



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL MEETING held on Monday 24th June 2024 at 7.00pm

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

Present -

Councillors: Mark Evans, Ed Hughes, Elizabeth Keeling, Dan Kinsey BEM, Alan Peace, Martin Perry, Mary Roberts, Ian Sadler, Daisy Tait

Absent without apologies – Andy Clay

Clerk: Rachael Wright

99/24 – Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Jan Evans, Vince Merrick and Matt Powell.

100/24 – 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 Mark Evans noted as Chairman of the Planning Committee at South Staffordshire Council he would keep an open mind in relation to planning applications, so as not to be pre-determined.

101/24 – Public Participation

A resident from Apse Close informed members he was aware of the different responsibilities of the Parish, District and County Councils and hoped the Parish Council could set out in the newsletter exactly what each authority was responsible for, as well as appropriate links of how to report matters to each. He requested assistance from members where required in getting matters sorted, likening his approach to the British Transport Police slogan – ‘See it – Say it – Sorted’, noting he could ‘See it’ and ‘Say it’, but sometimes needed help with the ‘Sorted’ element.

102/24 – Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 20th May 2024.

103/24 – Annual Return and Governance Statements (AGAR) 2023/2024

- a) Members received the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024.
- b) Members received the Annual Internal Audit Report. Councillor Mary Roberts congratulated the Clerk on another successful internal audit.
- c) Members approved the completion and signing of the Annual Governance Statement by the Chairman and Clerk/RFO.
- d) Members approved the Accounting Statements, which the Chairman signed.
- e) Members noted the dates for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounting records (26th June 2024 to 6th August 2024).

104/24 – Financial Regulations

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Financial Regulations.

105/24 – Reports from Committees

- a) Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted the Civic Centre Management Committee met on 10th June 2024 and agreed to obtain quotations for solar panels and apply to South Staffordshire Council for funding. They agreed the price of this year's Dinner Dance to remain the same as the 2023 price and received an update on the progress of the History Room. A very positive update on the matter was that Josh Thurstance, one of his former students, had been volunteering his time to assist in sorting through the room. The Committee had agreed for him to contact key stakeholders regarding the removal of some items from the room, including those referencing areas outside of the Locality, such as Birmingham. The Senior Citizens Day Centre room had been put forward to South Staffordshire Council as an un-manned warm space for this winter.
A meeting had taken place between the Chairman and the Carnival Committee Chairman regarding the bar services on Carnival Day and a seating plan had been agreed.
Finally, members had agreed to form a full Committee Working Group to discuss future staffing options for the Civic Centre to plan ahead for any staff changes that may occur due to retirement.
- b) Councillor Mary Roberts informed members the Finance and General Purposes Committee had met on 3rd June 2024 and agreed to postpone the newsletter distribution until after the 4th July election had taken place.
Members had agreed to the usual firework display, rather than any alternatives, this year and had agreed to invite St Bernadette's Primary School to sing and students from Cherry Trees School to turn on the lights. The Clerk was producing a rota for Councillors, who should all be in attendance to assist on the night.
Members agreed to support Small Business Saturday again, which falls on 7th December this year. It will be the usual format, with a trail around the shops and a craft fayre. The Clerk had been asked to make enquiries with the churches in the village centre about housing performers on the day.
- c) Councillor Ed Hughes informed members the Planning and Development Committee had not met during June, however, they had responded to 6 applications as set out in item 10 on the agenda. He noted they would be meeting next Monday for the first meeting of the new Council year.
- d) Councillor Martin Perry informed members the Recreation and Amenities Committee met on 17th June 2024 where they appointed Councillor Elizabeth Keeling as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. He noted the lease continued to be pursued for Brickbridge Playing Fields with South Staffordshire Council following their enquiries into grounds maintenance being included.

Members noted Wombourne Wanderers had given notice to leave after 10 years and they had agreed for Wombourne Allstars to have sole use of the pitches going forward. An annual rental was to be agreed at the next meeting.

New exercise equipment had been installed at Brickbridge Playing Fields, although only limited use had been reported to date, so members agreed to meet to have a Grand Opening event there.

Unfortunately, the Council were not successful in securing funds from South Staffordshire Council's Health Inequalities Fund. The Committee are trying to address concerns from the National Lottery in respect of their grant in relation to the proximity of the equipment at Poolhouse Play Area to the brook. Councillor Elizabeth Keeling had agreed to contact Lidl and Sainsburys to check if they were willing to provide funds.

Members agreed to set up a Friends of Bratch Park group and a date would be agreed in the coming weeks to spend some time sprucing the park up. Finally, he noted repairs would be carried out around the trampoline and surrounding areas, which were found to be deteriorating.

- e) Councillor Mary Roberts informed members the Staffing Committee had met, but the meeting excluded the press and public, therefore she was unable to give a report.

106/24 – Reports from members appointed to Outside Bodies

- a) Wombourne and District Community Association – Councillor Daisy Tait informed members a meeting had taken place on 22nd May 2024, where the Committee had been informed the garage roof needed attention. Discussions had taken place in relation to the future of the Community Centre.

