

Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council

23rd July 2026

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.30 pm

Present: Councillor Bettley-Smith (Chair)
Councillors Bullock, Daly, Ecclestone, Head, Hales, Karling, Lovatt,
Owen and Watkin.

Councillor Paul Williams (Chair of Staffordshire County Council)

There were 2 members of the public in attendance

1. WELCOME TO COUNCILLOR PAUL WILLIAMS

The Chair welcomed Councillor Paul Williams, the Chair of Staffordshire County Council, to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Berrisford and Speed. The Parish Council approved Councillor Speed's apologies, under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act, as they were due to a family emergency.

Councillors H Williams (County Councillor) and Whitmore (Borough Councillor) also sent their apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair and Councillor Karling declared their interests in Section (ii) of the Budget and Finance 2026-2027 Report, as they were both recipients of reimbursements. They did not take part in the discussions or voting thereon.

4. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

In the absence of a police representative, Councillors Daly and Bullock agreed to liaise regarding an appropriate way forward.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 30th June 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

A resident referred to Broadband matters, and had received confirmation that full fibre would not be provided in the parish. He further reported that he had not received any responses to his emails from the local MP or the County Councillor. Councillor Williams asked the resident to forward to him the emails that he had sent and agreed to investigate this matter,

7. REPORTS

The Parish Council received the following reports:-

- (i) **The Chair** – the new picnic tables had been ordered for Sandy Croft and were awaiting assembly; the reinstallation of the dog waste bin on Common Lane had been welcomed by residents.
- (ii) **The Deputy Chair** – installation of the replacement picnic tables.
- (iv) **County Councillor** – the poor condition of highways.
Borough Councillor - in the absence of the Borough Councillor, the Clerk read a report of her recent activities.

8. FOOTPATHS WORKING PARTY

- (i) The Clerk reported that advice received from CHALC had confirmed that the simplest way to proceed with the purchase of 5 gates was for the Parish Council to purchase the gates and then donate them to landowners.
- (ii) Councillor Owen reported that 10 gates had been ordered (including the 5 purchased by the Parish Council) which were being delivered 6th August.

Members noted that the County Councillor had a budget of £2,500 and that Borough Councillors, each had a Budget of £2,500 and some of that might be available for this Project.

RESOLVED

That a request for funding towards the Footpaths Project, from the County Councillor and the Borough Councillors, be considered at the next meeting.

8. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2026-2027

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

(i) Applications for Financial Assistance

There were no applications for financial assistance.

(ii) Transactions – Unity Trust Bank Current Account

RESOLVED

That the following transactions in the Unity Trust Bank Current Account, be approved:-

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
WaterPlus	Monthly direct debit		£10.44
Unity Trust	Service charge		£7.00
Staffordshire Pensions	June Pension		£155.62
HMRC	June PAYE/NI		£147.64
M Clough	June Salary		£468.67
Luke Rimmer	Invoice No: 0037		£210.00
SPCA	Invoice No. 16 Annual Subscription		£461.09
R Bettley-Smith	Flag Reimbursement		£49.99
S Daly	Plants Reimbursement		£25.94

(iii) Transactions – Unity Trust Instant Access Account

RESOLVED

That the following transaction in the Unity Trust Bank Instant Access Account, be approved:-

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
Unity Trust Bank	Interest	£206.41	

(iv) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the following forthcoming payments in the Unity Trust Bank Current Account, be approved:-

M Clough	July and August 2026 Salary	Approx. £485.00 per month
HMRC	July and August 2026 PAYE & NI	Approx. £156.00 per month
Staffordshire Pension	July and August 2026 Pension	Approx. £180.00 per month
Luke Rimmer	July and August 2026 Maintenance	(Contracted and within budget)

Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service charge – July and August 2026	£7.00
HugoFox	Emails	£2.99 per month (Contracted)
R Bettley-Smith	Reimbursement for purchase of benches agreed at meeting held on 30 th June 2026	£1,630.80
Zurich Insurance	Annual Premium	£847.85
Bison Limited	Berkswell pedestrian metal kissing gates x 5	£3,362.40
Newcastle Plumbing	Supplies for water at Sandy Croft (materials only) – Labour free of charge.	£975.80

The Parish Council noted that the water scheme on Sandy Croft had now been completed and a number of expressions of thanks had been received from members of the public.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk writes to Josh Warburton and Ryan Karling, expressing thanks for volunteering their time to the water scheme.

(v) Budget Expenditure to 15th July 2026

RESOLVED

(a) That the following Budget Head expenditure to 15th July 2026, be approved.

(b) That works to clear the Wilderness, be added as an additional Budget Head.

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Salary	£1,406.21	£5,750.00	£4,343.79
Income Tax/Ni	£442.72	£2,000.00	£1,557.28
Pension	£466.86	£2,000.00	£1,533.14
Insurance	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Audit Fees Internal	£275.65	£300.00	£24.35
Venue Hire	£0.00	£450.00	£450.00
Subscriptions	£461.09	£400.00	-£61.09
Website	£0.00	£175.00	£175.00
Emails	£8.97	£175.00	£166.03
Information Commissioner	£0.00	£50.00	£50.00
Stationery	£0.00	£75.00	£75.00
Payroll Services	£227.40	£800.00	£572.60
Mileage	£0.00	£175.00	£175.00
Footpaths	£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Grants	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Sandy Croft	£90.56	£1,250.00	£1,159.44
Memorial Garden	£1,505.93	£3,500.00	£1,994.07
Highways	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Chair's Expenses	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00
Unity Trust Bank Fees	£21.00	£100.00	£79.00
	£4,906.39	£23,450.00	£18,543.61

(vi) Explanation of Variances

The Clerk reported that subscription to SPCA was higher than anticipated and the budget allocated.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the overspend in this Budget Head be retained for monitoring purposes and the overspend at the end of the financial year, be taken from the reserves or from an underspent budget head.
- (b) That no virements take place for any Budget Head overspends of less than £100.00.

(vii) Bank Reconciliation as at 15th July 2026

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation as at 15th July 2026, be approved:-

<u>Bank Reconciliation 15th July 2026</u>	
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 June 2026	£9,613.37
Reserve Account UNITY (20500412) - 30th June 2026 (£8,000 to be retained as a Reserve)	£41,849.34
Less: any unrepresented cheques/payments	
Current Account UNITY (20500409)	£1,518.95
Reserve Account Unity (20500412)	£0.00
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity	
Add: any unbanked cash - Unity Reserve	£0.00
	£0.00
Net bank balances as at 15th July 2026	
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	£49,943.76
<u>CASH BOOK</u>	
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	£160.96
Unity Reserve	£23,656.41
Less: Payments in the year	
Unity Trust Bank	£4,906.39
Unity Reserve	£0.00
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£49,943.76

(viii) Internal Transfer

The Clerk referred to an unexpected capital spend, due to the poor condition of benches at Sandy Croft.

RESOLVED

That the sum of £1,500.00 be transferred from the Parish Council's Reserves (unallocated funds) to the Sandy Croft budget for the benches.

(ix) Bank Statements

RESOLVED

That the following bank statements, as circulated with the Report, be received:-

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

9. PLANNING MATTERS

The Parish Council considered the following planning application:-

- **New Application**

(i) Application Ref No: 26/00459/FUL

Proposal: Replacement windows and doors

Location: Daisy House New Road Wrinehill

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council supports this planning application. (This decision was unanimous)

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Councillor Head presented an update, and explained that the Working Group would be erecting some display boards at the Betley Show, which contained a QR code, so that residents could provide feedback.

It was noted and welcomed, that there was an increased emphasis of environmental matters, during this review.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME LOCAL PLAN

The Chair advised that the Borough Council had adopted the Local Plan at its Council Meeting held on 8th July 2026.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk communicates to the Leader of the Borough Council and to the Chief Executive, that the Parish Council welcomes the adoption of the Local Plan by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

12. CHECKLEY PARISH COUNCIL MOTION – PLANNING SYSTEM CHANGES

The Chair reported that the Borough Council had amended its constitution at its meeting on 8th July 2026, to bring it in line with the planning and infrastructure act 2025, to stop call-in, (8th July). Councillor Owen raised concerns about this decision and it was:-

RESOLVED

That Councillor Owen reports to the next meeting on his proposals.

13. PARISH COUNCIL ASSETS

RESOLVED

That the Clerk arranges for the replacement picnic benches, be added to the insurance schedule.

14. HIGHWAYS MATTERS (INCLUDING PAVEMENTS) – REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS AND NEXT ACTIONS

The Parish Council discussed recent representations received regarding ongoing concerns about the condition of highways and pavements within the Parish.

County Councillor Williams had reported that she had met with highways and a survey had taken place. Councillor Karling had made a thorough inspection of footpaths in Balterley and the Chair and Councillor Lovatt agreed to inspect the footpaths in Wrinehill and Betley (respectively).

RESOLVED

That the Parish Councillor's reports be submitted to County Councillors Helen and Paul Williams.

15. CCTV

RESOLVED

That the Deputy Chair to report on this matter in October.

16. 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARKET CHARTER IN 2027 WORKING GROUP

The Parish Council noted that a number of suggestions had been submitted from residents (who would be joining the Working Group) and the Village Hall Trustees.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

17. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Parish Council was disappointed to note that the government's proposal to replace County Councils and District Councils with Unitary Councils, had been approved.

The Chair reported that an objection had been sent to the government and the Secretary of State, by the Leader of the Borough Council and an emergency meeting of the Borough Council been arranged, for Wednesday 3rd September at 5pm.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk writes to the Leader of the Borough Council, with a copy to the Chief Executive, expressing the Parish Council's objection in the strongest terms, to the decision of Newcastle Borough Council becoming part of the North Staffordshire Unitary Council (Stoke on Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire moorlands) and requests that the Borough Council is asked as a matter of urgency to take the Parish Council's objections to the Secretary of State, MP and the [new] Prime Minister.

18. AREA MATTERS

Parish Councillors considered the following matters:-

- Grassed area maintenance at East Lawns had now been cut
- Councillor Bullock would raise concerns over speeding in the village with the Police
- Parking outside the Reading Rooms, blocking the pavement, was making the footpath impassable for pedestrians
- The impact of the closure of roads due to the mains gas pipe replacement

RESOLVED

That due to the unsuitable diversion over the unadopted road The Butts, the Clerk contacts Cadent, to request Access for Residents Only signs.

19. MADELEY AND BETLEY CIVIC PRIDE - 25th SEPTEMBER 2026

RESOLVED

That the date of this event was noted.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Parish Council noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 24th September 2026

21. URGENT ITEMS

There was one item of business which the Chair was of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency. The item of business referred to a contractual matter.

22. EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Parish Council resolved that the following item of business should be considered under Exempt Business as discussions were taking place regarding a contract.

23. GROUNDWORKS AT THE WILDERNESS

Members noted that the Wilderness was overgrown and impassable for the Betley Show. One Councillor did not consider that the cost of the removal of overgrowth, should be borne by the Parish Council, as it was a County Council responsibility.

RESOLVED

That the appointment of Richard Heler, for the removal of epicormic growth, at the Wilderness, to enable unhindered access to the Betley Show, in the sum of £500.00 (including VAT), be approved.