Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council

29th October 2026

Commenced: **7.30 pm** **Terminated:** **9.20 pm**

Present: **Councillor Bettley-Smith (Chair)**
Councillors Berrisford, Bullock, Hales, Lovatt and Watkin

There were 4 members of the public in attendance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Daly, Ecclestone, Head, Karling, Owen and Speed.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors Paul and Helen Williams (County Councillors) and Councillor Whitmore (Borough Councillor).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Berrisford and Hales declared interests in Minute 9(ii) as they were family friends.

3. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

The Chair reported that the appointment of David Gardner as the new Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police, had been confirmed.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 24th September 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

Residents referred to the following:-

- The new Leader of Staffordshire County Council.
- An offer of planning services to assist the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, as the resident was a former Town Planner and had also worked at the Planning Inspectorate.

6. REPORTS

The Parish Council received the following reports:-

(i) The Chair

- Devolution, a New Staffordshire Mayor, and Local Government Reorganisation. (please refer to Appendix for details)
- Highways and the prioritisation of works.
- County Records Office had advised that they were not receiving documents until January 2027.

(ii) Borough Councillor

- Councillor Bettley-Smith he would be providing funding towards the purchase of a new defibrillator in Madeley.

(iii) Representatives on Outside Bodies

- Councillor Hales had been invited to serve another five-year term on the Betley Trust

RESOLVED
That the appointment of Councillor Hales, as the Parish Council's representative on the Betley Trust, be approved. (This decision was unanimous)

7. FOOTPATHS WORKING PARTY

Councillor Berrisford provided a verbal update.

RESOLVED
That the report be noted.

8. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2026-2027

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

(i) Applications for Financial Assistance – Grants and Donations

Consideration was given to an application for financial assistance in the sum of £500.00 from St Margaret's Church, for the cost of maintaining the churchyard (the part that is still in use for burials). Members noted that no application had been made the previous year. Details of the application were circulated.

RESOLVED
(a) That a grant in the sum of £1,000.00 to St Margaret's Church for the cost of maintaining the churchyard (the part that is still in use for burials), be approved.
(b) That an additional £500.00 be re-allocated to the Grant Budget from the Reserves.

The Parish Council considered a proposal from the Chair to donate a sum of £200.00 to the Audley Rotary Club for the Christmas Tree lighting and the Grotto.

RESOLVED
(c) That a donation of £200.00, to the Audley Rotary Club for the Christmas Tree lighting and the Grotto, be approved.

The Parish Council considered a request from the Chair for funding to purchase sweets for the Santa event.

RESOLVED
(d) That the sum of £100.00, for the purchase of sweets for Santa to give to the children, be approved.

(ii) Transactions – Unity Trust Bank Current Account/Unity Trust Instant Access Account

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

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
HugoFox	Emails INV-32290		£2.99
Waterplus	Monthly direct debit		£10.44
Staffordshire Pensions	September pension		£189.55
M Clough	September salary (including backpay)		£570.81
HMRC	September HMRC/NI		£193.52
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge		£7.00
Unity Trust Bank	Interest	£193.70	
Betley Village Hall	Room Hire INVOICE NO: 4339		£105.00
Luke Rimmer	Invoice 0068		£180.00
Shires Accountants	Fees for salary adjustment Inv 3847		£21.00
M Clough	Reimbursement for wreathes		£54.00
Royal British Legion	Stickers for wreathes		£7.00
Shires Accountants	6 monthly fee Invoice 3859		£240.00
HMRC	VAT Refund	£1,380.48	

HugoFox	Emails		£2.99

(iii) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the following forthcoming payments be approved:-

M Clough	October 2026 Salary	£493.59
HMRC	October 2026 PAYE & NI	£123.40
Staffordshire Pension	October 2026 Pension	£163.37
Luke Rimmer	October Maintenance	(Contracted and within budget)
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service charge – October 2026	£7.00
HugoFox	October Emails	£2.99

(iv) Budget Expenditure to 21st October 2026

Members noted that the Clerk considered that the Budget expenditure would be adequate for the remainder of the financial year. They also noted that the Grants Budget been amended to Grants and Donations Budget.

RESOLVED

That the following Budget Head expenditure to 21st October 2026, be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Salary	£2,937.72	£5,750.00	£2,812.28
Income Tax/NI	£941.96	£2,000.00	£1,058.04
Pension	£975.41	£2,000.00	£1,024.59
Insurance	£847.85	£1,000.00	£152.15
Audit Fees Internal	£275.65	£300.00	£24.35
Venue Hire	£245.00	£450.00	£205.00
Subscriptions	£461.09	£400.00	-£61.09
Website	£0.00	£175.00	£175.00
Emails	£20.93	£175.00	£154.07
Information Commissioner	£0.00	£50.00	£50.00
Stationery	£0.00	£75.00	£75.00
Payroll Services	£509.40	£800.00	£290.60
Mileage	£0.00	£175.00	£175.00
Footpaths	£3,862.40	£3,000.00	-£862.40
*Grants and Donations	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Sandy Croft	£3,441.77	£4,705.00	£1,263.23
Memorial Garden	£2,076.93	£3,500.00	£1,423.07
Highways	£716.40	£1,000.00	£283.60
Chair's Expenses	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00
Unity Trust Bank Fees	£42.00	£100.00	£58.00
	£17,354.51	£26,905.00	£9,550.49

(v) Explanation of Variances

Members noted that all variances had been previously considered and would be used for budget planning purposes for 2027-2028.

(vi) Bank Reconciliation as at 21st October 2026

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation as at 21st October 2026, be approved:-

Bank Reconciliation 21st October 2026	
BETLEY BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2027	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statements as at	£
Current Account UNITY (20500409) - 30th September 2026	£2,211.29
Reserve Account UNITY (20500412) - 30th September 2026 (**£8,000** to be retained as an Earmarked Reserve for Elections)	£36,543.04
Less: any unpresented cheques/payments	
Current Account UNITY (20500409)	£609.99
Reserve Account Unity (20500412)	£0.00
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity	£1,380.48
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity Reserve	£0.00
Net bank balances as at 21st October 2026	
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	**£39,524.82**
CASH BOOK	
Opening Balance	
Unity Trust Bank @ 1st April 2026	£2,839.85
Unity Reserve @ 1st April 2026	£28,192.93
Add: Receipts in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£7,496.44
Unity Reserve	£23,850.11
Less: Payments in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£17,354.51
Unity Reserve	£5,500.00
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	**£39,524.82**

(vii) Internal Transfer
RESOLVED
That the internal transfer of £2,000.00 from the Reserve Account to the Current Account, be approved.

(viii) Bank Statements
RESOLVED
That the following bank statements, as circulated with the report, be received:-

- **Unity Trust Bank Statement (Current Account 20500409) – 30th September 2026**
- **Unity Trust Bank Instant Access (Reserve Account 20500412) – 30th September 2026**

9. PLANNING MATTERS
The Parish Council considered the following planning matters:-

- **New Planning Applications**

(i) **Application Ref No:** 26/00731/FUL
Location: 7 Ladygates Betley Crewe
Proposal: Single storey side extension, new bi folds and window changes to rear elevation.

RESOLVED
That the Clerk will ask for an extension to the comments deadline, and if this is not authorised, then the application will be considered under the provisions of the Standing Orders.

(ii) **Reference:** 26/00721/FUL
Address: Mountville Old Road Wrinehill Crewe Cheshire CW3 9BW
Proposal: Erection of a detached dwelling
Comments Due: 3rd November 2026
Councillor Berrisford reported on the factual elements of the application but took no part in the voting thereon.

RESOLVED
That the Parish Council registers a 'Neutral' comment with the Planning Authority.

The only justification for this development on this site, is that it will replace a number of significant dilapidated redundant buildings which may outweigh the constraints of the Greenbelt and other planning considerations. It is for the borough to determine whether this is the case.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW
The Chair requested authorisation for the purchase of hard copies of the Neighbourhood Plan document, for easy reading.

RESOLVED
That the purchase of 5 hard copies, in the sum of £105.00 +VAT, be approved, and if minimal in additional cost, this be extended to 7 hard copies.

11. 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARKET CHARTER IN 2027 WORKING GROUP
The Chair reported that there were various discussions between organisations regarding this event. Councillor Owen had confirmed that a report would be presented to the November meeting.

The Parish Council agreed that the 800th Anniversary Year would run from 1st January 2027 to 31st December 2027. For reference, the date that the Charter was signed was the 2nd May, and the date that this was published was the 7th May.

RESOLVED
That the report be received.

12. ASSET REGISTER
The Parish Council considered the updated Asset Register 2026-2027.

RESOLVED
That the Asset Register for 2026-2027 as circulated, be received and approved.

13. SANDY CROFT – POLICY UPDATE AND RISK ASSESSMENT(S)
RESOLVED
That this matter be deferred to the next meeting.

14. PLAQUE FOR BENCH
The Parish Council considered a proposal by the Chair for the installation of a plaque on the new bench at Sandy Croft, together with its wording and approval for its purchase.

RESOLVED
That the purchase of a plaque be approved, with appropriate wording to be agreed.

15. ELECTION MATTERS

The Parish Council noted that the Borough Elections Manager had advised that the cost of the May 2026 election was £6,386.00. This related to a Borough election rather than a Parish election and the costs were specific to the Betley area and did not represent the full electoral ward area of Madeley and Betley. The election of Parish Councillors was uncontested.

On this basis, the Parish Council considered whether its present £8,000.00 earmarked reserve was sufficient to cover the cost of an election, if it was contested, or whether it should increase its earmarked reserve for this possible cost.

RESOLVED
That, based on the evidence received, the existing earmarked reserve of £8,000.00 to cover the cost of an election, be confirmed.

16. ARRANGEMENTS FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AND REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Chair reported on the forthcoming arrangements and confirmed that he would be attending the Service on behalf of the Parish Council, and laying the wreath on Remembrance Sunday. The Chair would also be attending the school's Remembrance Service on the 11th November.

RESOLVED
That the report be noted.

17. CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS

The Parish Council received a report from the Chair on the following:-

(i) Christmas Tree – Councillor Bullock offered to donate a Christmas Tree. In the event that this offer did not proceed, the Clerk would apply to the Borough Councillor for funding for a community Christmas Tree.

(ii) Arrangements for the Memorial Garden Lights – The lights would be switched on from Friday 27th November (the Friday before advent Sunday). Councillor Berrisford would arrange appropriate testing by an electrician, in consultation with Cllr Bettley-Smith.

(iii) Christmas Tree lighting – The Christmas Tree lights would also be switched on at 7.00pm on Friday, 27th November. Santa would then visit the Village Hall from around 7.15 pm for the children's party. There would be a bar for adults, and pies.

RESOLVED
That the reports be noted.

18. SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES

The Parish Council considered the County Council's new policy on the purchase and installation of speed indicator devices.

The Parish Council noted that it did not have any Speed Indicator Devices that fell under this new arrangement, and its existing devices would remain in-situ.

RESOLVED
That the letter dated 16th October 2026 from County Councillor Peter Mason, Cabinet Member for Strategic Highways at Staffordshire County Council, be received.

19. AREA MATTERS

Councillor Bullock enquired about the new location of Betley Football Club.

RESOLVED
That the report be noted.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Members noted that the next meeting of the Parish Council was scheduled for Thursday, 26th November 2026.

21. URGENT ITEMS

There were no other items which the Chair of Council Business was of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

APPENDIX

Devolution, a New Staffordshire Mayor and Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has made two announcements regarding local government in Staffordshire.

These changes fall into two separate but related programmes:

1. Devolution - the creation of a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Mayoral Strategic Authority.
2. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) - which will determine the future structure of principal councils across Staffordshire.

Although both programmes are being considered at the same time, they are separate processes and are operating on different timescales.

A New Mayor for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (Mayoral Strategic Authority)

The Government has confirmed its intention to establish a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Mayoral Strategic Authority. This would create a directly elected Mayor responsible for strategic functions across the area, including economic growth, transport, skills and investment. The authority will also receive a share of income tax growth generated within the area.

The proposed authority would operate alongside local councils at a strategic level and would not replace town, parish, district, borough, city or county councils. Instead, it would provide strategic leadership and bring additional devolved powers and funding into Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The Government said the devolution package includes substantial long-term investment funding from Government and is intended to provide greater local control over key decisions affecting the economy and public services.

Local Government Reorganisation

Separate from the devolution proposals, the Government is continuing its review of local government structures. Today, the Government announced that several proposals which were paused in July will now proceed. Staffordshire is not one of those areas.

Earlier this year, the Government indicated a preferred direction for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. However, in a statement to Parliament today, Ministers confirmed that the previous July decisions for nine areas, including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, have been formally withdrawn and will be reconsidered. Ministers have said they will use the coming weeks to undertake further consideration before reaching final conclusions.

They stated that they remain committed to creating unitary authorities across England and expect to confirm decisions for the remaining areas no later than early 2027. The Government has also reaffirmed its intention to introduce its programme of Neighbourhood Governance next year.

2027 Local Elections Timetable

The Government has again confirmed that elections scheduled for May 2027 will proceed for the existing district and borough councils, where elections are already due to take place.

What Does This Mean for Parish and Town Councils?

As with previous announcements, there are no immediate changes to the powers, structure, duties or responsibilities of parish and town councils. However, should Local Government Reorganisation proceed, parish and town councils are likely to become increasingly important to residents as the

tier of local government closest to them. We anticipate that there may be more expected of us by our local communities, as has happened elsewhere when LGR took place.

The role of parish and town councils within the Government's proposed Neighbourhood Governance framework also remains undefined and further detail is awaited.

Next Steps

The Government has made clear that it remains committed to local government reorganisation in Staffordshire. They state the announcement relates to reconsiderations of the preferred structures, rather than whether reorganisation itself will take place. The Government has indicated that it will be consulting local MPs and council leaders before any announcement.

The Government has also indicated that decisions will be announced as they are reached, rather than grouping counties into tranches. Final decisions for all remaining areas undergoing review are expected in early 2027.