WERRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MONDAY 13th JULY 2026

AT WERRINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

PRESENT

Cllr M Fair (Chair)

Cllr K Griffiths, S Hill, D Shaw, B Hughes, T Latala and L Ibbs.

G Keiher-Knapper (Clerk)

There were 8 members of the public present.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed all Members and members of the public, and explained the format of the Parish Council meeting. The Chair advised that the first 15 minutes of the meeting were allocated to Public Participation, during which each member of the public could ask one question of up to five minutes in length. The Chair further explained that Public Participation could be extended at their discretion if required; however, due to the volume of business on the agenda, a concise public session would be appreciated.

A member of the public informed the meeting that she was unable to become a Parish Councillor as she did not reside within the required three-mile qualifying area. She also stated that she had not been accepted as a volunteer because she did not live within the village.

Following discussion, it was agreed again that the member of the public would lead the Community Speed Watch initiative, with the Parish Council assisting in recruiting additional volunteers.

Cllr P. Hughes addressed the meeting regarding the second planning application for a Co-op store. Cllr Hughes noted that the Parish Council's comments on the application appeared more favourable than its previous response but considered that significant additional information had since come to light. Cllr Hughes stated that, in her view, the original refusal had related to the design of the proposal and that insufficient consideration had been given to highway safety, the amenity of neighbouring residents, and potential environmental health impacts, particularly unacceptable levels of noise.

A member of the public asked why the Parish Council's position had changed significantly in relation to the second application. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had reviewed the data collected from the Speed Indicator Device located opposite the Windmill. The data correlated with the Highway Authority's assessment of

the original application, indicating that excessive speeding on this section of Ash Bank Road was largely a matter of perception, with the recorded data not demonstrating that vehicles were regularly exceeding the speed limit. The Clerk also noted that a pedestrian crossing should already have been installed as a planning condition associated with the recent housing development.

A member of the public asked whether a decision had been made regarding the future of the pump track. The Clerk advised that this was the first Parish Council meeting since the recent Anti-Social Behaviour meeting and that the Council would be discussing the matter under the relevant agenda items, together with updates arising from subsequent meetings. To ensure residents were kept informed, it was agreed that the draft minutes of the meeting would be shared.

Cllr B. Hughes addressed rumours circulating within the community that the Co-op planning application had already been approved and that the Parish Council would be acquiring the former Co-op building for use as a community hub. Cllr Hughes confirmed that these rumours were incorrect. The planning application remained undetermined and was expected to be considered by the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Planning Applications Committee in either August or September. The Chair reminded the meeting that there is still time to comment on the application to SMDC.

Public Question Time ended at 1920hrs, and 5 members of public left the meeting

051/26 **Apologies**

Cllr J Morrison, Cllr R Ward and Cllr K Whitehurst.

Cllr B Hughes proposed a six month leave of absence for Cllr J Morrison which was accepted.

052/26 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations (from agenda):**

None.

053/26 **Register of Interests**:

Councillors were reminded of the need to maintain their register of interests.

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The Chair informed the meeting that the Localism Act has been updated and personal addresses of Councillors are no longer required to be published.

054/26 The **Minutes** of the following meetings were reviewed for accuracy and approved:

a) The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Monday 8th June 2026.

b) The minutes of the Werrington Sports Ground Working Group.

c) Action points from the Neighbourhood Plan Meeting Monday 22nd June 2026.

d) Action points/Summary from Anti-Social Behaviour meeting Monday 22nd June 2026

055/26 The following **Accounts** were approved:

a) **June 2026** Bank Reconciliation (circulated via email)

b) **June/July 26 payment** schedule (circulated via email)

c) **Budget Review** the Chair requested time with the Clerk to better understand the Parish Council accounting system..

056/26 The following Planning **Applications** were discussed:

SMD/2026/0298 Werrington Parish Council has no comments.

SMD/2026/0290 Werrington Parish Council decided to comment on the application to request a Highways survey because of the safety of access to Winterfield Lane which is now incredibly busy and in a very dangerous condition with lots of drops off the edges of the road.

SMD/2026/0286 Werrington Parish Council has no comments.

SMD/2026/0286 Werrington Parish Council has no comments.

SMD/2026/0295 Werrington Parish Council has no comments.

SMD/2026/0305 Werrington Parish Council has no comments.

SMD/2026/0302 Werrington Parish Council agreed for Cllr L Ibbs to carry out further research and feed back to the Parish Council.

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057/26 Receive a **report** from:

a) Staffordshire Moorlands Councillors.

Cllr B. Hughes informed the meeting that she had attended a Parish Assembly, during which it was suggested that Parish Councils should consider increasing their precepts by approximately £10,000 to provide for the potential cost of future by-elections.

Cllr B. Hughes also advised that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner currently has funding available to support projects aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour.

Cllr P. Hughes informed the meeting that a resident had once again expressed an interest in becoming involved with activities at Meigh Road Playing Fields. The Chair requested that Cllr P. Hughes provide the resident with the Chair's telephone number so that further discussions could take place.

b) County Councillor.

Did not attend.

058/26 **Staff Reports**:

Clerks Report

The Parish Council resolved to purchase weed membrane for use at the allotments.

It was noted that the **SPACE** summer activities are now being advertised, including Stoke City Football Coaching sessions. The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust booking system for its summer activities is expected to go live shortly. It was noted that it is hoped the ongoing issue of broken glass within the copse will not prevent activities from proceeding this year, as it almost did last year.

Cllr D. Shaw provided an update on *Village Life*, advising that the Autumn edition has been approved and is due to be delivered in August. It was further noted that advertising space for the Christmas edition has already sold out. Cllr K. Griffiths thanked Cllr D. Shaw, Cllr T. Latala and their team of volunteers for their continued hard work.

The Chair expressed concern that some Councillors were still not using their official Parish Council email addresses. The Chair emphasised that this matter must be addressed as a priority and requested that any Councillor experiencing difficulties contact Cllr T. Latala for assistance with setting up their account.

Cllr K. Griffiths requested an update regarding the dead tree on Draw Well Lane. The Clerk advised that, following extensive correspondence with Staffordshire Highways, including liaising with the resident concerned, it is hoped that Staffordshire Highways will now take the necessary action to address the issue.

059/26 **Allotments**.

All plots are currently taken, one plot has a personal situation on going so isn't able to attend.

A branch fell into a plot from a SMDC Tree and SMDC has inspected the tree and removed the branch.

060/26 **Meigh Road Playing Fields**

a) Drainage Consultation

The Clerk advised that the Drainage Consultation Report had been circulated to all Members and would also be published on the Parish Council website for residents to view. The Clerk further reported that a quotation had been requested from an alternative contractor for the recommended drainage works in order to establish an estimated cost.

b) Pump Track

The Parish Council considered the future of the pump track and agreed that the following options should be fully investigated before any decision is made:

1. Remove the pump track in its entirety.
2. Reduce the size of the pump track and redesign the layout.
3. Retain the pump track in its current location while exploring additional measures to remove anti-social behaviour.
4. Relocate the pump track to an alternative site.

The Chair explained that he wished to identify a Councillor to act as the lead for each of the Parish Council's key projects. This would provide additional support to the Clerk and enable regular updates and recommendations to be brought back to Council meetings.

The Clerk advised that Section 106 funding associated with the new housing development could not be used for this project, as the funding had been specifically allocated for sports pitch improvements. The Clerk also reported that Staffordshire

Moorlands District Council had confirmed that, should the Parish Council decide to remove or reduce the size of the pump track, the Council would not be required to repay the initial funding provided by the District Council. A response from British Cycling regarding its funding contribution is still awaited.

The Clerk further advised that a quotation for the complete removal of the pump track had been requested. A further quotation for reduction in size and re design requires detailed information to be provided, reinforcing the need for a Councillor to support the project.

It was resolved that all available options should be thoroughly investigated and residents consulted and all of the findings reported back to the Parish Council to enable Members to make a fully informed decision.

061/26 **Sports Ground:**

Following the working group where residents and hirers were invited to attend the Parish Council considered the long-term future of Werrington Sports Ground and agreed that the following options should be explored:

1. Sell the sports ground subject to restrictive covenants requiring the site to continue to be used for sporting purposes.
2. Sell the sports ground without restrictive covenants.
3. Grant a long-term lease of the sports ground to a sports club or suitable organisation.
4. Retain the sports ground under the Parish Council's management.

It was agreed that residents should be consulted as part of the fact-finding process before any decision is made. The findings of the consultation, together with any other relevant information, will be reported back to the Parish Council to enable Members to make an informed decision on the future of the facility.

The Chair reiterated his intention to appoint a Councillor to act as the lead for this project. The Chair noted that the Clerk's time is largely occupied by the day-to-day management and administration of the sports ground, and that dedicated Member support would therefore be essential to undertake the necessary research and fact-finding.

062/26 **Bowling Club**:

Cllr S. Hill reported that she had received a complaint from a resident living near the Bowling Club regarding the tree debris (brash) that had been left on site following recent tree works.

Cllr L. Ibbs advised that she had also received complaints from three members of the public concerning the same issue.

Cllr K. Griffiths explained that current guidance recommends leaving brash from felled trees on site where appropriate, as it provides valuable habitat for wildlife and naturally decomposes over time. He further advised that removing the material would incur additional costs, which the Parish Council is unable to meet within its current budget. Cllr K Griffiths also noted that the timber could not be offered to residents for use as firewood due to health and safety considerations.

The Clerk reminded Members that the tree had been identified by the Bowling Club representative at the previous meeting as being extremely dangerous. The Parish Council's cover Warden removed the tree within the same week that it was reported. However, due to the extreme heatwave, the work was completed over a period of approximately ten days.

Cllr K. Griffiths commented that the situation demonstrated the increasing expectation for the Parish Council to deliver services beyond the level for which it is funded and resourced.

