

**Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Gnosall Parish Council  
Held in the Grosvenor Centre, on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2014  
Beginning at 7.30 pm**

The Chairman, Cllr Roger Greatrex opened the meeting and welcomed everyone

Present:

12 Parish Councillors and the Clerk, 1 Borough Councillor, 1 County Councillor and 21 residents (full list attached)

1	<p><b>To receive apologies</b></p> <p>Received from: Stafford Borough Councillors Mike Smith and Ann Kelly Parish Councillors: Cllr Tomkinson, Cllr Watson-Jones, Cllr Abbott. Cllr Cook And Dave Clarke, Trish Edwards, Dina Styles, Staffordshire Police, Mr and Mrs Jobling</p>
2	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the last meeting held on 23 May 2013</b></p> <p>The minutes had been approved at a Council meeting in July 2013. For clarity Mr Rick Talbot said he not the owner of the land to the rear of Old Barn Close (the owner being a different Mr Talbot).</p>
3	<p><b>To receive the Annual Report for the year 2013/14 and any questions from electors of the Parish</b></p> <p>Copies of the Annual Report for the year ending 31.3.14 had been distributed to those attending the Assembly and would be distributed around the village at key points. Reports from the Clerk and Chairman and Committee Chairmen detailing the work of each of the committees over the last 12 months were contained in the report as well as an un-audited statement of accounts.</p>
4	<p><b>To receive any questions from electors</b></p> <p>A question was raised by Mrs Spencer in relation to new houses in the village and how this could create pressure for more space within the Grosvenor Centre for community use and could the Parish Council consider extending the Centre to accommodate additional residents and additional need.</p> <p>Cllr Hughes reminded everyone that a feasibility study was carried out about 5 years ago and this could be revisited. Cllr Payne also referred to a study carried out that considered a loft conversion and an extra storey but it was felt too expensive to progress.</p> <p>The Clerk noted this as a possible project for the Council to consider again.</p> <p>There were no further questions from electors.</p>
5	<p><b>To receive a presentation on the work of the Acres, phases 1,2 and 3</b></p> <p>Cllrs Deegan and Simkin gave a very detailed presentation on the extensive work carried out on the Acres since 2011 and plans for phase 3 in 2014/15. Initial plans had been shared with parishioners at a consultation event in 2011 and work commenced later that year aiming to improve access, infrastructure and restoration of the wetland with phase 1 being completed in 2012 aided by funding from the Environment Agency, LEADER and Gnosall Parish Council. Phase 2 soon followed in with a picnic area, interpretation</p>

	<p>panels and leaflet funding by grants adding to the idea of a “green infrastructure” linking both ends of the village via green open spaces including the Acres, Railway, canal etc. The Acres has seen a huge increase in usage as a result of the work. Phase 3 plans include the employment of a warden, forest school status, classroom and allotment facilities as well as environmental, art and education projects and funding is being sought to meet the costs.</p> <p>A question was raised by a parishioner regarding cycling through the village especially from the A518 to the High Street and from the roundabout at the bottom of the High Street to the Acres and whether pavements could be adapted for dual purpose as this would encourage people to cycle or walk to the High Street.</p> <p>Cllr Winnington replied, he said the boardwalk could also be used by cyclists to prevent cycling on that section of the A518 and maybe better signage is needed that could be considered.</p> <p>Cllrs Simkin and Deegan were thanked by the Chairman, along with other Open Space Committee members for all the hard work carried out on these significant projects over the last few years that has resulted in such a positive change to how this area of open space in the parish is now used and enjoyed. He added that the projects had received a number of awards that were on display should parishioners wish to view them.</p>
6	<p><b>To receive a short report on the parish council procedures relating to planning matters</b></p> <p>To help parishioners understand the procedures around planning applications and the role the parish council plays, the Chairman gave a summary of the processes involved. He explained that the Parish Council’s committee meets every 3 weeks to consider any applications that had been received from Stafford Borough Council, the principal authority. At each of the committee meetings, members of the public can speak informing councillors of relevant information about the application and its locations, raising concerns and asking questions of the committee. Members have to decide whether they object or approve the applications based on a number of material considerations, issues that are, in law, material or relevant to an application and include for example, the development plan, effect on traffic and safety, layout, scale &amp; massing, landscaping and many more. Personal feelings of members or parishioners are not relevant. Whilst the planning authority does not have to agree, it must consider the parish council’s view before it grants refusal or permission for the development. The final decision is made by the Borough Council. The Chairman concluded by reminding parishioners that the Council is in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan with a number of volunteers and if approved, the plan will become the development plan for this area and will give our local community more say about where new homes are built and will have more influence on planning matters in the parish.</p> <p>Mr Steventon asked about how contentious applications such as those received in the past 12 months for large scale development are called in. It was explained that Borough Councillors are requested to, or decide to call in an application if there are planning grounds to do so. Borough Councillor Ken Williamson said councillors have to represent all parishioners those to object to applications and those who approve and sometime the decision to call in an application is difficult however Borough Councillors would always argue honestly against applications on planning grounds.</p>
7	<p><b>To receive reports from the Borough and County Councillors</b></p> <p>SBC Councillors, Ken Williamson said it was the Borough Council’s aim to reduce council tax as the council felt it was a duty to keep council tax as low as possible but at the same time maintain services at the current level if not improved. He said Stafford</p>

Borough Council had been praised by the Audit Commission for making savings and maintaining services.

County Councillor Mark Winnington addressed the Assembly reporting on a number of issues:

- 1 the biggest challenge for Staffordshire County Council is looking after the elderly and vulnerable
- 2 Roads – he said rural roads do suffer with pot holes more than the main roads which are prioritised as they are used more. SCC is undertaking a procurement process for a new strategic partner for the next 10 years to work on Highway matters. SCC is looking to improve defect reporting system feeding back to people who report Highway defects using modern technology. SCC was awarded over £2 million to be spent by the summer to carry out repairs and fix potholes on the county's road network.
- 3 Superfast Broadband - work is underway to bring high speed broadband to another 4000 properties in Staffordshire including Moreton
- 4 Railway Line – a further £300,000 has been secured to work on the remaining 3km of the line in September.
- 5 St Lawrence School – still unsure of plans

These points and others were the focus of a newsletter that Cllr Winnington distributed to the Assembly. He thanked the Parish council for supporting the parish in such turbulent times.

#### **Questions to Cllr Winnington**

Mr Steventon asked why there had been little action since a meeting 2-3 years ago with Highways when passing bays, warning signs, speed limits were discussed. Cllr Winnington replied that this is a problem with all rural areas in the parish and the meeting did also address improvements for pedestrians that have been helped with the improvements to the railway line. Cllr Winnington would ask about signage and passing bays

There were questions raised about the poly tunnel planning application and how work commenced prior to the application being approved and conditions not being met. Cllr Williamson said Enforcement Officers would monitor conditions and concerns should be passed on as well as reports of mud on roads that farmers have a legal duty to keep clean. Cllr Williamson encouraged residents to report issues to either the Parish Council or to Borough Councillors.

There were no further questions and Cllr Greatrex thanked everyone for attending, thanked all parish council staff and parish councillors for the work carried out in the past year. He also thanked Cllr Hughes and Mrs Spencer for organising the refreshments and closed the meeting.

## **List of those present at the Annual Assembly held on 25 May 2014**

### **Parish Council**

Miss Jayne Cooper  
Cllr Roger Greatrex  
Cllr Graham Payne  
Cllr Pat Alker  
Cllr Maggie Hughes  
Cllr Tracey Simkin  
Cllr Malcolm Cowie  
Cllr Kenneth Ingram  
Cllr Mary Booth  
Cllr Sue Green  
Cllr Mike Deegan  
Cllr Dave Willetts  
Cllr Shirley Wallis

### **Stafford Borough Council**

Cllr Ken Williamson

### **Staffordshire County Council**

Cllr Mark Winnington

### **Parishioners**

Mrs Cynthia Spencer  
Mr Paul Prince  
Mrs Pam Prince  
Mr Steve Hopkins  
Mr Rick Talbot  
Mrs Pam Talbot  
Mr Paul Boston  
Mr Jim McGregor  
Mr Bob Alker  
Mr Tony Frost  
Mr Winfield  
Mrs Winfield  
Mrs Linda Sullivan  
Mr Doug Webb  
Mr Rob Prichard  
Mr Steventon  
Mrs Steventon  
Mr Graham Wallis  
+ 3 (no names)

**Total 36**