MINUTES

Fulford Parish Council
Full Council Meeting

Thursday 9th October 2025
Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall

Present:
Cllr Carol Baskin
Cllr Peter Wilkinson
Cllr Karen Deeth
Cllr Ale Sandiford (FPC & SBC)
Cllr Angela Noblett
Cllr Janet Crossley
Cllr Matt Alexander
Cllr Sue White
Cllr Anthony Meredith (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Green
Cllr Paul White
Cllr Derek Brindley (co-opted)
Cllr Penny Meakin (c-opted)

Cllr Sean Bagguley (County Council)

In attendance:
Mrs Gemma Keiher-Knapper (Clerk/RFO)
PCSO Davies

Meeting started at 19:15hrs

097/25 **Public Participation**
There were two members of the public in attendance awaiting co-option.

098/25 **Apologies.**
Cllr G Brunt, Cllr A Lovatt, Cllr Bryce and SBC Cllr M Dodson.

103/25 To receive a **Report** from the Police (if available).
The Chairman brought this agenda item forward to allow the PCSO to return to duty.
-Ongoing issues at the garages in Blythe Bridge whilst Homes Plus removes the garages.
-Informed of drug dealing taking place in public house car parks in the Parish.
-Attempted theft of a vehicle in the Parish, which is believed to be targeted.

099/25 **To consider candidates for co-option** and make a decision.

Co-option of Penny Meakin onto the Fulford Parish Council for Meir Heath Ward.

Proposed: Cllr A Noblett	**Seconded: Cllr A Sandiford**

For: 11	**Against: 0**	**Abstentions: 0**

Co-option of Derek Brindley onto the Fulford Parish Council for Blythe Bridge Ward.

Proposed: Cllr P Wilkinson	**Seconded: Cllr C Baskin**

For: 11	**Against: 0**	**Abstentions: 0**

100/25 **Declarations of interest and dispensation**
None

101/25 **Register of interest**
The Chairman reminded all Parish Councillors to update their disclosable pecuniary interests up to date in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

102/25 To consider **minutes** for accuracy and approve minutes of previous Council Meetings:

a) Fulford Parish Council Meeting, Thursday 11th September 2025.
b) Neighbourhood Plan Action Points Thursday 18th September 2025.
c) Christmas Event Working Group Action Points Thursday 18th September 2025.

103/25 To receive a **Report** from the Police (if available).
The item was brought forward.

104/25 To receive **Report** from:

a) Stafford Borough Councillors (if available).

Cllr Alec Sandiford informed the meeting of the following:

- **Stokes Local Plan**

It is recommended that Fulford Parish Council submit an objection because it affects the Parish Boundaries and is creating urban sprawl and development in the Green Belt. The Parish Council approved the Clerk to submit an objection. Cllr A Meredith abstained from the vote.

- **Garages at Blythe Bridge**

After years of trying to get them demolished, sub-contractors have finally started; however, the sub-contractors are leaving gardens and the allotments unsecured and exposed.

- **Enforcement Issues**

A lot of time is being spent on Enforcement issues in the Parish because the District Council are struggling to get full-time staff because agencies pay a substantial amount more money.

- **Trees and TPOs**

Lots of residents have been in touch about trees and TPOs, and hopefully, soon, in collaboration with Lichfield District Council, there will be a live map showing all trees and preservation orders.

- **Planning**

The Planning Department are not releasing housing numbers yet, but is receiving offers for land. The old Creda site has been mentioned a few times with regard to housing/commercial.

- **Government Reorganisation**

SBC has invited the Parish Council to a meeting; however, they are sticking with the North-South divide for their proposal to the Government.

b) County Councillor (if available).

Cllr Sean Bagguley informed the meeting of the following:

- **Fulford Road Closure**

The contractors have come across issues, so it is taking longer than expected.

- **Rough Close – Windmill Hill Drainage**

Believe that the issue has been resolved. The Clerk informed the meeting that it is better, but there is still constant running water down the road and a blocked gutter that is not helping. Cllr Baguley said he will report this back.

- **Speed Indicators**

Cllr Bagguley informed the meeting that SIDs are under review, and he is aware of how long the review has already taken, so he will keep checking.

