

BETLEY, BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

25th September 2025

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.00 pm

**Present: Councillor Head (Chair for this meeting)
Councillors Bullock, Hales, Head, Karling, Lovatt, Owen, Speed and Watkin.**

Councillor Jill Whitmore – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

There were 5 members of the public in attendance

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR MEETING

In the absence of Councillors Bettley-Smith and Daly, Councillor Head was appointed as Chair of the Parish Council for this Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bettley-Smith (official duties), Daly, Berrisford and Ecclestone. The Parish Council approved all apologies as required under Section 85(i) of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Lovatt and Speed declared their interests in Minute 6. The Parish Council granted them both a special dispensation to enable them to remain in the meeting, as the item was just for noting.

Councillor Head declared an interest in Minute 7 as he had been involved in the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

The Police representative had sent apologies for the meeting.

Councillor Bullock reported on a recent theft from the Cricket Club.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bullock be authorised to report the concerns of the Parish Council on this matter to the police.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 29th July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

The Parish Council received enquiries on the following:-

- Neighbourhood Plan;
- Contact by members of the public;
- Possible purchase of the playing field

RESOLVED

That Mr Steven Ball be appointed to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to replace Mr Peter Ainsworth.

6. SALE OF PLAYING FIELD

In the absence of the Chair, the Clerk verbally updated the Parish Council on feedback received from Councillor Bettley-Smith.

Discussions ensued regarding the viability of the purchase of the land, and Members agreed that agreement on the way to proceed with this proposal should be made at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED

That a substantive decision be made at the next meeting of the Parish Council, on whether or not the land will be purchased, by the Parish Council. For the purpose of the Minutes, Councillors Lovatt and Speed did not participate in the discussions or voting.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council received draft reports from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, presented by Mr Gwyn Griffiths.

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the Parish Council approves the use of the proposed monitoring report when considering future planning applications;**
- (ii) **That the Parish Council establishes a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the purpose of reviewing and updating (if necessary) its current Neighbourhood Plan;**
- (iii) **That the widening of the membership of the existing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, exclusively by the invitation of the Parish Council, be approved;**
- (iv) **That the Parish Council extends its thanks to the people involved in preparations of the initial Neighbourhood Plan;**
- (v) **That the appointment of Mr Steven Ball, to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, be reconfirmed (please refer to Minute 5);**
- (vi) **That the appointment of Councillors Head and Hales to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, be approved.**

8. REPORTS

The Parish Council received the following reports:-

(i) The Chair

On behalf of the Chair, the Clerk reported on the undermentioned matter:-

Following discussions with the Electoral Office at the Borough Council, the Parish Council had earmarked a specific reserve of £8,000 to cover the cost of any Parish Council by-election that was not held at the same time as any other election. The figure was derived from the actual cost of by-elections held in the Borough since 2022.

(ii) County Councillor and Borough Councillors

Councillor Whitmore reported on meetings she had attended and support she had given to residents throughout the Borough. She had also participated in a litter pick.

(iii) Representatives on Outside Bodies

Councillor Head reported that he was stepping down from position of Chair of Betley Village Hall Committee, but would remain as the Parish Council's representative, on the Committee.

9. FOOTPATHS WORKING PARTY

Councillor Owen gave a brief update on gates that had been provided by donors. The Parish Council commented on the tremendous work completed by the Working Party.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted..

10. ASSET REGISTER

RESOLVED

That this Item be deferred to the next meeting.

11. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2025-2026

The Parish Council discussed and considered a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on the following matters:-

(i) Applications for Financial Assistance

There were no applications for financial assistance for consideration at this meeting.

(ii) CO-OP Bank Transfer to Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the transfer of £3,000.00 from the Co-op Bank to the Unity Trust Bank Account, be approved.

(iii) Transactions – Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the following transactions in the Unity Trust Bank, be approved:-

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
Staffordshire Pensions	July Contributions		£166.12
HMRC	PAYE/NI		£137.92
M Clough	July Salary		£446.83
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge		£6.00
	Transfer from COOP	£2,000.00	
Zurich Municipal	Annual Insurance		£927.16
Luke Rimmer	July Maintenance		£210.00
M Clough	Mileage		£116.64
T W Heler	Path clearance		£600.00
	Transfer from COOP	£2,000.00	
Npower	Electricity charges		£75.67
M Clough	August Salary		£526.06
Staffordshire Pensions	August contributions		£195.51
HMRC	PAYE/NI		£173.21
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge		£6.00
Royal British Legion	3 x Poppies		£85.50
Luke Rimmer	August maintenance		£150.00

(iv) Transactions – CO-OP Bank

RESOLVED

That the two, £2,000.00 internal transfers from the Co-op Bank to the Unity Trust Bank, since the last meeting of the Parish Council, be approved.