The Chair informed Members that he had held a constructive meeting with the Chairman of the Bowling Club and that it had been agreed that future communications between the two organisations would be conducted directly between the respective Chairs.

Cllr K. Griffiths further advised that, unfortunately, the former councillor who had attended the previous meeting had not provided the Bowling Club with a risk assessment. As a result, the Bowling Club had arranged a meeting on the following Monday to discuss its access arrangements and identify appropriate solutions.

063/26 **Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman had circulated a report to Members prior to the meeting and highlighted the following key points:

- The Parish Council should continue to develop and evolve by adopting a three-year Strategic Plan. It was noted that the Council faces increasing demands on Councils' time and limited resources, and a strategic approach would help prioritise objectives and guide future decision-making. Suggested priorities could include addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB), the future of Meigh Road Playing Fields, Werrington Sports Ground, the Neighbourhood Plan, a Disaster Recovery Plan, Best Kept Village, achieving the Bronze Award, and increasing external funding opportunities.
- The Chairman requested that three Councillors volunteer to work alongside Cllr S Hill in developing the Strategic Plan. Cllr K Whitehurst was suggested by Members.

The Chairman also reported on his activities since the previous meeting, which included attending the Open Gardens event, participating in an anti-social behaviour webinar, attending a residents' ASB meeting, meeting with the Chair of the Bowling Club, corresponding with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and meeting with a prospective Parish Councillor.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her continued support since he had taken on the role of Chairman. Members also approved the Chairman's request to attend the relevant training courses.

064/26 **Anti Social Behaviour Update.**

The Clerk informed Members that anti-social behaviour at Meigh Road Playing Fields remains an ongoing concern. Incidents of broken glass being left on the playing fields continue to be reported. In addition, residents have experienced rocks being thrown into their gardens, and more recently the defibrillator mounted on the Lengthsman's Hut had been deliberately ripped from the wall.

The Chairman reported that earlier that day he and the Clerk had met with representatives from Staffordshire Police for a site walkaround of Meigh Road Playing Fields. Staffordshire Police will prepare and submit a report containing recommendations and potential measures to help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour at the site. Once the report is received it will be shared.

In discussions with various agencies it has become clear that the reporting of incidences of ASB must be formally reported to the Police. The allocation of Police resources are driven by statistical analysis. The Council has regularly encouraging residents to report incidents in order to provide hard evidence of the problem and identify any specific locations of concern for targeting.

065/26 **Disaster Recovery**

Cllr K Griffiths reminded Members that, at the previous meeting, he had asked them to watch a video and consider how the Parish Council could communicate with residents regarding community resilience. The aim is to explore how residents could work alongside the Parish Council to support the community in the event of emergencies such as water shortages, civil unrest, terrorist incidents or significant pressures on local health services.

Cllr Griffiths advised that the project is still in its early stages and represents a substantial piece of work. He emphasised that developing a Community Disaster Plan is considered essential to improve the community's preparedness and ability to respond effectively to potential future emergencies.

066/26 **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Parish Council approved the following:

a) Approve Green Spaces for consultation.
b) Approve Village Centre for consultation.
c) Approve poster advertising consultations.
d) Approve feedback/comments for consultations.
e) Volunteer Councillors for library drop in consultations

067/26 **Correspondence**

The Parish Council approved:

- Letter to a resident with regards to dangerous parking.
- Letter to a resident with regards to overhanding bushes blocking a footpath.
- Letter in response to Head of the County Council about nil County Councillor attendance to Werrington Parish Council meetings.

Cllr P Hughes reminded the Parish Council about the Checkley Parish Council correspondence.

The Chair reminded the meeting about the exchanges of correspondence between the Chair and Mr Ben Adams, PF and CC, which had resulted in a greater appreciation by

agencies of the increased incidences of ASB in the Parish and a willingness to seek possible solutions.

068/26 **Councillor Updates/Items**

There were no further comments from Councillors to those made in earlier items on the agenda

Confidential Items (public and press excluded)

069/26 **S106 Funding Request**.

The Parish Council resolved to proceed with the replacement of the MUGA soakaway drainage only, using the available Section 106 (S106) funding. This decision was made as Staffordshire Moorlands District Council requires three quotations for any additional works, and despite contacting a number of contractors, the Clerk has been unable to obtain the required quotations.

The Parish Council also noted that any remaining S106 funding could potentially be allocated towards the drainage improvement works at Meigh Road Playing Fields, as recommended in the recently completed drainage consultation.

070/26 **Proposed Notice Board for Meigh Road Playing Fields**

Werrington Parish Council approved a notice board for the main gates of Meigh Road Playing Fields.

071/26 **Items for the next Agenda**.

Please inform the Clerk

072/26 **To confirm Date, Time and Location of the next meeting.**

Monday 14th September 2026 at Werrington Methodist Church

Meeting Closed at 2115hrs

Signature_____

Name_____

Date_____