- **Parking Issues, Planning application and Enforcement issues**

Cllr Bagguley also informed the meeting that he has several ongoing issues.

- **Utility Companies**

Cllr Bagguley informed the meeting that Staffordshire County Council is now ensuring that utility companies coordinate road closures with better planning and ensure they are put back better.

Cllr Wilkinson requested that it be fed back about the amount of furniture left behind for days after completion, including traffic lights.

Cllr S White requested the County Councillor to look at Fulford Road from Fulford to Saverley Green for the poor condition, flooding and horse road signs, please.

Cllr P White asked about the continuation of the double yellow lines at the bottom of Grindley Lane. Cllr S Bagguley informed the meeting that it is still ongoing.

25.10.105 **Clerk's Report** (See attached).

a) Wardens' Jobs Lists

The Parish Council approved the monthly job lists for the Wardens

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b) Grindley Park Play Equipment Inspection

Cllr Noblett informed the meeting that the Grindley Park attendant has carried out all the recommendations following the play equipment inspection. The only work outstanding is the recommendations for the basket swing because the Warden is pricing up the replacement parts, and the Clerk will go out to tender to fully replace it. It is not currently dangerous, just recommendations suggested, and the timber is recorded as starting to decay.

c) Tree works

The tree works have all been carried out, and the Fulford Warden will confirm this.
The Clerk informed the meeting that a resident has requested that Fulford Parish Council cut back the trees along the footpath which are overgrowing the resident's property. The Clerk has requested a quotation, and the Parish Council approved a budget of £500 to enable work to go ahead before the next Parish Council meeting in November.

d) Christmas Event

The Parish Council are not holding any Christmas Events at Fulford Village Hall because there are already several events; however, it has been previously agreed to support the Village Hall's Event by supplying selection boxes.

The Parish Council is not holding the Christmas Event at Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall because there is already a booking starting at 17:00 hours, so the Parish Council's residents' Christmas Event will be held at St Francis Church, Meir Heath, on Friday, 5th December 1600-1800hrs.

106/25 **Accounts/Finance:** Fulford Parish Council approved:

a) September 25 Bank Reconciliation.

b) Sept/Oct 25 Payments list (See attached).

107/25 To consider **Planning Applications** received (See attached).

24/40936/FUL

Cllr Sandiford has called the application in, and a new tree report has been requested.
The Clerk is to check that the Parish Council's original objection is still on the portal.

There were no comments for the following planning applications:
25/41126/TWT, 25/41037/FUL, 25/41194/TCA, 25/41199/LDCPP, 25/41200/LDCPP or 25/41167/TWT.

Fulford Parish Council also approved the Clerk to object against Stoke on Trent's Local Plan on the grounds of development on the Green Belt, causing Urban Sprawl.

108/25 **Report** from Fulford Parish Council Chairman.
Fulford Parish Council approved Cllr A Meredith and Cllr S Green to contribute a Christmas tree to Fulford Churches Christmas Tree Festival.

Cllr Merdith also gave the Parish Council a summary of the Stone Parish Council Assembly that he attended with regards to devolution in other areas to look for what assets are important to your Parishes, but be aware that the precept will need to reflect maintaining those assets, and also be aware that election fees may rise dramatically.

109/25 **Neighbourhood Plan.**
a) Survey – The Clerk is still inputting but the survey is now closed.
b) Next Meeting – To be confirmed 23rd or 20th October 2025
Green Space homework to be completed for each Councillor, please, for the next meeting.
c) Fulford Businesses meeting.- To be arranged in the New Year.

110/25 **Health and Safety.**
Cllr S Green reported acorns covering Highview Footpath, making it dangerous underfoot. Also, a raised paving slab at the bottom of the steps is dangerous in the dark.
The Parish Council agreed that if Street Scene have not attended to it by Wednesday, to ask one of the attendants to address it.

111/25 To approve the Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall Lease and Licence.
Consideration of this item was deferred pending the solicitor's return from annual leave, subsequent to the Village Hall locating a copy of the original lease.

