MINUTES

Fulford Parish Council
Annual Meeting of the Council
Full Council Meeting

Thursday 14th May 2026
Fulford Village Hall

Present:
Cllr Carol Baskin
Cllr Gareth Brunt
Cllr Anthony Meredith
Cllr Stephen Green
Cllr Peter Wilkinson
Cllr Karen Deeth
Cllr Alec Sandiford
Cllr Angela Noblett
Cllr Janet Crossley
Cllr Teri Bryce
Cllr Penny Meakin
Cllr Paul White (Arrived at 1930hrs)

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

Meeting started at 19:15hrs

AMC001/26 **Public Participation**.
There were no members of the public in attendance.

AMC002/26 **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN.**

Cllr Anthony Meredith

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

For: 10	**Against: 0**	**Abstentions: 0**

It had been previously agreed by the full council that the Chairman and Vice Chairman positions would rotate through the Wards each year. Next year will be the Meir Heath Ward Chairship and the Blythe Bridge Ward Vice Chairship.

Cllr Meredith thanked Cllr Brunt for his work as Chairman.

AMC003/26 **ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN.**

Cllr T Bryce

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

For: 10	**Against: 0**	**Abstentions: 0**

AMC004/26 **Acceptance** of Office
The newly appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman signed their acceptance into office.

AMC005/26 **Apologies** for Absence.
Cllr A Lovatt, Cllr S White, Cllr D Brindley and County Cllr S Bagguley.

AMC006/26 **Declarations of interest and dispensation** (from agenda).
None.

AMC007/26 **Register of interest and dispensation.**
All Parish Councillors were reminded to keep their disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 up to date.

AMC008/26 Full Council **approved the minutes** of:
a) Full Council Meeting Thursday 9th April 2026.
b) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Action Points Thursday 16th April 26

AMC009/26 To receive a **Report** from the Police
Did not attend.

AMC010/26 To receive **Report** from:
a) Stafford Borough Councillors

Cllr Alec Sandiford informed the meeting of the following matters he has been working on:

- Discussions are ongoing with an Officer regarding attendance at all primary schools within the Parish to assist with parking enforcement.
- Fulford Park has now been cleaned.
- The land adjacent to Gorsty Farm is now under appeal with the Planning Inspectorate.
- The traveller site is due to appear in court this month.
- Enforcement action is being pursued at several locations within the Parish.
- A breach of building regulations at a local business has been reported.
- Homes Plus is addressing defects in properties within Blythe Bridge and Meir Heath.
- The police are now maintaining an increased presence on the common.

- There are several ongoing tree-related issues across the Parish.
- Section 56 notices regarding dangerous pavements in Meir Heath are being progressed.

b) County Councillor did not attend.

Cllr P White arrived at 1930hrs

AMC011/26 **Clerks Report**

The Clerk's report had been distributed to all members prior to the meeting. The following key points were highlighted:

- The Wardens' job lists for the forthcoming month were shared with members.
- It was noted that meetings regarding the allotments would be required over the summer months.
- FPC agreed to fund one SWT session and six football sessions, comprising two sessions at Fulford Village Hall, two at Stallington, and two at Grindley Park.
- FPC resolved to purchase a new mower at a cost of £320, as the estimated servicing and repair costs for the existing mower were £260.

AMC012/26 Review **delegation** arrangements
Fulford Parish Council reviewed and approved delegation arrangements.

AMC013/26 Review **Terms of Reference**
Fulford Parish Council delegated reviewing the Terms of Reference to each Committee as the first committee agenda item.

AMC014/25 Existing and new **Committees and Working Groups**.

a) **Planning Committee**
Cllr K Deeth, Cllr A Noblett, Cllr S Green, Cllr A Lovatt.
b) **Staffing Committee**
Cllr C Baskin, Cllr G Brunt, Cllr A Sandiford and Cllr Wilkinson.
c) **Governance Committee**
Cllr J Crossley, Cllr P Wilkinson and Cllr C Baskin.
d) **Financial and General-Purpose Committee**
Cllr A Noblett, Cllr K Deeth, Cllr Meakin and Cllr Sandiford.
e) **Highways Working Group**
All are welcome to attend.
f) **Grindley Park Working Group**
All are welcome to attend.
g) **Complaints Committee**
To be agreed if required.
h) Cllr P Wilkinson Parish Council representative for **Fulford Village Hall,**
Cllr K Deeth Parish Council representatives for **Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall.**

AMC015/26 **Accounts/Finance:** Fulford Parish Council approved:
a) April 26 Accounts and Bank Reconciliation.
b) April/ May 26 Payments list (see attached).
c) Approved Bank Signatories
Cllr C Baskin, Cllr A Meredith, Cllr P White, Cllr Brunt and Cllr Noblett
d) Approved to continue with online payments.
e) Approved Annual Governance Statement.
f) Approved Annual Accounting Statement.
g) Noted internal audit report
h) Approved Kim Squires Services for Internal Audit 2026/27.