New flyers had been printed advertising the Association to be handed out at the Carnival. A grant application had been received from Wombourne Allstars veterans and the Association agreed to seek more information before considering it.

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed members that Staffordshire County Council had applied for an Arts Council Grant for the library. Councillor Alan Peace informed members that the Association's Executive Committee had met and agreed roof repairs at a cost of £2,400. Overhanging trees would also be dealt with.

- b) Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee – Councillor Mary Roberts informed members a meeting was held on 22nd May 2024 and these would be quarterly meetings going forward. It was noted that the airport was no longer working with Dangerous Sheep. There had been some noise complaints, but when they were investigated it was found that none of the complaints related to private aircraft, but belonged to MOD, RAF or Police.

One complaint about low flying aircraft had been investigated and found it was the Police completing training exercises.

Renovations to the tar had been completed and the new restaurant and café were now open.

Other buildings were also due to receive renovation. 36 other small airfields had closed, but the new owners were determined to stay open. They were considering the viability of opening a farm shop on-site, although they were pleased to report visitor numbers had increased recently.

- c) Wombourne Carnival Committee – Councillor Mary Roberts informed members the Committee met on 19th June and were informed they had just 2 stalls left, which they anticipated would sell out before the event. All food pitches had been sold. The tiny bar had pulled out, but may be back next year.

There were 6 floats this year. Banners had been distributed and should be put up by the end of the month. 6 acts had been booked for the arena. As always, the Committee were looking for volunteers to assist on the day.

Councillor Alan Peace informed members he would be putting up the banner at the Civic Centre on Wednesday. He also informed them every house on the parade route had been letter dropped to make them aware of the rolling closure during the parade.

- d) Councillor Mike Davies was absent from the meeting therefore there was no update in relation to Wombourne Charity Trustees.

- e) Wombourne Best Kept Village – Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM informed members the Committee was going through somewhat of a change at present, as they were looking for a new Chairman after both Simon Williams and Donna Eccleston had resigned.
BKV efforts still continued with regular volunteers such as Helena Plater and Jane Evans out regularly litter picking and cleaning areas in the village centre. Across two separate weekends, volunteers had cut the overgrowth around the tree bases in the village and their next ambition was to clear the long stretch of alley way near Westfield School.
Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM asked members to strongly consider the option of employing a Parish Warden / Orderly from next April, stating BKV are currently doing jobs that could be completed by this employee, allowing them to work in other locations across the village. He felt the investment from the Parish Council would be a positive step forward and urged members to consider it when reviewing budgets later in the year.
- f) Wombourne Retailers Liaison – Councillor Elizabeth Keeling informed members she had visited businesses in the village since officially becoming their Liaison and they had all reported similar findings that footfall had significantly decreased since the closure of Barclays.
She informed members it was her intention to continue to engage with businesses to find out how the Parish Council could assist them.
Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM noted more businesses were being lost from the village, firstly The Courtyard, then Peggy Lain and he had been told confidentially another would also be closing soon. He suggested the Parish Council needed to build a relationship with local landlords to encourage the type of businesses coming into the village and encourage offers in relation to rental prices. He also thought Barclays should be contacted to inform them the predicted effect of their closure has been brought to life with retailers reporting to be quieter since they closed. He hoped that there would be an update on parking in the village in the autumn with South Staffordshire Council taking the lead on the matter.
- g) Police Liaison – Councillor Ed Hughes informed members they had all received an update from Chief Inspector Tim Norbury, who had promised more teams on the ground with them being tied up to less paperwork since the frequency of Police Reports to Council's was reducing. He noted his support of the number of Police on the ground growing in the area and hoped it would continue.
- h) Councillors Vince Merrick and Mike Davies were absent from the meeting, therefore there was no update in relation to Giggetty Action Group.

107/24 – Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members approved the payment schedules for May 2024.

108/24 – Planning Applications

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

109/24 – Correspondence

The Clerk informed members they had all been sent a copy of the email from Chief Inspector Tim Norbury, referred to earlier by Councillor Ed Hughes. The main effect to these meetings going forward was that there would not be a monthly Police Report or presence at meetings. Instead Officers would be out engaging in person, rather than typing up reports and we would receive a report and attendance by someone quarterly.

110/24 – Meeting Schedule

- a) The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 29th July 2024
- b) Committee meetings will be held as follows:
 - Monday 1st July at 6.15pm – Planning and Development Committee Meeting
 - Monday 1st July at 7pm – Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting
 - Monday 15th July at 7pm – Civic Centre Management Committee Meeting
 - Monday 22nd July at 7pm – Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting

111/24 – Reminders

Members were reminded that Wombourne Carnival and their own craft fayre would be taking place on Sunday 7th July and the entries for Wombourne in Bloom would be judged shortly after Friday 12th July 2024.

112/24 – Chairman’s Closing Remarks

Councillor Martin Perry thanked Councillors and volunteers for their efforts around the village, noting with summer on its way it was starting to look spectacular and Wombourne the jewel in South Staffs.

The meeting closed at 7.43pm.

Signed:

Dated: