his post shortly. He also reported a new ANPR camera had been installed on the Poolhouse Estate.
- i) Giggetty Action Group – Councillor Vince Merrick informed Members he met some of the team on Saturday to review some environmental work that was required on the estate. Issues has been reported and dealt with via the District Council, Homes Plus and the local Policing team. The group would be holding their next meeting on Friday 26th January 2024 at the Civic Centre, so he would report back on that at the next meeting.

10/24 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members approved the payment schedules for November and December 2023.

11/24 – Planning applications

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

Councillor Mike Davies explained the Committee had responded to 12 applications, 6 small alterations, 2 applications with tree preservation orders, 3 large alterations and 1 variation of condition relating to the local car boot sale. He said the Parish Council had strongly objected to the proposal to increase the number of car boot sales, noting the disruption to the local residents had been flagged to him and he felt the Parish Council had supported their wishes in refusing the application.

12/24 – Biodiversity Policy

Members approved the policy requesting some additional sentences be included to affirm some of the statements in it.

Councillor Ed Hughes raised concerns over Penn Common as an area of broad biodiversity and concerns from local residents in relation to changes being made to the Common by the local Golf Club, in particular to the car park being made private and the ditches that are being excavated. He was concerned it was a forgotten area and should be protected from any changes that may be in breach of planning permissions previously given. Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM concurred his concerns and agreed to take a look at the original planning consent given to the Golf Club. Councillor Mary Roberts agreed to email over a document she had found online regarding the ownership of the Common.

13/24 – Annual Parish Meeting

Members noted the meeting would take place on Wednesday 24th April 2024 at 7pm in the Wodehouse Suite, as part of a Community Showcase Event. It was noted all Members were expected to attend.

14/24 – Correspondence

- a. Thank you letter from Blakeley Heath Primary School in relation to their visit to the Council Chamber, noting that Councillors Dan Kinsey BEM and Ian Sadler made the session fun. They asked for loan of some litter pickers, which the Parish Council agreed to.

- b. Email from a resident in Apse Close regarding moving traffic offences and asking various questions. Councillor Mike Davies suggested rather than the Parish Council act as a middle man in dealing with the correspondence, he suggested he would set up a meeting with the resident and the Highways Liaison Manager at Staffordshire County Council to try to resolve his queries.
- c. Email from Alpaca Communications making contact on behalf of PACE Renewables, regarding proposals for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (Wombourne BESS) on land east of Wombourne Road, Staffordshire, WV5 0LU. They note they are in the preliminary stages of developing our proposals and they would be looking to hold a public consultation for the proposed BESS facility in due course. The public consultation will give local residents a chance to meet the development team, raise queries and learn more about the proposals, but they would be happy to discuss their application with the Parish Council in the meantime. Members agreed to ask the Clerk to invite them to the Full Council meeting in March.

15/24 – Meeting Schedule

Members noted:

- a) The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 26th February 2024.
- b) Other meetings will be held as follows:
 - Monday 29th January 2024 – Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting at 7pm
 - Monday 5th February 2024 – Civic Centre Management Committee Meeting at 7pm
 - Monday 12th February 2024 – Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting at 7pm
 - Monday 19th February 2024 – Planning and Development Committee Meeting at 7pm

16/24 – Reminders

- a) The next Parish Summit at South Staffordshire Council’s offices will be held on Thursday 1st February 2024. Members should inform the Clerk if they wish to attend.
- b) The Joan Williams Civic Award will open for nominations on Thursday 1st February 2024. Members should encourage nominations before the deadline of Friday 22nd March 2024.

17/24 – 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 on an individual basis outside of meetings.

The Chairman also thanked all Members who attended the Carol Concert in December, in particular Councillor Vince Merrick as Vice-Chairman and Councillor Ed Hughes, who completed a reading on his behalf.

He gave thanks to the Members who attended the Councillor Surgery on Saturday, noting a handful of residents attended so it had been worthwhile.

He also gave thanks to Members for their collaborative working, and for their encouragement and support in presenting the certificates to the Members from High Flyers this evening.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm.

Signed:

Dated: