Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Gnosall Parish Council
Held in the Grosvenor Centre, on 17th May 2023
Beginning at 7.30 pm

Cllr A Mills, Chair of the Parish Council, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He extended the Parish Council's thanks to Gnosall First Responders for their support in maintaining the many defibrillators located across the parish and to the BKV team for their continued efforts in helping maintain the village to such an excellent standard.

Present: see attached list

1 To receive apologies

Received from Stafford Borough Councillor Scott Spender, Parish Councillor Pat Alker, Reverend Alison Hudson, Scout Leader Jane Baron, Head Teacher Kirsten Sweet, Fire Station Manager Liam Hickey, PCSO Patrick Wright, Maggie Hughes, Jim McGregor, Paul Boston and Bob Alker

2 To receive the minutes of the last meeting held on 26th May 2022

Minutes were circulated for information as they had been previously approved at the full parish council meeting held in June 2022.

3 To receive a short report from the Chair of the Parish Council to support a display detailing the work of Council Committees

The Chair explained that the Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2023 contained the main aspects of the Council's work during the year 2022/23. The report would be published on the Council's website. The Chair thanked former Councillors Roger Greatrex and Chris Emsley for all the work they had undertaken during the many years they had been parish councillors.

4 To receive reports from the Borough and County Councillors

Mark Winnington in his capacity as both Borough and County Councillor briefly explained the outcome of the recent Borough Council election. He thanked outgoing Borough Councillors, Patrick Farrington and Mike Smith for their work carried out over recent years. He referred to his report that is contained within the parish council's Annual Report.

5 To welcome Staffordshire's Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Ben Adams

Mr Adams gave a detailed and informative talk on his role, explaining that his position is to represent residents of Staffordshire and that he works closely with both the Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer ensure the safety of residents of Staffordshire.

He referred to the shift in crime and how internet and drug related crime is increasing. He explained how he is working to make improvements to Staffordshire Police force to bring the force back to outstanding as it was 10-12 years ago and that more staff would be recruited to help meet this target. It was acknowledged there are now more officers nationally than ever before but not in Staffordshire.

He confirmed his priorities were to :

1. Improve contact and improve people's experience when contacting the police – whether they are a victim or providing information. He is aware people have concerns that calls are not followed up.
2. To make improvement to response times
3. Road safety and reducing the risk of injury – details of the number of road fatalities were shared and how drink and drug driving is a serious issue.

Other subjects talked about were, county lines, knife crime, environmental crime and how the fire service are successfully assisting the ambulance service with responding to reports of people having falls.

A recently appointed PCSO, Lisa Powell was introduced. Lisa, alongside two other PSCO's are responsible for Gnosall parish as well as many other parishes over a large section of the county. Lisa has 18 years of experience working for Staffordshire Police in different roles. Local Policing was discussed and Lisa offered to deliver talks to the parish on specific subjects such as anti-social behaviour, when to use 999 and 101, cybercrime, financial crime, rural crime and crime prevention. It was further suggested that PCSO's build relationships with local schools and make visits to schools talk to children about crime prevention.

Mr Adams informed the council of sources of funding available to target anti-social behaviour and making changes in the community that parishes could apply for.

Questions previously presented to Mr Adams by Parish Councillors were answered. Details of the questions are attached (Appendix 1).

Those present were invited to ask questions:

Two questions were raised about installing Average Speed Cameras in Gnosall similar to those in Woodseaves which had been successful.

Both Ben Adams and Mark Winnington responded explaining that these sorts of cameras are very expensive and the location have to be considered carefully. It is unlikely that requests for cameras rural areas would be supported. They said other options may be worth considering such as fixed cameras. Mr Adams also referred to a new app that records speed data and that very soon, all county councillors would be updated on this new technology.

There was a question about littering. It was explained that this falls under the responsibility of Stafford Borough Council unless it is related to anti-social behaviour in which case the police can be involved. Local examples of littering on The Acres and in the wetland area in particular were shared by residents. The PCSO confirmed she had recently visited these areas and would pay further visits in future.

