

BLITHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting

Held on 3rd September 2026 at Admaston Village Hall at 7pm

Present:

Cllr Jon Wood (chairman), Cllr Anthony Vernon (vice chairman), Cllr Peter Atkins, Cllr Stan Hulme, Cllr Kevin Massey
Mrs Tracey Dibble (clerk), Cllr Gary Hales (SCC)

Also Present:

From the Parish: none

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

26.09.01 Apologies: for Absence:

None Received.

26.09.02 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting and the Annual Meeting

The minutes for the meeting held on Thursday 2nd July 2026 were circulated to the councillors in advance and the Council resolved to approve as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

26.09.03 To receive declarations of interest by members in respect of items on the agenda

Cllr J Wood declared his interest in Planning Application P/2026/00679, which was noted.

26.09.04 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

26.09.05 Clerk Update

- a) Defib Training - Clerk has contacted the first responder, who unfortunately was recovering from an operation and will contact the clerk once he is able to undertake training sessions, hopefully towards the end of September.
- b) Closure of Blithfield Reservoir Fishing - The Clerk reported that she had contacted the South Staffs Water representative, who was unable to attend the meeting but requested details of future meeting dates to enable a representative to attend.

Cllr Woods reported that a Bailiff at the Reservoir had contacted him regarding potential third-party interest in the fishing and fish farm. A consortium of interested parties has been formed with the aim of rescuing the fish farm and securing the fishing rights at the Reservoir. The consortium has met with South Staffs Water, who were reported to be positive about the proposals.

The Bailiff is currently awaiting a decision from South Staffs Water, which is expected by the end of September. He is also coordinating, if there is sufficient interest, the establishment of a committee to represent residents and users of the Reservoir. There is a general view among those involved that Blithfield Reservoir has not been managed effectively as an asset over the past 10–15 years.

- c) Hedge Cutting at Gas Works - The Clerk reported that Cadent had been contacted via their 'We Care' email address regarding the maintenance of the hedge along Booths Lane. Cadent responded requesting confirmation of the exact location and a contact telephone number, which were provided by the Clerk.

The Clerk will follow up with Cadent to advise that the hedge requires substantial cutting back and that the appropriate equipment should be used to carry out the work effectively.

- d) Aura Power Funding - Clerk reported she had made contact via email with Aura Power, but had not yet received a response. Clerk to follow up.
- e) Unity Bank - Clerk asked the Council to consider transferring the Parish Council's banking arrangements to Unity Trust Bank. Cllr Wood explained that Unity Trust Bank is set up to support parish councils and may help to address some of the difficulties currently being experienced with Lloyds Bank, including the lack of controls regarding payment authorisations.

Cllr Wood advised that moving to Unity Trust Bank would provide an opportunity to resolve these issues and asked Councillors whether they would be comfortable with online payment authorisations. The Clerk briefly explained the authorisation process and emphasised the importance of appropriate internal controls to protect both the Clerk and the Council.

Cllr Wood asked the Council how they wished to proceed. Cllr Hayes commented that, in view of the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), it may be beneficial to streamline the Council's banking arrangements where possible.

It was agreed to set up a Unity Trust Bank account, with the decision on when to transfer the Council's banking arrangements to be made at a later date.

- f) Future Meeting dates 4th March, 6th May, 1st July 2027
Confirmation of meeting dates 4th March, 6th May and 1st July 2027 were confirmed. September 2026
The Clerk will issue notices for display on Notice Boards.

Cllr Wood commented we may have to move the May meeting due to Elections and asked if anyone had any objections to moving the May 2027 meeting either to the 2nd or 3rd Thursday of the month, there were none at this time.

26.09.06 Public Participation

There was none.

26.09.07 To receive oral reports from the Borough and County Councillors

Cllr Hales reported that he had received the results of the recent Speed and Volume Count. He explained that the results were based on the 85th percentile and that, from a County Council perspective, there was limited scope for action where the recorded speeds did not exceed the relevant threshold. In such circumstances, enforcement would largely be a matter for the Police.

Cllr Hales presented a paper by Tony Screen entitled Tackling Rural Speeding, which he offered to circulate to the Council. He commented that speeding was an issue affecting rural areas across the country.

A discussion took place regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) and speeding in Blithfield. It was confirmed that there was a substantial drop in the 'reservoir racing' activity but the wider problem we have always had (which has been reported continuously) is the speeding and noise over a long distance i.e. from the junction of the B5013/B5014 to Colton and vice versa. It was also noted that care and motor cycle meets had taken place at the newly re-opened 'The Blythe' public house with the same complaints as previously reported.

Cllr Hulme noted that this was the third occasion on which Speed and Volume Counts had produced the same 85th percentile results but it was the 15% who were speeding that were creating the problems. Cllr Hales advised that he had written to express his lack of surprise at the findings. Cllr Hulme expressed concern that only the official accident figures were being taken into account when, in fact, many more accidents/incidents were occurring.

Cllr Hales reported that he, Cllr C Brown and Cllr J Higgins had funded three Speed and Volume Counts along the route, all of which had produced similar results. Cllr Hulme expressed. Cllr Massey commented that the equipment had been positioned on a bend where vehicles would naturally be slowing down, and questioned whether this gave an accurate representation of speeds along the route.

Cllr Hales reported on the expenditure undertaken at Loxley Junction, Kingstone, with the aim of reducing accidents. He also advised that there were ongoing issues with the Amey contract. Cllr Vernon commented that two vehicles and two operatives had been required to replace a 30mph speed limit sign.

Cllr Hales explained that Amey's current contract runs until 2029 and that the contractor is responsible for resurfacing works, while potholes are inspected by the County Council. He also noted that gullies were full and that this was having an adverse effect on the road surface.

Cllr Atkins thanked Cllr Hales for his efforts in securing the replacement 30mph signs at the entrance to Newton.

Cllr Hulme raised concerns regarding the positioning and number of rumble strips at the junction of the B5013 and B5014, questioning why the rumble strips had not commenced earlier and why only three sets had been installed when a downward gradient contributed to the problem. Cllr Hales agreed and offered to investigate the situation.

A general discussion took place regarding speeding and road safety. Cllr Hales acknowledged the concerns raised and advised that proposed Government measures relating to rural road safety may encourage increased reporting of speeding incidents to the Police and empower Parishes and residents to report issue in order to obtain the actual data, as there are accidents which are not reported to the police and perhaps only reported to insurance companies, who could be approached for this data. This could help to build a stronger evidence base and provide more comprehensive data.

26.09.08 To receive Chairman's report

Jon reported he had attending the Solar Power Planning and Application meeting within Stowe-by-Chartley, which had been established to object to the proposed Yew Tree Solar Farm. The group is preparing a presentation to put forward its case at the Planning Meeting. A further meeting is scheduled for 23 September.

Cllr Wood also referred to the proposed Uniper Power development at Lower Farm, which backs onto residents' farmland. Concerns were raised regarding the potential for leakage, fire and noise. Cllr Massey commented that, although the solar farm is outside the Parish, residents within the Parish could still be affected by noise. Cllr Wood suggested that the Council could potentially apply for funding that may be available in relation to the development. He advised that the Council would first need to contact Stowe-by-Chartley Parish Council to confirm that they were happy for an application to be made, before approaching Uniper Power. It was agreed that the Council would pursue an application for any appropriate funding. Cllr Wood and the Clerk will liaise with Stowe-by-Chartley Parish Council and organise the application.

Cllr Wood reported that the Village Hall currently charges the Council £17.50 for summer meetings and £20.00 for winter meetings. It had been proposed that a flat rate of £25.00 be charged for the six scheduled Council meetings each year, with no additional charge for any extra meetings.

It was agreed that the Council would pay a flat rate of £25.00 going forward.

Cllr Wood reported that the Village Hall car park had recently been resurfaced and that the Committee was considering having the trees trimmed.

Discussion took place regarding the large Yew Tree, which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), as is the surrounding woodland. Cllr Wood confirmed that the Village Hall would be submitting an application to reduce the crown of the trees by up to 5 metres and reduce the width of the Yew Tree.

The Council confirmed it would support the proposed application to cut back the woodland trees and reduce the Yew Tree.

Cllr Atkins proposed that the Council engage in local and cross-parish discussions regarding proposed housing developments, particularly with proposed developments around Hixon, due to the potential impact of increased speed and volume of traffic through the Parish.

It was suggested that neighbouring Parish Councils should be approached regarding any future developments that could have an impact on this Parish.

Cllr Hulme supported the proposal and felt that it would be beneficial to have arrangements in place for ongoing communication and consultation between neighbouring Parish Councils.

26.09.09 Police and Crime

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

Needwood Ward - 68 crimes reported in May 2026, 66 crimes reported in April.

26.09.10 Speeding Cars and Motorbikes, S59 signs

Covered in 26.09.07.

26.09.11 Village gateway signs

The Clerk reported that she had reviewed previous correspondence to establish the current position regarding the Gateway signs. It was confirmed that Cllr Hales would meet the cost of any necessary licences. The Clerk advised that Cllr Hales was awaiting the Council's decision on how to proceed. Cllr Wood commented that this would depend on the costs involved. Further discussions produced agreement that, in view of the costs and complications involved compared to the benefits, the gateway signs would not be perused at this time.

Cllr Wood referred to the sign at Admaston, heading towards the Reservoir from Rugeley, which had originally been identified as requiring lowering.

