



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

held on Monday 28th October 2024 at 7.00pm

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

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

Public - 5 members of the public, plus David Evans (Deputy Commissioner), Tim Norbury (Commander), Alex Rathbone (PCSO)

Clerk - Rachael Wright

145/24 - Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Bond MBE, Mike Davies, Jan Evans, Daisy Perry, Martin Perry and Mary Roberts.

146/24 - Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM declared he was a Trustee of Wombourne and District Community Association and Wombourne Best Kept Village Committee.

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 Ed Hughes informed members he was the Inclusion Lead for the Invictus Trust.

Councillor Mark Evans informed members he was the Cabinet member over Planning at South Staffordshire Council and would, therefore, not be making any comments in relation to any planning applications.

Councillor Vince Merrick informed members he was the Licensing Lead and therefore would also not be making any comments in relation to licensing applications.

147/24 – Q&A with Dave Evans, Deputy Staffordshire Commissioner – Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime

Dave Evans, Deputy Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime explained that he started his role at the end of May 2024. Previously, he served as a Cabinet Member for Children's Services and is currently a Councillor in North Staffordshire. His main priorities include rural crime, anti-social behaviour and business crime, with ongoing investigations focusing on the criminal use of roads, particularly involving drug transport and off-road motorbikes.

As Co-Chairman of the Safer Roads Partnership, he expressed support for local community Speed Watch initiatives and noted that funding is available through community safety partnerships to address issues like off-road motorbike crime.

In response to a question about recruitment for Special Constables, he confirmed ongoing efforts to recruit and engage with the local community. He highlighted their work on an engagement strategy aimed at increasing volunteer numbers, with a focus on collaboration with Parish Councils.

A resident raised concerns about worsening traffic outside schools and the presence of HGVs passing through the village, asking if Mr Evans would encourage the County Council to address these issues. He responded that addressing parking outside schools requires a multi-agency approach, involving schools, the Police and local Councils. Additionally, he committed to exploring the policing of HGV traffic through the Safer Roads Partnership.

148/24 – Police Report

Commander Tim Norbury provided his second update to the Parish Council since his appointment 10 months ago. He shared crime statistics from the past 12 months, noting the following trends:

- Business Burglary: Incidents remained stable, with three reported in September, a comparatively small number relative to other areas. Two suspects were identified, interviewed and are being managed. Business burglaries most commonly occurred on Friday and Saturday evenings between 8pm and 9pm.
- Residential Burglary: Incidents remained low, with one in May, zero in June, three in July and two in both August and September.
- Criminal Damage: Decreased by 21%.
- Drug Offences: Up by 150%. Commander Norbury clarified that this increase reflects a proactive focus on operations targeting drug-related crime, leading to higher reporting rates.
- Less Serious Violence: Decreased by 26%.
- More Serious Violence: Decreased by 35%.
- Domestic Violence: Decreased by 38%.
- Other Theft: Up by 6%, attributed to a national rise in shoplifting. However, the area remains the best-performing locally due to targeted interventions.
- Theft from Motor Vehicle: Decreased by 32%.
- Theft of Motor Vehicle: Decreased by 19%, with five offences reported in September. Key times for this crime were identified as Sunday night into early Monday morning.
- Anti-Social Behaviour: Decreased by 9%.

Commander Norbury highlighted his investment in local Neighbourhood Teams focused on drug-related crime, leading to several successful arrests and prosecutions. He also reported ongoing car crime operations, with three individuals identified and linked to over 20 incidents.

He emphasised that, while Officers may not always be visible, they are actively engaged in operations, often in plain clothing. Over 35 community engagement events were attended by his team, ensuring regular communication with residents. He also made a commitment to maintain a police presence outside schools and confirmed that they target known crime hotspots at peak times.

He expressed appreciation for West Midlands Police, with whom they collaborate on operations and attributed crime reduction efforts to strong prevention strategies.

Councillors expressed their gratitude to Commander Norbury for his time and detailed report, acknowledging his team's hard work in keeping Wombourne a safe place to live.

149/24 – Public Participation

A resident from Apse Close congratulated the Parish Council on their recent Newsletter, asking if the infographic on the rear page could be shared with Wombourne Online. The Clerk explained it would be shared firstly on the Council's own social media pages and then she would ask Wombourne Online to share it.

A resident from The Grange asked if the Newsletter could be printed and distributed amongst residents. Councillor Elizabeth Keeling explained there was no funding in the Council's budget for printing and distributing the Newsletter, but she hoped to seek sponsorship from businesses for this in the future.

150/24 - Approval of Minutes

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 30th September 2024.

