



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

held on **Monday 18th March 2024** at 7.00pm

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

Present – Committee Members-

Councillors: Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Mark Evans, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick, Matt Powell, Mary Roberts (Chairman)

Present – Non-Committee Members - Councillors: None

Absent without apologies – None

Clerk – Rachael Wright

Members of the public – N/A

14/24 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Jan Evans and Elizabeth Keeling.

15/24 – Declarations of Interest

None.

16/24 – Approval of last Committee Meeting minutes from 12th February 2024

Members approved the minutes of the last meeting.

17/24 – Matters arising from 12th February 2024

13/24 – The Clerk informed members the production of a Fairtrade Policy was still in progress.

18/24 – Newsletter

Councillor Mary Roberts updated Members on the recent meeting of the Working Group, where they discussed and finalised a range of high-level content for the newsletter. This includes updates on the Civic Centre, advertisements for the panto and dinner dance, articles of local interest, organisational responsibilities, updates on the Local Plan and the Speed Watch initiative, amongst others.

It was previously agreed that the newsletter would be distributed exclusively online, through the website and social media platforms. Residents will have the option to sign up for newsletter updates via the website.

The objective is to release the first of two planned newsletters for the year by the first week of May. Additionally, the Working Group will convene again before the next Committee meeting to further coordinate efforts.

19/24 – Parcels for the elderly

Councillor Mary Roberts reminded members of the proposal from a member of the public regarding the distribution of parcels to individuals over the age of 70, who live alone during Christmas.

The Clerk provided an update on a similar initiative run by a Parish Council in Swindon. This included details on the number of parcels delivered, their contents and the funding mechanism. It was noted that the Parish Council operates on a larger scale, serving approximately 22,000 residents, with a budget of £1.2 million and a precept of £1.1 million.

After deliberation, members concluded that they could not endorse the proposed scheme in its current format. However, they agreed to collaborate with Sarah Slater from Friendly Faces to explore the feasibility of supporting an initiative focused on providing Christmas meals for the elderly.

20/24 – Card machine

The Clerk presented 4 options to members to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that Take Payments should be instructed to provide a card machine for the Parish Council from April 2024.

21/24 – Social media policy

The policy was discussed by members in light of a recent incident on social media, which resulted in several individuals being blocked from the Facebook page.

Members unanimously supported the decision to block these individuals and requested the Clerk revise the policy to include a provision mandating the submission of a screenshot of the offence to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council or, in their absence, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Finance and General Purposes. This measure aims to provide protection for the Officer involved.

It was agreed amongst members that once a member of the public has been blocked, they will remain so and there will be no avenue for appeal.

The meeting closed at 7.26pm.

Signed:

Dated: