

Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council

30th May 2024

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.05 pm

Present: Councillors Berrisford, Bettley-Smith, Daly, Drakakis-Smith, Ecclestone, Hales, Head Karling, and Watkin

6 Members of the Public

Mrs M Clough – Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

ANNUAL BUSINESS

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bettley-Smith be appointed as Chair of the Parish Council for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year.

(For the purpose of the Minutes, this proposal was made by Councillor Daly, and seconded by numerous Members. All Members in attendance voted to accept this proposal, with the exception of Councillor Drakakis-Smith, who voted against the proposal)

In taking the position of Chair, Councillor Bettley-Smith reported that he had also been appointed Deputy Mayor for 2024-2025, and having sought advice, there would be no conflict between the positions.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor Daly be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Parish Council for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year.

(For the purpose of the Minutes, this proposal was made by Councillor Bettley-Smith and seconded by Councillor Head. All Members in attendance voted to accept this proposal, with the exception of Councillor Drakakis-Smith, who voted against the proposal)

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bullock, Owen and Speed, County Councillor Paul Northcott, due to the election.

(The Borough Councillors Gary White and Simon White had resigned from the Borough Council, having moved out of the Borough. They timed their resignation so that the by-election would coincide with the General Election and avoid additional costs to the Borough's electorate).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests from Members of the Parish Council at this stage of the Meeting

5. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, OUTSIDE BODIES AND ORGANISATIONS

(i) Terms of Reference – Finance and Audit Committee and Planning Committee

Members noted that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Audit Committee contained a few updates to the previously agreed Terms of Reference however, its Membership for 2024-2025 remained unchanged.

RESOLVED

That the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Audit and Planning Committees be approved, as circulated.

(ii) Outside Bodies and Organisations

RESOLVED

That the following appointments to outside bodies and organisations be approved:-

Conservation Advisory Working Group	Councillor Berrisford substitute Councillor Watkin
Madeley Locality Action Partnership	Councillor Berrisford
Rural Runabout	Mr Andrew Jones
Betley Trust	Councillor Hales
Village Hall Committee	Councillor Head
HS2 liaison	Councillor Berrisford
Press Liaison(Parish Magazine)	Clerk to draft with approval by Chair and Deputy Chair
Press Liaison (Other Media)	Chair and Deputy Chair
Internal Accounts	Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk)
Sandy Croft Maintenance	Chair and Deputy Chair, Councillors Hales, Karling and Speed
Memorial Garden	Chair and Deputy Chair, Councillors Ecclestone, Hales and Speed
Website	Councillors Bullock, Daly and Head
Speedwatch Co-ordinator	Councillor Bullock
Traffic & Police Liaison Group	Chair, Deputy Chair, Councillor Bullock to lead (with Mr T Townsend to be invited to contribute as appropriate)
Footpaths Group	Councillors Berrisford, Bullock and Owen
Lead Members for Highways	Balterley: Councillor Karling Betley: Councillor Owen Wrinehill: Councillor Beresford

6. MEETINGS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL 2024-2025

Members discussed the frequency of the meetings of the Parish Council and the recommendations made by the Finance and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council meetings be reduced to 6 meetings a year, with the next meeting being held on 27th June 2024. A schedule of meetings for the year would be considered at the June meeting.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL – 11th APRIL 2024

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th April 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to Minutes 329; 330; 331; 332; 333; 334; 340; 341 and 343).

8. MINUTES OF FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 11th APRIL 2024

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Finance and Audit committee held on 11th April 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Members agreed to accept all the recommendations contained therein, with the exception of the recommendation relating to the frequency of meetings of the Parish Council (please refer to Minute 6 above). (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to the Minutes)

9. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – 17th MAY 2024

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on 17th May 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting).

10. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

There were no updates submitted for consideration from Staffordshire Police.

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2023-2024

(i) Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024

RESOLVED

That Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024 as appended to these Minutes at Appendix 1, be approved. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024)

(ii) Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023-24

RESOLVED

That Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023-2024 as appended to these Minutes at Appendix 2, be approved. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023-24)

(iii) Action Plan 2024-2025

RESOLVED

That the Action Plan as circulated, be approved. (This was unanimously approved).

(iv) Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-2024

RESOLVED

That the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-2024 as circulated, be received. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-2024).

(v) Detailed Internal Audit Report 2023-2024

RESOLVED

That the Detailed Internal Audit Report 2023-2024 as circulated, be received. (Councillor Drakakis-Smith objected to Detailed Internal Audit Report 2023-2024)

12. PUBLIC FORUM

The Chair reported that a portrait of the King, that had been acquired by the Parish Council, would be displayed in the Committee Room.

Mr Ball congratulated Councillor Bettley-Smith on his appointment of Deputy Mayor. He also wished to thank the Chair, on behalf of many residents, for his significant contribution in resolving the flooding matters on Checkley Lane. The Chair added that there were others involved in this successful outcome, but it was especially helpful that the County Councillor was engaged in the process.

Finally, Mr Ball reported that he considered the changes to the frequency of meetings of the Parish Council to be a positive step in making improvements and reducing stress.

13. REPORTS

The Parish Council received the following reports:-

(i) The Chair

- Councillor Bettley-Smith advised that, in the interests of transparency, Members should know that, along with other Borough Councillors and a County Councillor, he had been reported to the Monitoring Officer by Councillor Drakakis-Smith, and as Chair of the Thistleberry

Residents Association, for various reasons in relation to their membership of the Walleys Quarry Liaison Committee.

In response, the Monitoring Officer had concluded that he had seen no evidence to warrant an investigation into the complaints raised, therefore to take this matter further would not be an efficient use of public resources. The County Council Monitoring Officer had reached a similar view in relation to the County Councillor.

- Councillor Bettley-Smith reported on a letter received from the MP regarding Doddlespool Hall Farm, which included the details of a meeting held with the Environment Agency's Area Environmental Manager (Mr Glasgow). An order had been issued for the removal of the illegally dumped waste on the site by 8th September 2024. The Chair concluded that action was continuing to be taken at the land at Doddlespool Hall Farm. However, more could not be shared as we were within a General Election period.
- Finally, the Chair reported on various meetings with external organisations in which he had been involved, to resolve the flooding issues on Checkley Lane.

(ii) The Deputy Chair

Councillor Daly reported that he had no updates for this meeting.

(iii) The Clerk

- The Clerk reported on a notification received from Staffordshire Highways that work had been completed to resolve Drain Flooding at Checkley Lane, Wrinehill.
- Mrs Clough had also received a message from a resident regarding speeding tractors and an incident involving the property of her grandfather, which had been damaged. The Parish Council would again highlight this matter in the Newsletter.

At this juncture, Councillor Karling left the meeting.

- Finally, the Clerk reported on correspondence received from a resident over the perceived lack of acknowledgement of Councillor Drakakis-Smith's involvement in the Footpaths project.

The Chair responded that the Councillor had been thanked for her valuable contribution at the 2023 Parish Meeting, along with Councillors Berrisford and Owen. Councillor Drakakis-Smith's involvement in the installation of a kissing gate didn't feature in this year's report because at the time of the Parish Meeting, the work hadn't yet taken place. Furthermore, since May 2023, Councillor Drakakis-Smith hadn't been a member of the Footpaths Working Group, however, her valuable contribution to any work undertaken, had been acknowledged at all stages, and would continue to be acknowledged.

(iv) County Councillor and Borough Councillors

The Chair reported that the County Councillor and Borough Councillors would not be presenting reports to the Parish Council during the General Election period.

He added that Councillors Simon and Gary White had recently resigned as Borough Councillors, and that the election for their replacements for the Madeley and Betley Ward, would be held on 4th July 2024.

(v) Representatives on Outside Bodies

There was nothing to report from Members on outside bodies.

At this juncture, Councillor Karling returned to the meeting.

14. D-DAY CELEBRATIONS

In Councillor Owen's absence, Members noted that 25 signs and a flag would be placed around the Memorial Garden to recognise D-Day, along with red, white and blue lights in the trees.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

At this juncture, Councillor Head left the meeting.

15. PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council considered the following planning matters:-

- (i) Application Number 24/00329/FUL - Proposed single storey extension. Little Owls Barn Deans Lane Balterley Crewe Cheshire CW2 5QH.

Councillor Watkin had studied the plans submitted and circulated them to the Members for their consideration.

Councillor Head returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

(The Parish Council was unanimous in its decision, as the Councillor who abstained (Councillor Head) wasn't present for the discussion).

- (ii) Application Number 24/00305/FUL - Alterations to the existing rear extension, new single storey rear extension and new porch, 19 Betley Hall Gardens Betley Crewe Staffordshire CW3 9BB. Councillor Ecclestone declared a personal interest in this application as he had a cordial relationship with the applicant. He took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

Councillor Head explained the details of the application. Members expressed concerns over its aesthetics, which involved replacing existing tiles to composite wood effect timber.

RESOLVED

The Parish Council has no objection to this application, however several Members were concerned about the composite wood effect timber cladding, as they considered it not in keeping with the properties in the immediate area. Therefore, if the Borough Council is minded to give permission, the Parish Council requests the Borough to consider the suitability of the material in the context of the neighbouring properties. (There was one abstention from this decision).

16. FOOTPATHS WORKING PARTY

Councillor Berrisford updated the Parish Council on work completed to date by Members of the Footpaths Working Party.

She was delighted to report that landowners had given their permission, to enable a fully gated route from Cricket Club to opposite the Hand and Trumpet. Furthermore, earlier today she had received verbal notification of a donation to install another gate.

Councillor Berrisford and the Members of the Footpaths Working Party were thanked for their ongoing excellent work on this project.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

17. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2024-2025

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, as circulated.

(i) Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk confirmed that there were no applications for financial assistance.

(ii) Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the sum of £2,000 be transferred from the Co-op Bank to the Unity Trust Bank.

(iii) Transactions since the Last Meeting – Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the following transactions in the Unity Trust Bank since the last meeting of the Parish Council, be approved.

DATE	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
12/04/2024	Hand and Trumpet Donation	£95.00	
15/04/2024	Staffordshire Pensions - March		£161.18
15/04/2024	HMRC - March		£111.20
19/04/2024	Transfer from Co-op	£2,000.00	
26/04/2024	Clerk Salary – March		£420.09
26/04/2024	Shires Accounting		£152.80
26/04/2024	SPCA		£14.49
26/04/2024	Davenport Accountants		£250.00
26/04/2024	Luke Rimmer – Invoice 461		£130.00
02/05/2024	HMRC - April		£111.00
02/05/2024	Clerk Salary - April		£420.29
02/05/2024	Staffordshire Pensions - April		£155.62
03/05/2024	HMRC VAT Refund	£1,343.92	
13/05/2024	Reimbursement to Councillor G Owen for Signs and Flag – (Financial Regulations)		£135.98

(iv) Transactions since the Last Meeting – Coop Bank

RESOLVED

That the following transactions in the Co-op Bank since the last meeting of the Parish Council, be approved:-

DATE	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
12/04/2024	Precept	£20,866	
19/04/2024	Transfer		£1000
19/04/2024	Transfer		£1000

(v) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the following payments be approved:-

M Clough	May 2024 Salary		£420.09
HMRC	May 2024 PAYE		£111.20
Staffordshire Pension	May 2024 Pension		£155.62
Luke Rimmer	Maintenance to Memorial Garden for April – Invoice 466		£180.00
Shires Payroll	Payroll and Pension fees April 2024 – October 2024		£206.40
SPCA	Annual Membership Renewal		£313.45
Viking	Reimbursement to Clerk		£25.69

(vi) Clerk Reimbursements – November 2023-May 2024

RESOLVED

That the following reimbursements to the Clerk be approved:-

Dates	Mileage	Total £ @ 0.45 per mile
18 th January 2024	32.4	14.58
15 th February 2024	32.4	14.58
28 th February 2024 (to vets)	31.6	14.22
4 th April 2024	32.4	14.58
15 th May 2024	32.4	14.58
		£72.54

(vii) Budget Expenditure to 20th May 2024 – Unity Trust Bank

RESOLVED

That the following Budget Head Expenditure to 20th May 2024 be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	BUDGET ALLOCATED	£ DIFFERENCE
Salary	£1,593.87	£7,200.00	£5,606.13
Pension	£472.42	£1,660.00	£1,187.58
Admin - Insurance	£0.00	£850.00	£850.00
Admin - Audit Fees	£250.00	£40.00	-£210.00
Admin - Venue Hire	£0.00	£450.00	£450.00
Admin - Subscriptions	£0.00	£330.00	£330.00
Admin - Website	£0.00	£135.00	£135.00
Admin - Other	£459.81	£500.00	£40.19
Highways	£0.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
Footpaths	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Grants	£0.00	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
Miscellaneous	£135.98	£270.00	£134.02
Sandy Croft	£0.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
Memorial Garden	£260.00	£4,000.00	£3,740.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Chair's Expenses	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00
	£3,172.08	£20,485.00	£17,312.92

(viii) Bank Reconciliation as at 20th MAY 2024

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation for Royal Bank of Scotland and Unity Trust Bank as at 20th May 2024 be approved:-

Bank Reconciliation 20th May 2024	
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 20th May 2024	£
Current Account UNITY (20500409)	£1,797.96
Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300)	£41,965.25

Less: any unrepresented cheques	
Current Account UNITY (20500409)	£1,110.43
Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300)	
Add: any unbanked cash	
Net bank balances as at 20th May 2024	£42,652.78
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
CASH BOOK	
Opening Balance	
Unity Trust Bank @ 1st April 2024	£420.69
Co-op Bank @ 1st April 2024	£23,099.25
Add: Receipts in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£1,438.92
Co-op Bank	£20,866.00
Less: Payments in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£3,172.08
Co-op Bank	
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£42,652.78

18. AREA MATTERS

The Members reported that there were no area matters for consideration at this meeting.

19. REMEMBRANCE ARRANGEMENTS (FIGURES AND POPPIES) FOR 2024 RESOLVED

That in the absence of Councillor Owen, consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING RESOLVED

- (i) That the next meeting of the Parish Council be held on Thursday, 27th June 2024, at 7.30 pm;
- (ii) That the Clerk in liaison with the Chair drafts a schedule of dates for meetings for the remainder of the year, which will be presented to the next meeting of the Parish Council together with the rationale for the proposals.

21. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no items requiring consideration as a matter of urgency.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

BETLEY, BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

30/05/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

11(1)

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

<https://www.hugofox.com/community/betley-balterley-and-wrinehill-parish-council-15769/home>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

BETLEY, BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	18,142	23,871	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	17,204	18,568	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	5,871	13,347	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	5,582	7,746	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	11,764	24,520	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	23,871	23,520	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	23,871	23,520	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	24,852	24,852	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

[Signature]

Date

22/05/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

30/05/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

11(ii)

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]