112/25 Fulford Parish Council approved the following policies.
a) Zurich Insurance Policy

113/25 Councillor Updates/Items: to receive any additional updates or items for discussion from Councillors.
a) Remembrance Arrangements.

Blythe Bridge Church Wreath – Cllr P White
Fulford Church Wreath – Cllr A Meredith
Meir Heath Church – Cllr T Bryce
It was also agreed that the Warden would put a Tommy next to each Noticeboard.

Confidential Items to be discussed at the end of the meeting if Public and Press are present.

114/25 Fulford Parish Council approve the draft of the **Christmas Newsletter and to print with Panda Press.**

115/25 Request for any **transfer of assets**.
The Clerk informed the Parish Council that consideration should be given to whether Fulford Parish Council wish to request any transfer of assets in our Parish from Stafford Borough Council or Staffordshire County Council, but consider the cost of the upkeep. It was agreed that the item would be added again to the November Agenda, giving Councillors time to consider their Wards and speak with their residents.

116/25 **Cllr Deeths' report to the Parish Council**.
Cllr Deeth informed the Parish Council that she attended the Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall Committee Annual Meeting the previous evening. The Village Hall accounts have been circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk.

Cllr Deeth reported that the Committee expressed a strong preference not to renew the current Lease but to renew the Licence as soon as possible, as the Parish Council is presently occupying the Parish Office without one.

A former Parish councillor was also at the meeting and made statements about the clerk, which Cllr Deeth believes to be untrue. The former Councillor allegedly claimed that the Clerk was responsible for the Parish Council's decision not to provide the Village Hall Committee with a key to the Parish Office. Cllr Deeth reminded members that the clerk has no power and just does as instructed by the Parish Council and while the former Councillor was Chair, a vote was cast and the majority voted against. Cllr K Deeth further informed the Council that the former Fulford Parish Councillor had later been co-opted onto the Village Hall Committee.

The former Councillor also alleged, after the Village Hall Committee meeting, that the Clerk had instructed her how to vote. Cllr Deeth reminded all Councillors that if any member feels pressured or influenced in how they vote, they should report this through the Whistleblowing Policy to the Chair. She added that the Clerk has never attempted to influence her vote and wished to have her support for the Clerk formally in the minutes.

Cllr Noblett proposed a vote of confidence in the Clerk, which resulted in 12 Councillors voting in favour and Cllr P. White voting against.

The Clerk informed the Council that should the former Councillor continue to make defamatory statements, she would seek legal advice regarding defamation of character**.**

Cllr Wilkinson raised concerns that this financial year was started by Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall, with not enough funds to operate for half a year. As custodian trustee, the Parish Council's duty is to safeguard this asset for the residents. Cllr P White insisted that the Parish Council could not get involved, and after some discussions, it was advised that if the Village Hall Committee got into financial difficulties, there would not be any other authority to help.

Cllr Deeth requested that the Parish Council reconsider issuing the Village Hall Committee a key to the Parish Office**.** She proposed that, should a key be provided, all cabinets and

drawers be secured**,** a CCTV camera installed, and the landline diverted, to ensure that no data breaches occur.

Cllr Deeth further suggested that a formal agreement be drawn up between the Village Hall Committe**e** and the Parish Council**,** outlining:

- Where the key is to be stored,
- Who has authorised access, and
- The procedure for giving notice and being accompanied when access is required.

Access should only occur without prior notice in the event of an emergency. Additionally, a risk assessment should be completed, approved, and signed by both parties before any key is issued.

Fulford Parish Council agreed to move forward and, once everything is in place, share a key with Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall Committee. Cllr Crossley was against, and Cllr Meredith, Green and Baskin abstained.

117/25 Discuss and decide on a date for full council training.
The Clerk shared the instructions, available dates and times and asked all Councillors to initial their available dates so that the Clerk could book a date where the maximum Councillors could attend.

118/25 Items for **next Agenda.**
-Verdun Oak Plaque
-Allotment Gates

119/25 To **confirm Date**, Time and Location of next meeting. Thursday 13th November 2025 at Fulford Village Hall

Meeting Closed at 20:35hrs

Signed **Date** **Position**