WERRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD MONDAY 11th MAY 2026

AT WERRINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

PRESENT

Cllr K Griffiths (Chair),

Cllr L Ibbs, B Hughes, S Hill, R Ward, K Whitehurst

M Fair, D Shaw

Cllr Latala (arrive 1850hrs)

G Keiher-Knapper (Clerk)

SMDC Cllr P Hughes

There were 3 members of the public present.

THE CHAIR OPENED THE MEETING AT 1800hrs

APM01/26 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting is to allow residents to discuss parish affairs, update themselves on the activities of the Parish Council and other local organisations, and have a voice in matters affecting their community.

APM02/26 APOLOGIES

None recieved.

APM03/26 CHAIRMANS REPORT

The Chairman informed the meeting that, he had completed two years as Chairman. He expressed the view that the role should ideally rotate annually. Upon taking on the Chairmanship, he had not fully appreciated the extent of the Parish Council's difficulties, including financial struggles alongside issues relating to bullying and governance. At that time, the Council had 1.5 Clerks employed, which did not appear sustainable, and there was also pressure from some residents seeking a vote of no confidence in the Parish Council. In addition, several statutory regulations and procedures were out of date.

Shortly after the Chairman's appointment, the Clerk went on sick leave. As the Parish Council did not have its own office, all Council property and records were held at the Clerk's home address, which created additional difficulties during that period. The

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Chairman noted that it was a particularly challenging time, during which several individuals, including the Clerk, chose to leave of their own accord, leaving a small group to manage a significant and ongoing workload. Councillors Hill and Ibbs subsequently took on responsibility for financial oversight and continue to scrutinise the accounts on a monthly basis thus providing more transparency.

The Chairman reported that drainage improvements had now been carried out at Werrington Sports Ground, which had been an ongoing issue for years and that better working relationships had been established with neighbouring businesses.

He further advised that all statutory procedures are now up to date and subject to regular review.

The Neighbourhood Plan, which had originally commenced in 2020 but later stalled, has made significant progress over the past two years and is now close to completion.

The Parish Council had also attempted to establish a Youth Club with the support of Cllr David Shaw and his voluntary group. Unfortunately, due to the behaviour of a small number of children and parents, the volunteers were unwilling to continue, resulting in the project being discontinued.

Communication had historically been an issue within the Parish, and the Chairman noted that, with support from Cllr David Shaw, the Village Life publication is now back up and running.

Several meetings had taken place with residents who had been pursuing a vote of no confidence in the Parish Council. Through liaison with District Councillors Ross Ward and Pat Hughes, this action has ceased, although the Chairman acknowledged that further work is still required to improve relationships and communication.

Police liaison remains an area requiring improvement; however, the situation is better than previously. While the initiative for reporting matters at the library has ceased, police drop-in clinics are now taking place alongside councillor clinics.

The Chairman noted that the Parish Council previously had very little media presence, but the Council website has since been improved and should continue to be developed further alongside social media.

Improved liaison has also been established with local schools, thanks to the work of Cllr Kerry Whitehurst and Cllr Pat Hughes, and it is intended that this relationship will continue to develop.

More recently, connections have been established with the Wetley Moor Common organisation and Staffordshire Wildlife in order to work collaboratively on the future protection and management of the Moor.

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The Chairman stated that the Parish Council is now in a stronger position and ready to move forward, including preparing for Local Government Reorganisation.

Drainage at Meigh Road Playing Fields has been an ongoing issue for many years, with successive Parish Councils undertaking various works overtime. With the assistance of Cllr Ross Ward, the Parish Council is now arranging for a professional survey to be carried out in order to identify the works required to improve drainage at the site.

Finally, the Chairman thanked all Councillors for their personal and collective support to both himself and the Parish over the past two years, and also expressed his thanks to Gemma, the Clerk.

APM04/26 OPEN FORUM

A resident raised concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at the Meigh Road and Meigh Road playing fields. The resident explained that the area is generally a pleasant, quiet, and peaceful place to live; however, for several years, incidents have occurred around this time of year involving individuals kicking residents' front doors late in the evening, causing alarm and distress. The resident attended the meeting as they wished to support and engage with the Parish Council on these matters.

The Chair informed the resident that he hopes to meet with the Police and Crime Commissioner in the near future to discuss the need for increased police resources in Werrington. The Chair noted that there is a misconception that those responsible are local children from Werrington, whereas it is believed that many are from outside the area. The Chair also advised that members of the Bowling Green have experienced anti-social behaviour, including verbal abuse and threats from young people.

Members were further informed of incidents that had occurred over the weekend, including young cyclists verbally abusing and causing concern to various residents along Meigh Road/ Meigh Road Park in numerous situations over the weekend.

Following discussion, the Parish Council agreed to formally write to the Police Commander and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team to request a meeting regarding these ongoing concerns.

Cllr T Latala arrived.

APM05/26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – QUESTIONS ARE INVITED FROM RESIDENTS.

There were no further questions.

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APM06/26 FINAL COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR AND CLOSE.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming and invited them to stay for refreshments.

Cllr S Hill proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 1850HRS