151/24 - Report from Committees

Councillor Dan Kinsey informed members the Civic Centre Management Committee would be reviewing updated quarterly figures at their next meeting and he hoped it would mean the Civic Centre was making more than it was costing to run. Members had agreed the use of the Day Centre as a Warm Hub at their last meeting which would run from December to March. It was worth noting this was a donation to the community of circa £10,000 per annum. A Working Group had been set up to discuss the future management of the Civic Centre and their first meeting would be taking place tomorrow.

Councillor Elizabeth Keeling informed members at the last Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting they noted the Newsletter had now been distributed. The Committee reviewed the Q1 and Q2 reports and agreed the appointment of the Internal Auditor, Sandra Morris. They noted the insurance valuation report and agreed to seek funding from the Village Centre Improvement Fund for a bus shelter for High Street, picnic benches for the area near the public toilets and towards their Christmas Light Switch On Event with the Parish having to contribute 30% towards the cost coming from funds earmarked for Poolhouse Play Area. The location of the new Chairman's Board and details in respect of the Christmas Light Switch On and Small Business Saturday were agreed. Members agreed not to pursue the idea of Christmas parcels for the elderly, preferring to support the Warm Welcome Initiative.

Councillor Ed Hughes informed members no meeting of the Planning and Development Committee had taken place.

Councillor Elizabeth Keeling informed members the Recreation and Amenities Committee had met and agreed grass cutting would not form part of the lease for Brickbridge Playing Fields. They had agreed to draw up a framework for events to be held at Brickbridge Playing Fields and noted their success in securing grant funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Poolhouse Play Area development. Friends of Bratch Park had met in September and had a successful day, where they painted 6 of the 9 benches, amongst other jobs. The annual inspection reports had been received and the Committee had formulated their budget wishlist to include a Village Orderly, a parish van, small refurbishment of the village toilets, including roof work, re-painting of the exterior and interior.

152/24 - Reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies

- Wombourne and District Community Association: No Councillors were present to provide the update
- Wolverhampton Business Airport Consultative Committee: No Councillors were present to provide the update
- Wombourne Carnival Committee: No Councillors were present to provide the update

- Wombourne Charity Trustees: No Councillors were present to provide the update
- Wombourne Best Kept Village: Councillor Dan Kinsey BEM reported that individuals continued to tidy the village, despite no formal meetings, though he hoped a formal meeting would be held in November to ensure the longevity of the group
- Wombourne Retailers Liaison: Councillor Elizabeth Keeling thanked Admin Assistant, Sam Berry, for the graphic on the rear of the Newsletter that had been well received amongst retailers. There had been a good response to the Best Dressed Window Competition, due for judging the week commencing 18th November. A new business would be coming to the village in January
- Police Liaison: Councillor Vince Merrick informed members they had already received a comprehensive report from Tim Norbury and that he had nothing else to add
- Giggetty Action Group: Councillor Vince Merrick informed members no meetings had taken place
- Friends of Wombrook: Councillor Ian Sadler informed members no meetings had taken place

153/24 - Parish Council Finances and Administration

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the payments, bank reconciliations and petty cash for August and September 2024.

154/24 - Planning Applications

Members noted the submissions made to South Staffordshire Council in lieu of a meeting.

155/24 – Budget

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of funds from £36,100 for Poolhouse Play Area to spend £4,592 on a replacement recycled border around the multi-play at Bratch Park and 30% contributions towards a bus shelter (total cost £4,075) and picnic benches (total cost £2,186.85) for the village centre.

156/24 - Correspondence

- a) An email from a resident in Apse Close informing members he had located the owner of a piece of land near to his home
- b) A letter from a resident regarding the lack of banking provision in the village. Members agreed to defer this matter to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting.

157/24 - Meeting Schedule

Members noted the following upcoming meetings:

- a) Full Parish Council Meeting - Monday 25th November 2024
- b) Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting - Monday 4th November 2024
- c) Civic Centre Management Committee Meeting - Monday 11th November 2024
- d) Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting - Monday 18th November 2024

158/24 - Reminders

- a) Remembrance Service at St Benedict Biscop Church at 10.30am on Sunday 10th November 2024. Meet at 10.15am outside the Church. Refreshments to follow at Wombourne Cricket, Tennis and Bowling Club.
- b) Best Dressed Christmas Window Competition – judging to take place the week commencing 18th November 2024.

159/24 - Chairman’s Closing Remarks

The Chairman noted it had been a superb meeting with a fantastic update from Commander Tim Norbury.

The meeting closed at 8.01pm.

Signed: **Dated:**