



## **WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

held on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024** at 7.00pm

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

#### **Present -**

Councillors: Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Jan Evans, Mark Evans, Ed Hughes, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Vince Merrick, Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Matt Powell, Mary Roberts, Ian Sadler, Daisy Tait

#### **Absent without apologies – N/A**

Clerk: Rachael Wright

Public: 28 members of the public, plus Sergeant Matt Walker and PCSOs Alex Rathbone and Paula Wilkes.

Councillor Mark Evans warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, expressing his gratitude for their attendance. He began by reflecting on his past year as Chairman of the Parish Council, describing it as his 'greatest work achievement to date'. He emphasised how much he had enjoyed the role, highlighting the sense of pride and fulfilment it has brought him.

Councillor Evans spoke passionately about the experiences and challenges he had encountered, underscoring the noteworthy progress and accomplishments the Council had recently made. He thanked his fellow Councillors for their constant support and collaboration, acknowledging that their collective efforts were key to the Council's success.

He acknowledged Rachael Wright, the Clerk to the Council, for her unwavering support and guidance; Councillor Mary Roberts for her humility, diligence and for being an inspirational Councillor; Tom Higgins, a resident, for his consistent attendance at meetings and for holding the Parish Council accountable; and Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM for the invaluable time, guidance and support he had provided over the past year.

#### **67/24 – Election of Chairman for 2024/2025**

Councillor Barry Bond MBE proposed Councillor Vince Merrick for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year. He highlighted Councillor Merrick's steadfast dedication to the local community, which originated with his service on Trysull and Seisdon Parish Council and Lower Penn Parish Council.

Councillor Bond MBE praised Councillor Merrick's active and dedicated roles as both a Parish and District Councillor, noting his keen interest in community safety. He also acknowledged Councillor Merrick's exceptional ability to engage with often overlooked segments of the local population. Councillor Bond MBE expressed his full confidence in recommending such a committed, diligent and hardworking individual for the role of Chairman of the Parish Council.

Councillor Mike Davies seconded the proposal, emphasising Councillor Merrick's constant loyalty, tenacity, determination and dedication. He elaborated on these qualities, asserting that such attributes were essential for effective leadership. Councillor Davies conveyed his strong conviction that Councillor Merrick possessed the necessary skills and character to excel as Chairman, confidently supporting his nomination. He concluded by stating that Councillor Merrick's appointment would undoubtedly benefit the Council and the community it serves.

There were no other nominations and all Members were in favour of the proposal, so it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Vince Merrick be Chairman for 2024/2025.

Upon graciously accepting the position, Councillor Vince Merrick extended his heartfelt gratitude to members of the Council, expressing sincere appreciation for their firm support and the confidence they had placed in him. With humility and determination, he acknowledged the responsibility entrusted to him to lead the Council for the forthcoming twelve months.

Commenting on his initial duty as Chairman, Councillor Vince Merrick shared his plan to present the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Mark Evans, with a shield. As he handed it over, he took a moment to commend Councillor Evans for his exceptional representation of the Council throughout the past year.

#### **68/24 – Election of Vice-Chairman for 2024/2025**

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM nominated Councillor Martin Perry for the position of Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. He recounted their acquaintance, which burgeoned during the period of lockdown due to Covid-19. Their interactions, often occurring during chance encounters in the village, particularly when Councillor Perry was walking his dog, sparked meaningful conversations. Councillor Kinsey BEM noted Councillor Perry's penchant for posing insightful enquiries and his fervent desire to foster positive change within the community.

Initially apprehensive about fitting in within the Parish Council due to his candid nature, Councillor Perry received reassurance of his place from Councillor Kinsey BEM. Upon joining the Council, Councillor Perry gravitated towards the Recreation and Amenities Committee, eventually assuming the role of Chairman last year. Demonstrating exemplary dedication, he immersed himself in various activities outside of formal meetings, including inspecting play areas, providing support to staff, testing equipment and diligently completing grant applications alongside his full-time job.

Councillor Kinsey concluded by affirming Councillor Perry's tireless work ethic and optimistic demeanour, underscoring his suitability for the role of Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Ed Hughes seconded the proposal, offering reflection on Councillor Perry's leadership qualities and their impact within the Parish Council. He elaborated on Councillor Perry's exemplary leadership style, emphasizing how he consistently sets a high standard through his actions, thereby motivating and inspiring his fellow Parish Councillors to strive for excellence daily.

Drawing upon the adage that 'iron sharpens iron', Councillor Hughes conveyed his belief that Councillor Perry's presence would not only enhance the effectiveness of the Council, but also foster a culture of continual improvement.

In his closing remarks, he reiterated his strong confidence in Councillor Perry's suitability for the role, affirming that his proven dedication and leadership qualities make him the ideal candidate.

There were no other nominations and all Members were in favour of the proposal, so it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Martin Perry be Vice-Chairman for 2024/2025.

Upon being appointed as Vice-Chairman, Councillor Perry expressed gratitude to the members for their supportive remarks, acknowledging the significant responsibility ahead. He humbly recognised the magnitude of the task, acknowledging the large shoes he had to fill and assured the Chairman of his full support and dedication.

#### **69/24 – Election of Deputy Chairman for 2024/2025**

Members noted that Councillor Mark Evans would take the position of Deputy Chairman as per Standing Orders.

#### **70/24 – Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Andy Clay.

#### **71/24 – Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted he was a Trustee of Wombourne and District Community Association.

Councillor Mary Roberts noted she was a Member of the Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee, Wombourne Santa Sleigh Committee and 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 and District Community Association, Wombourne Best Kept Village, Wombourne Santa Sleigh, Wombourne Carnival, Wombourne Volunteer Bureau and a Director of South Staffordshire Narrowboat Company.

Councillor Mike Davies noted he was a Trustee of Wombourne and Swindon Relief Fund.

#### **72/24 – Presentation of the Joan Williams Civic Award**

The Chairman, Councillor Vince Merrick noted he had the distinct honour of presenting the Joan Williams Civic Award to Helena Plater, whom he described as 'one of the village's most resolute and selfless volunteers'.

He commended her for the tireless time and effort she consistently invests in litter picking and maintaining the village's cleanliness, highlighting her exceptional dedication and the positive impact of her work on the community.

Her unwavering commitment to keeping our community tidy and beautiful was warmly acknowledged and greatly appreciated by all members present, who recognised her contributions as invaluable to the well-being and appearance of the village.

#### **73/24 – Election of Chairman and Members of Committees for 2024/2025**

All members agreed for the Chairman and Members of Committees be agreed en bloc according to a list circulated, as follows:

- a) **Civic Centre Management** – It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM be elected Chairman of the Committee.
- b) **Finance and General Purposes** - It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Mary Roberts be elected Chairman of the Committee.
- c) **Planning and Development** - It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ed Hughes be elected Chairman of the Committee.

d) **Recreation and Amenities** - It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Martin Perry be elected Chairman of the Committee.

**Members of Committees** – It was **RESOLVED** that the Members be appointed to Committees as follows:

<b><u>Committees</u></b>	B Bond MBE	A Clay	M Davies	J Evans	M Evans	E Hughes	E Keeling	D Kinsey BEM	V Merrick	A Peace	M Perry	M Powell	M Roberts	I Sadler	D Tait
Civic Centre Management	X				X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Finance and General Purposes			X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	
Planning and Development	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X			
Recreation and Amenities		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X				X
Staffing			X	X									X	X	

#### **74/24 – Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies for 2024/2025**

All members agreed to the Members appointed to Outside Bodies to be agreed en bloc according to a list circulated, as follows:

<b><u>Outside Body</u></b>	B Bond MBE	A Clay	M Davies	J Evans	M Evans	E Hughes	E Keeling	D Kinsey BEM	V Merrick	A Peace	M Perry	M Powell	M Roberts	I Sadler	D Tait
Wombourne and District Community Association											X				X
Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee		X											X		
Wombourne Carnival Committee				X									X		
Wombourne Charity Trustees			X												
Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee								X							
Wombourne Retailers Liaison							X								X
Wombourne Police Liaison						X			X						
Giggetty Action Group			X						X						

**75/24 – Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for Committees**

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the matter to a later date.

**76/24 – Review and adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the matter to a later date.

**77/24 – Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment**

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the matter to a later date.

**78/24 – Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks**

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the cover in place.

**79/24 – Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies**

Members noted the subscriptions as follows:

- a) Staffordshire Parish Council's Association (Council)
- b) Society of Local Council Clerks (Clerk)

**80/24 – Review of the Council's complaints procedure**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.

**81/24 – Review of the Council's policies, procedures, and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies:

- a) GDPR – Rights of individuals
- b) GDPR – Privacy notice for staff and Cllrs
- c) GDPR – Information security policy guidelines and procedures
- d) GDPR – Employment records – retention and erasure guidelines
- e) GDPR – Personal data breach

**82/24 – Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press / media**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.

**83/24 – Review of the Council's Social Media Policy**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the policy.

**84/24 – Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies:

- a) Absence Policy
- b) Disciplinary Policy
- c) Employers Pensions Discretions Policy (LGPS)
- d) Equal Opportunities Policy
- e) Grievance Policy
- f) Lone Worker Policy
- g) Pension Policy
- h) Training and Development Policy
- i) Health and Safety Policy

**85/24 – Review of the Council’s expenditure incurred under s137 of the Local Government Act or the general power of competence.**

Members noted no payments had been made under S137 of the Local Government Act.

**86/24 – To approve signatures on the bank account**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following signatures:

- a) Mrs Rachael Wright – full access
- b) Mrs Judith Vasiljevic – full access
- c) Mrs Samantha Berry – view only
- d) Chairman of Finance and General Purposes – full access
- e) Chairman of Civic Centre Management – full access
- f) Chairman of Recreation and Amenities – full access

**87/24 – Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council as follows:**

- a) Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- b) Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- c) Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- d) Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- e) Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- f) Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- g) Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- h) Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- i) Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber
- j) Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

**88/24 – Determining the time and place of Committee meetings up to the next Annual Meeting of the Council**

Members agreed to the meeting dates as set out on the document provided, so long as there is business to be discussed and an agenda is issued.

**89/24 – Public Participation**

A resident from Apse Close informed members that while reviewing the Wombourne Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page, he noticed posts about missing drain covers on School Road and Woodhill Drive. After checking, he found the cover on School Road had been replaced, but the one on Woodhill Drive was still missing. He reported it to County Highways, who promptly replaced it. He suggested that the Parish Council issue guidance in their newsletter, shared on relevant Facebook groups, on how to report such issues.

He also raised a road safety concern about mirrors at the entrance to Wombourne High School, noting that these are considered illegal signs by Staffordshire County Council and are not recommended on private land. He requested that Councillor Mark Evans check with the South Staffordshire Council’s Planning Department to ensure compliance with the Construction and Environmental Management Plan.

Additionally, he sought guidance from Councillor Mike Davies on the pothole repair process. He asked if it is possible for Supervisors to raise instant repair orders to avoid multiple visits and suggested that the system be tweaked to flag older potholes for reassessment. He requested that the Wombourne South Councillors include Woodhill Drive in their Ward Walks on 8th June 2024.

Councillor Mike Davies thanked the resident for his diligence, emphasizing the importance of reporting issues to ensure they are addressed. Councillor Alan Peace mentioned he had logged 34 potholes on the Giggetty Estate, with only 2 repaired so far, and urged County Highways to prioritise significant hazards.

Councillor Mike Davies added that County Highways had spent 6-7 days on the Giggetty Estate but noted that the system is overwhelmed with numerous low-priority potholes.

**90/24 – Police Report**

The Chairman noted a report had already been shared with members, but asked PCSO Paula Wilkes if she had anything extra to add. She noted Sergeant Matt Walker was in attendance, who had been heading up Operation Bormus and supporting local patrols in relation to vehicle crime and theft in the area.

The Chairman thanked the Sergeant for his team’s hard work.

**91/24 – Approval of Minutes**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**92/24 – Parish Council Finances and Administration**

Members approved the payment schedules for April 2024.

**93/24 – Planning applications**

Members noted the responses to planning applications made to South Staffordshire Council in lieu of a meeting. Councillor Mike Davies noted 7 applications had been commented upon, 1 should not have been validated with the information provided, 1 was declined and the other 5 were approved.

**94/24 – Local Plan**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the response to the Local Plan Consultation.

**95/24 – Correspondence**

None.

**96/24 – Meeting Schedule**

- a) The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- b) Committee meetings will be held as follows:
  - Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 – Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting
  - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Civic Centre Management Committee Meeting
  - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 – Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting

**97/24 – Reminders**

Members were reminded the Parish Council office would be closed on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 for Bank Holiday.

**98/24 – Chairman’s Closing Remarks**

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking members for nominating him to the position, stating he will be proud to lead the Council over the next twelve months and it was fantastic to see such a variety of people from the village at the meeting, including some of the retailers, the Police and members of Best Kept Village.

The meeting closed at 7.39pm.

**Signed:** ..... **Dated:** .....