

## BLITHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting dated 09.01.2025

**Present:** Cllr Anthony Vernon Vice Chairman who chaired this meeting), Cllr Phyllis Massey, Cllr Stan Hulme, Fiona Shipley (clerk)

From the Parish: Ms Abi Pollock, Mr Paul Riley, Mr Andrew Bastable, Mr Julian Malein

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**25.01.01 Apologies: for Absence:** Cllr Peter Atkins (Chairman BPC) Cllr Kevin Massey (BPC) Cllr Philip Atkins (SCC) Cllr George (ESBC), Cllr Jones (ESBC), Cllr Gould (ESBC)

**25.01.02 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting** held on 07.11.2024 were circulated to the councillors in advance, approved and signed by the vice chairman and the clerk, the minutes of the planning meeting held on 27.11.2024 were also circulated in advance and signed.

**25.01.03 To receive declarations of interest by members in respect of items on the agenda.** Cllr Vernon declared an interest in P/2024/00696 planning application for Moreton Brook Solar Farm as his son is the tenant farmer, however he has no financial interest.

**25.01.04 Matters Arising from the Minutes** There were no matters arising from the minutes.

#### **25.01.05 Clerk Update**

a) Lloyds Bank are starting to charge us from 01.01.2025. The clerk reported that she had looked in to alternative options and for now thought it was best to remain with Lloyds Bank as other banks were likely to follow suit and it was not easy to move to another bank. The charges are likely to be around £80/pa.

b) Due to retirement we need to find a new website provider. Eric Roy who designed and hosted the website for several years is retiring and we need to find a new website provider. The clerk reported that she had a recommendation of a company in Mansfield called JKE Design who are competitive. She will make further enquiries with a view to approving a new website provider at the next meeting. There has been some suggestion that the website may need updating, but we will try to avoid that for the time being.

**25.01.06 Public Participation.** A member of the public, made the meeting aware of his disappointment at the lack of action regarding the upgrading of the Admaston village signs and the continued lack of a speed limit. He reported that the existing Admaston sign which now looks very odd, as the faded ESBC sign was removed, and the existing sign stands on 2 x 10ft poles with nothing else, is now a danger, as the existing poles are corroded at ground level. The clerk reported that she had repeatedly emailed, her contact (given to her by Cllr Philip Atkins SCC) in the highways division about the very subject, in desperation she had finally informed Cllr Philip Atkins of her frustration. As the sign was now dangerous she would use the 'Report it' facility.

**25.01.07 Upgrade of Broadband in the Parish** - In progress.

**25.01.08 To receive oral report from Borough and County Councillors.** Cllr Gould has sent details of a Bagots and Needwood Ward visit from the Community and Civil Enforcement Team on 13<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> January 2025. There was nothing in particular for the clerk to ask to be considered by the team.

**25.01.09 To receive Chairman's reports** In the Chairman's absence there was nothing to report.

#### **25.01.10 Police and crime**

Police and Crime – more information can be found at <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/>

Needwood area 47 crimes in September 2024, 59 crimes in October 2024

### **25.01.11 Speeding cars and motorbikes S59 signs –village gateway signs**

Speeding Cars and Motorbikes S59 signs.

Following the last meeting the clerk approached Cllr Philip Atkins regarding the state of the Admaston village signs and a request for 'please drive carefully signs' to be added to the signs in a bid to make drivers aware they were entering a village. He suggested village gateway signs funded by the parish. The clerk explained that these were not considered possible due to the cost of the signs for a small parish. He offered to help fund the signs from his DHP fund. The cost of 2 x signs will be approximately £2,000.00, plus a permit to dig £379.00, a section 50 licence £398.00, plus the cost of installation and possible traffic control. An estimated ball park figure of £4,000.00.

2 residents of Admaston have pledged financial support for the project. The parish councillors resolved to proceed with the project at this stage, on the understanding that it would be funded by individuals, fundraising initiatives and possibly from parish reserves but not from the precept in 2025/2026.

The clerk will update Cllr Philip Atkins so that a meeting with Kayleigh Lees can be arranged from the Highways division to progress further.

**25.01.12 Admaston Telephone Box.** The lengthsman and Mr Paul Riley will reinstate the telephone box as soon as the weather allows.

**25.01.13 Admaston Village Hall update.** Funding has been secured to refurbish the toilets and some heritage tiles are being purchased for the purpose. The work should be done in Spring 2025. A VE day celebration event is being planned along with another harvest supper and other events.

### **25.01.14 Planning**

a) New

b) Pending P/2024/00696 Construction of a solar farm comprising ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and associated infrastructure and landscaping Location: Land at Newton Farm, Lea Lane, Newton, Staffordshire, WS15 3NP Grid Ref: 403822 325257

(see separate minutes for planning meeting 27.11.2024) Following a public meeting and planning meeting of the parish council held on 27.11.24, the parish council unanimously resolved to oppose the application for a number of reasons.

Drointon Parish Council have offered their parish councillor Richard Rayson to come and talk to the parish council and the clerk will try to organise for him to come to our next meeting on 06.03.2025.

Our MP Dave Robertson has responded to an email asking him to support the parish council's opposition to the application, saying the matter is very important to him.

c) Decisions P/2024/00371 Conversion and alterations of former education centre to form 7 no dwelling houses with associated works. Location: Blithfield Education Centre, Newton Hurst Lane, Dapple Heath, Staffordshire, WS15 3PH PERMITS

d) P/2019/01105 Leaways, Newton – apparent non-compliance with planning decision. No response to the letter written by the clerk asking for the removal of the black polythene.

### **25.01.15 Highways and Lengthsman**

a) Grit bin – Rectory Farm – the clerk will report that the grit bin has not been replaced but a pile of grit has been placed beside the existing broken one.

b) School Lane, Admaston – verge posts, these will need to be replaced by members of the parish. A decision needs to be made on what sort of posts are required and quotes then sorted. Some discussion took place about the narrowing of the lane due to the verge growing into the road and the length of time since the council sent a road sweeper. The clerk will make some enquiries.

c) ESBC and Admaston signage upgrade on B5013. The ESBC sign has now been removed.

d) Steenwood Lane. Work has been delayed due to more urgent/emergency pressures but it will be carried out when possible.

The clerk reported that she had been informed further work to Booth Lane was listed.

The lengthsman, Cllr K Massey, has been negotiating with the public right of way officer and the landowner to get a dead tree removed from the footpath behind the village hall off the land on Blithfield Hall Drive

#### **25.01.16 Finance**

SO 30.09.24	Fiona Shipley – Clerk salary	£220.65
Chq 606 06.11.24	Royal British Legion - donation	£100
Chq 607 06.11.24	Clerk back pay	£202.51
Chq 608 06.11.24	Marchington IT lap-top service and 2 years anti-virus software	£79.89
Chq 609 06.11.24	Chairman's expenses	£15
DD	Information Commission	£35
SO 28.11.24	Fiona Shipley clerk salary	£249.58
A/c Balance 30.12.2024	A/c 054 £3189.74	A/c 575 £5088.66

b) to approve the budget for 2025 – 2026, previously circulated to parish councillors and agree precept for 2025 - 2026.

The councillors present resolved to adopt the budget and precept, circulated prior to the meeting.

The precept for 2025 -2026 will be £6276.00, which is an unavoidable, but significant increase on last year.

#### **25.01.17 To discuss any other business including items for the next agenda**

The clerk will look into accessing bleed kits to be kept with the defibrillators.

**25.01.18** Date of next meeting - 06.03.2025

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

Signed Chairman

Signed Clerk