There was a question relating to the frustrations of using the 101 system and the time it takes to be answered. Mr Adams explained how improvements are being made with plans for further improvements. Most calls are now answered in under 20 minutes which is better but still not good enough. This led to talks about how busy call centres are taking approximately nine hundred 999 calls each day in Staffordshire. A question was then raised about the expected response time for a 999 call. Mr Adams said it was 15 minutes but depending on the circumstances and location of officers that could not be guaranteed every time.

There was a question about the services Gnosall as parish receives from Staffordshire Police given that around £90K is received by Staffordshire Police from council tax. It was explained that Staffordshire is one of the lowest funded forces and efforts are in place to appoint more staff to achieve a balance of the right amount of police staff both "on the scene" and "behind the scenes". Gnosall may not have many visits from officers as it is a low crime area which should be celebrated by its residents.

There were no further questions and Mr Adams and PCSO Lisa Powell were thanked for their time.

The meeting closed with refreshments.

Appendix 1

Gnosall Parish Annual Assembly.
Wednesday 17th May 2023.
Grosvenor Centre, Gnosall.

Councillor Doug Webb.

i) *What plans are there to increase a police presence in and around our Parish?*

ii) *How do you intend to deal with the increasing drugs problem that seems to be ever present wherever you are in the UK?*

Councillor Pat Alker.

i) *Of the 20,000 additional police officers promised in the Conservative Party's manifesto in 2019, to be achieved by March 2023, how many additional officers were recruited to Staffordshire?*

ii) *Current figures show cuts to police manpower since 2010 actually resulted in a nationwide reduction of 20,600 officers. Therefore the 'additional' proposed 20,000 recruits is merely a 'top up' and will not fully replace officers who have already left. Police Forces are still under manned so how do you propose to address the manpower shortfall and how do you decide where new officers will be deployed?*

Councillor Gail Gregory.

i) *What are your Top 3 aims for the year and what are the most significant barriers to progress?*

Councillor Mary Booth.

i) *How can liaison between local policing teams and parish and town councils be improved? Here in Gnosall the Parish Council has tried various methods. Each tends to work for a time and then, due to changes of policy or personnel, the system of reporting and attending council meetings seems to drop off, or stop completely. Our large and growing Parish with a population of 5,100 (2021 Census) needs access to community safety information, so we can work together with the police and other authorities to improve the lives of everyone here.*

Councillor Tracey Simkin.

i) *What does Neighbourhood Policing mean to you and how do you preserve this?*

List of those present:

Jayne Cooper, Clerk
Stu Ridgewell, Council Support Officer
Allan Mills, Chair of the Parish Council
Gail Gregory, Parish Councillor
Tracey Simkin, Parish Councillor
Graham Payne, Parish Councillor
Kenneth Ingram, Parish Councillor
Mary Booth, Parish Councillor
Doug Webb, Parish Councillor
Stuart Powell, Parish Councillor
Graham Symons, Parish Councillor
Gemma Buckless, Parish Councillor
Mark Winnington, County and Borough Councillor
Mark Smith, Chair of Gnosall Carnival Committee
Keith Abbott, GPN and Gnosall Heritage Group
Lesley Worsley, Gnosall Scouts,
Wendy Mills, Gnosall WI
Dave Clarke, Gnosall Best Kept Village
Deborah Butler, Gnosall Best Kept Village
Arthur Butler, Gnosall Best Kept Village
Trevor Whincup, Public Rights of Way
Jane Smith, Gnosall Allotments and Gardens Association
Liz Gardner, Gnosall Allotments and Gardens Association
Ann Andrews, Gnosall First Responders
Sharon Gulliver, Gnosall First Responders
Lisa Powell, PCSO
Rosemary Raynbird
Dudley Taylor
Andrew Bevington
Ian Kerr
Liz Powell