Cllr Hales explained that there was an issue with lowering the sign due to the location of the damaged post in proximity to a gas main. A general discussion took place regarding the options for lowering the sign or gateways and the associated practical difficulties.

It was agreed that Cllr Hales would investigate the feasibility of lowering the Admaston signs and report back to the Council, including any issues or requirements identified.

26.09.12 Admaston Village Hall update

Cllr Wood informed the meeting there is a Horn Dance day and coffee and cake at lunchtime.

Also a Harvest supper evening on 26 September, blessed by Mrs Farrington

26.09.13 Planning

a) New **Application Number: P/2026/00659. Proposal:** Formation of a glazed balcony with associated patio doors to the back elevation and alterations to existing fenestration on the left and back elevation. **Location:** WYNDLETT, MANOR LANE, NEWTON, WS15 3PE. **Grid Reference:** 403937/32539 – **NO OBJECTION**

Application Number: P/2026/00679. **Proposal:** Installation of 2 x Electric Vehicle chargers on the front of the property to be accessed from the two parking spaces. **Location:** THE HAYLOFT, STANSLEY

WOOD COURT, NEWTON HURST LANE, DAPPLE HEATH, WS15 3PH. **Grid Ref: 405369 / 324789 – NO OBJECTION**

b) Pending none

c) Decisions **Application Number:** P/2026/00521. **Proposal:** (TN) Removal to ground level of Cherry tree T1. **Location:** THE OLD RECTORY, BLITHFIELD CHURCH ROAD, ADMASTON. Grid Reference 404196/323966. – **PERMITS**

Application Number: P/2026/00380 **Proposal:** Erection of a single story rear extension and installation of roof lights to the side elevations. **Location;** ORCHARD HOUSE, THE OLD RECTORY, BLITHFIELD, CHURCH ROAD, ADMASTON WS15 3NL Grid Ref: 404168 / 323991 – **PERMITS**

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**

26.09.14 Highways

a) School Lane, Admaston – replacement of verge posts – ongoing, SCC scheduled resurfacing has not taken place – SCC have notified work has been raised – on going. Cllr Vernon asked why the verge could not be dug out as extra parking for the village hall then wouldn't need verge post. Cllr Massey felt if you hard cored the verge how do you differentiate what is road and what is parking. This suggestion was not adopted.

Cllr Atkins left the meeting 8.30.

b) Newton Lane – Ditches, potholes, excess of water, between Newton and Dapple Heath - a significant repair has taken place of the road surface, particularly on the hill between Dapple Heath and Newton Lane, however some deep potholes have been left. The only improvement to the ditches and drainage has been carried out by our Lengthsman. SCC have notified more work will be carried out when resources allow – on going. Cllr Vernon commented that some of the potholes have been filled, but other missed. Cllr Hales said they are trying to get away from temporary repairs and he would sent the council a documents explaining how long after a temporary repair a proper repair should be done.

c) Booth Lane – the deteriorating state of the road surface has been reported – Amey have been out to look at this, but no further developments. This has been completed

d) Lea Lane – 30 mph sign missing, reported. This job had been completed.

26.09.15 Lengthsman

The lengthsman presented his time sheet and invoice for the last 12 months.

Cllr Massey reported that the phone box in layby was being used as a toilet. It was agreed Cllr Massey would organise a new lock for the phone box.

26.09.16 Finance

a) Payments and receipts were authorised as below.

PAID OUT		
Ref/Cheque	Item	Amount

02.06.2026 chq 641 (6)	Clerk Expenses FS	£65.00
02.06.2026 chq 642 (7)	Chip Hosting Ltd	£152.50
05.05.2026 chq 636 (1)	Alastair Jepson – Audit	£50.00
19.06.2026	Bank Charges	£4.25
23.06.2026 chq 643 (8)	Clerks Salary	£263.37
07.07.2026	Clerks Expenses	£43.33
20.07.2026	Bank Charges	£6.75
PAID IN		
09.06.2026	Lloyds Bank Interest	£2.04
09.07.2026	Lloyds Bank Interest	£2.11
A/c Balance 31.07.2026	A/C 575 £5,144.61	A/C 054 £3,832.81

Clerk reported that she was unsure if the Internal Auditor who under took the Audit this year will be available for the next audit and it was something the council needs to think about moving forward.

26.09.17 To discuss any other business including items for the next agenda

Cllr Wood informed the Council that they have the opportunity to comment on Local Government Reorganisation through SPCA and how Parish Councils can influence how these new authorities work within the sector. Clerk to email information and Cllr Wood asked Councils to email the clerk with any ideas or suggestion the councils may have for the Agenda.

Cllr Massey confirmed that the vegetation around the village pump has been cut back.

26.09.18 Date of next meeting - Thursday 5th November 2026

The chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Signed :

Chairman

Signed :

Clerk