

BLITHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on 28 August 2025 at Admaston Village Hall at 7pm

Present: Cllr Peter Atkins (chairman) Cllr Anthony Vernon (vice chairman) Cllr Stan Hulme, Cllr Kevin Massey, Mr Jon Wood, Mrs Fiona Shipley (clerk)

Cllr Gary Hales (SCC)

From the Parish: Mr Paul Riley, Ms Sharon Oliphant

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked County Cllr Gary Hales who was attending his first Blithfield Parish Council Meeting.

25.08.01 Apologies: for Absence: Cllr Bev George (ESBC), Cllr Jacqui Jones (ESBC), Cllr Vicki Gould (ESBC)

25.08.02 Co-option of new member to parish council Cllr Atkins proposed that Jon Wood should be co-opted on to the parish council, to fill the vacancy following the resignation on Phyllis Massey, Cllr Vernon seconded it and this was unanimously approved.

25.08.03 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting and the Annual Meeting held on 03.07.2025 were circulated to the councillors in advance and signed by the chairman.

25.08.04 To receive declarations of interest by members in respect of items on the agenda. There were none.

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

25.08.10 Chairman's Report The chairman requested that he gave his report at the start of the meeting as many of his points concerned other items on the agenda.

- i) The chairman welcomed Jon Wood to the council.
- ii) The chairman also again placed on record the wonderful contribution Phyllis Massey has given to the council over nearly 30 years and said he had received a card from her, thanking the parish for the flowers we gave to her.
- iii) The chairman wonders whether we will need to have more frequent meetings in the future as he sees the council becoming more busy.
- iv) We are all of course very sad following the tragic, fatal accident recently on the B5013. Cynically this may help to get further measures in places to help reduce speeding, noise and anti-social behaviour on the road around Admaston and the Blithfield Causeway.
- v) There is also concern about speeding along our narrow lanes, particularly with large agricultural machinery using them. Should there be more warning signs, passing places etc. Should there be a dialogue with local farmers in the parish?
- vi) If the Moreton Brook Solar Farm goes ahead, thought must be given on how to manage and distribute the £20,000 p.a. between the Blithfield Church, The Parish Council and Admaston Village Hall.

25.08.06 Clerk Update

Clerk Update

- a) The parish lap-top has been updated to support Windows 11 which has been installed
- b) Parish Facebook page is up and running. Anyone wishing to have an item posted on the page should contact the clerk or the Facebook admin.
- c) B5013 steering group meeting organised by Needwood Ward SCC Cllr Catherine Brown. This meeting will take place on 12 September 2025. Cllr Atkins and Cllr Massey will attend on Behalf of Blithfield Parish Council. County Cllr Hales will also attend along with many associated partners to discuss ways of making the road safer and reducing speeding.
- d) Phyllis Massey – presented with bouquet as a token of the parish's appreciation for her long service to the parish council.
- e) Local government reorganisation. Various consultations are taking place at present. We are in situated in the middle of the county, it is not clear if Blithfield will become part of a North or South Staffordshire authority.
- f) Future Meeting dates, it was agreed that the March 2026 meeting would be held on 12 March and the May meeting would be held on 7 May 2026.

25.08.07 Public Participation.

25.08.08 Upgrade of Broadband in the Parish - Cllr Wood will make contact with SCC to find out how this is progressing. He believes it will be the end of 2026 before everyone is connected.

25.08.09 To receive oral reports from Borough and County Council Cllr Hales reported that he had committed to lowering the signs for Admaston Village and adding 'please drive carefully' signs, using his DHP budget. The cost of the signs is £1500!

He also reported that research shows there is very serious concerns about the fire hazard of battery storage systems for solar farms. Reform are not as a party in favour of net zero and he supports the parish council's efforts to prevent the solar farm planning applications in our parish and neighbouring parishes.

25.08.10 To receive Chairman's report The chairman suggested in order that we have greater co-operation and collaboration with The Parochial Church Council for Blithfield and Admaston Village Hall, we should request a copy of their minutes. This was approved.

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

Needwood area 60 crimes in March 2025, 65 crimes in April 2025

25.08.12 Speeding Cars and Motorbikes. As reported in 25.08.06 by the clerk, Cllr Brown supported by Cllr Hales is organising a steering group meeting as an initiative to make the B5013 safer.

25.08.13 Village gateway signs Following the intervention of Cllr Hales to make good the existing village signs and the cost of village gateway signs at this time, the parish council has paused this project (see also 25.08.09).

25.08.14 Red Telephone Boxes Cllr Massey and Mr Paul Riley have reinstated the Admaston telephone box. Help with storage and transportation of the telephone box was received from Cllr Vernon and his son James. The parish council would like to extend their thanks to all concerned and are delighted to see it back. The lengthsman has now started work on refurbishing the Newton telephone box and hopes to repaint it this Autumn.

25.08.15 Admaston Village Hall update. Cllr Jon Wood is the new treasurer. Events have been well supported

25.08.16 Planning

a) New

b) Pending P/2025/00598 Remove to ground level one Pine tree (T1)
Location: Orchard House, The Old Rectory, Blithfield Church Road, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NL Grid Ref: 404168 323992

P/2025/00349 Conversion of one dwelling house to form two dwelling houses with associated internal alterations Location: The Hayloft, Stansley Wood Court, Newton Hurst Lane, Dapple Heath, Staffordshire, WS15 3PH Grid Ref: 405369 324789

P/2025/00098 Erection of a part two, part single storey side and rear extension, including Dormer windows to front and rear, and erection of Porch. Location: Rose Cottage, Steenwood Lane, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NG Grid Ref: 405111 323168

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

Cllr Finney, Chair of Stowe by Chartley PC has sent letters for our councillors to sign if they wish in support of their objection to a 2nd solar farm application in their parish at Yew Tree Farm, Drointon.

She also asked if our Parish Council would raise our concerns with the chief executives of Staffordshire County Council, Stafford, and East Staffordshire Borough Councils and also our MP. It was agreed that the parish clerk would write to them.

25.08.17 Highways

Cllr Hales has had a recent meeting with the Highways division and was able to update us as follows

a) Grit bin – Rectory Farm – this should be renewed before the winter.

b) School Lane, Admaston – carriageway repairs are awaiting to be rescheduled for the third time. The oak posts were originally installed by the council so the clerk will report again.

c) Steenwood Lane – ditching and jetting work has taken place already and some carriageway repairs, further work is currently scheduled to take place in September 2025.

d) Newton Lane – Ditches, potholes, excess of water, between Manor Lane and Dapple Heath, carriageway repairs are awaiting scheduling but the drainage issues need reporting again.

e) Newton Hurst Lane, Dapple Heath deep pothole – Dig-down work to investigate further has been scheduled for 27.08.2025 but due to an over-run on a previous job this has been delayed.

f) Over hanging branches from the ground adjacent to the bridge at Dapple Heath -- The farmer has cut back the overhanging branches and they have been thanked.

g) Hedges on Booth Lane - A resident has reported his concern about the hedges close to the gas works and a lack of response from Cadent, who he has asked to cut them back, as they are blocking visibility on an already narrow lane. The clerk has reported the issue to Amey.

25.08.18 The lengthsman presented his time sheet and invoice for the last 12 months. He was thanked for his work over the last year. In view of the rise of the National Living Wage to £12.71/hour from April 2026, it was agreed to pay him £12.75/hour for the coming year.

25.08.19 Finance

PAID OUT Ref/Cheque	Item	Amount
Chq 617 01.07.25	Chip Hosting - Website	£135.00
Lloyds Bank 19.07.25	10.05.25 – 09.06.25 Bank charge	£5.25
SO 28.07.25	Fiona Shipley clerk salary	£249.58
Lloyds Bank 19.08.2025	10.06.25 – 09.07.25 Bank charge	£5.25
PAID IN		
Lloyds Bank	interest	£2.94
A/c Balance 28..07.2025	A/C 575 £5115.39	A/C 054 £3636.22

The clerk brought forms to be signed and completed to the meeting in order to add Cllr Jon Wood as a signatory on the PC account and remove Phyllis Massey. She reported that it was becoming harder and harder to deal with banks non-digitally and that she would when time allowed look into moving over to digital banking.

25.08.19 To discuss any other business including items for the next agenda.

Cllr Vernon reported a water leak on Watering Pit Corner. The clerk will report.

NALC have approved a pay deal for 2025/26 for council clerks. The clerk is entitled to an extra 46p/hour back dated to 01.04.2025. This was ratified.

Cllr Hales re-iterated his wish to support the parish where he could especially with Highways issues and said Staffordshire County Council is responsible for over 4,000 miles of roads.

25.08.20 Date of next meeting - 06.11.2025

Where ever possible meetings are scheduled for alternate months, on the first Thursdays. There are occasions when this is not possible. Residents are urged to keep an eye on the website, Facebook and the notice boards, where meeting dates are posted well in advance.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Signed Chairman

Signed Clerk

DRAFT