(v) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the following payments detailed below, be approved:-

M Clough	September 2025 Salary	£447.03
HMRC	September 2025 PAYE & NI (111.60 & £26.12)	£137.72
Staffordshire Pension	September 2025 Pension	£166.12
Luke Rimmer	September maintenance	Approx. £150.00

(vi) Budget Expenditure to 18th September 2025 – Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the following Budget Head expenditure to 18th September 2025, be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Salary	£2,203.40	£5,758.00	£3,554.60
Income Tax/National Insurance	£724.49	£1,800.00	£1,075.51
Pension	£859.99	£1,784.00	£924.01
Insurance	£927.16	£975.00	£47.84
Audit Fees External	£0.00	£937.50	£937.50
Audit Fees Internal	£262.50	£262.50	£0.00
Venue Hire	£91.00	£450.00	£359.00
Subscriptions	£342.32	£350.00	£7.68
Website	£0.00	£150.00	£150.00
Emails	£0.00	£150.00	£150.00
Information Commissioner	£0.00	£35.00	£35.00
Stationery	£46.21	£50.00	£3.79
Payroll Services	£344.40	£625.00	£280.60
Mileage	£116.64	£150.00	£33.36
Footpaths	£600.00	£2,500.00	£1,900.00
Grants	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Sandy Croft	£829.27	£1,100.00	£270.73
Memorial Garden	£2,140.07	£3,500.00	£1,359.93
Chair's Expenses	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00
Unity Trust Bank Fees	£30.00	£100.00	£70.00
	£9,517.45	£21,927.00	£12,409.55

(vii) Explanation of Variances

There were no virement requests at this meeting.

(viii) Bank Reconciliation as at 18th September 2025

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation for Co-op Bank and Unity Trust Bank as at 18th September 2025, be approved:-

Bank Reconciliation 18th September 2025	
BETLEY BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2025	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statements as at	£
Current Account UNITY (20500409) - 31st August 2025	£1,973.93
Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300) - 4th September 2025 (£8,000 to be retained as a Reserve)	£37,156.25
Less: any unpresented cheques/payments	
Current Account UNITY (20500409)	£235.50
Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300)	
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity	

Add: any unbanked cash - CO-OP	
Net bank balances as at 18th September 2025	£38,894.68
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
<u>CASH BOOK</u>	
Opening Balance	
Unity Trust Bank @ 1st April 2025	£5,016.90
Co-op Bank @ 1st April 2025	£20,965.25
Add: Receipts in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£238.98
Co-op Bank	£22,191.00
Less: Payments in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£9,517.45
Co-op Bank	
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£38,894.68

*Members noted that the costs of the Madeley Parish by-election in 2024 were around £8060. The Parish Council had been advised however, that since that date there had been a substantial increase in postage costs and printing costs, and other staffing and polling station factors had to be taken into account.

Councillor Watkin wished to record his appreciation for the depth and clarity of information within this report.

(ix) Bank Statements

RESOLVED

That the following bank statements be received:-

- **Unity Trust Bank Statement – 31st July 2025**
- **Unity Trust Bank Statement – 31st August 2025**
- **CO-OP Bank Statement - 4th September 2025**

12. PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council considered the following planning matters:-

- **Comments submitted under the Standing Orders**

(i) Planning Application: 25/00586/FUL

Address: Garfield, Main Road, Betley, Crewe, Cheshire. CW3 9BJ

Proposal: Variation of conditions 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 of planning permission 24/00713/FUL to seek approval for amendments to revised planning proposals for replacement dwelling and outbuilding (condition 2), materials (condition 3), root protection areas (RPAs) (condition 6), access, parking and turning areas (condition 7), Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (condition 8) and the variation or removal of condition 10 (The first occupation of the dwelling)

RESOLVED

That the comments submitted under the provisions of the Standing Orders, in relation to the planning application above, be approved.

- (ii) Members noted that the Clerk had registered the Parish Council for the online submission of comments. This meant that all comments submitted must clearly indicate whether the Parish Council 'Supported' 'Objected' or just 'Commented' on each planning application.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13. LIGHTSPEED BROADBAND

The Parish Council noted that a resident had referred this matter to the MP and the Parish Council had referred the matter to the County Councillor.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14. AREA MATTERS

Parish Councillors raised the following matters relating to the individual areas of Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill.

- Car parking at the Reading Room
- Newcastle Civic Pride litter pick in the village

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15. STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Parish Council was advised of the following plans for reorganisation.

Staffordshire County Council had published its proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Its proposal was an east/west split of the county, with two councils made up of the following districts -

- West Staffordshire Unitary: Comprising of the districts of Stafford, South Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Cannock Chase.
- East Staffordshire Unitary: Comprising of the districts of Tamworth, Stoke-on-Trent, Lichfield, Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire.

More details were available on the County Council website.

Newcastle-under-Lyme had an active consultation underway, and residents were encouraged to participate, regardless of where they lived in Staffordshire.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

16. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the Parish Council reverts to monthly meetings, to replace bi-monthly meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee and the Planning Committee. (For the purpose of the Minutes, this decision was unanimous).**

- (ii) **That the next meeting of the Parish Council be held on 23rd October 2025 at 7.30 pm.
(For the purpose of the Minutes, this decision was unanimous).**

17. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair was of the opinion that the following item of business should be considered as a matter of urgency.

18. CHRISTMAS TREE

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council seeks a donor for a Christmas Tree, before the next meeting of the Parish Council.