AMC016/26 To note the continuation of the General Power of Competence.

AMC017/26 To consider **Planning Applications** received.
26/41852/HOU No comment
26/41718/FUL No Comment

26/42092/PIP Land off Stallington Rd Spot Acre
Permission in principle – Erection of one detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Fulford Parish Council wishes to call this application before the Planning Committee and objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The application title is inaccurate, as the site is not known as “Spot Acre”.
- The proposed highway access is considered to be unsafe and presents significant dangers to highway users.
- The development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- The site has remained undisturbed for over a decade, allowing an established ecological habitat to develop. Any future development must therefore give full consideration to the presence of badger setts and bats, together with the wider ecological impact of the proposal.

AMC018/26 **Report** from Fulford Parish Council Chairman.
Cllr Anthony Meredith thanked the Councillors for electing him as Chairman. Cllr Meredith informed the meeting that he had received a complaint regarding the groundsman strimming the spring flowers before they had fully died back. The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council in Wards may wish to consider undertaking bulb planting this autumn.

AMC019/26 Reviewed and approved **Fulford Parish Council's Policies**:
a) Standing Orders.
b) Financial Regulations.

AMC020/26 Neighbourhood Plan

a) **Update** – The Clerk reminded all Councillors that the Green Space templates for their respective Wards must be submitted by Wednesday of the following week.
b) **Next Meeting** – Wednesday 20th May at 10:00am, to be held at Fulford Village Hall.
c) **Fulford Business Meeting** – Monday 15th June at 7:30pm at Fulford Village Hall.
Cllr Wilkinson queried why non-alcoholic wine to be provided. The Clerk responded that she understood this to be due to the Village Hall holding a licence and therefore requiring use of the hall bar facilities. Cllr Green commented that he had attended other events at the Village Hall, such as choir events, where alcohol had been available. The Clerk agreed to seek clarification from the Village Hall. Cllr P White stated that public funds could not be used to purchase alcohol; the Clerk noted that she did not share this understanding.

AMC021/26 – Bollards Request
Cllr K Deeth informed the meeting that, although the issue had not occurred during the current month, there had been previous instances of vehicles parking across the footpath on Grindley Lane following the Parish Council's clearance works. This had resulted in pedestrian access being obstructed. Cllr Deeth requested that consideration be given to the installation of a removable bollard at the location due to the presence of a dropped kerb.
The Clerk advised the meeting that a social media post would be issued requesting that residents refrain from parking across the footpath. Should the issue persist, residents would be advised to contact Cllr Bagguley regarding the matter.

AMC022/26 – Remembrance Plaque
Cllr Sandiford asked the Parish Council to consider the installation of a remembrance plaque on the planters outside Fords in memory of the recently deceased Bruno, who was well known and highly regarded within the Blythe Bridge Ward.
Following the discussion, the Parish Council resolved to place the matter on the agenda for the next meeting to allow Councillors additional time to consider the request.

AMC023/26 Dog Poo bag Dispensers and Notice Board
Cllr Meredith requested another dog poo bag dispenser for Fulford Ward this triggered a discussion and an agreement for further research for locations in each Ward and quotations to be considered and next months meeting.

AMC024/26 – Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall
The Clerk updated the meeting regarding the Village Hall Committee's request for a copy of the Village Hall deeds. Following enquiries with Chesworths, it was confirmed that the deeds held there related only to Grindley Park.

The Clerk advised that, following discussions with former Councillor Martin Oxby, a solicitor's firm in Stone had been identified as having previously acted for the Parish Council. However, the firm has since dissolved. The Solicitors Regulation Authority confirmed that documentation relating to Fulford Parish Council had been transferred elsewhere and provided details of an alternative contact, as the original individual responsible had since deceased.

The Clerk further informed the meeting that neither Staffordshire County Council nor Stafford Borough Council held archived records relating to the Village Hall. The planning application for the Village Hall could be located on the planning portal; however, no supporting documentation was available. Cllr A Sandiford offered to assist with making further enquiries.

The Clerk commented that, if the Parish Council did not own the land, she was uncertain as to why the Parish Council had submitted the original planning application. Cllr P White interrupted that this was because the Parish Council acted as Custodian Trustee. The Clerk requested clarification as to where this was formally recorded. The Clerk also queried why a lease existed, confirming that the Village Hall Committee paid a peppercorn rent of £10 per annum if the Parish Council did not own the land. Cllr P White stated that this payment related to the Parish Council holding the deeds in trust.

During the discussion, the Clerk requested that Cllr P White refrain from what she considered abrupt and discourteous behaviour towards her, stating that she felt this was unfair and unhelpful to both herself and the Council. The Clerk reiterated that she was carrying out her duties in seeking clarification regarding ownership and governance arrangements and stated that, once the deeds were located, there would be no intended change to ownership.

The Clerk further advised that, once the deeds had been located, the Parish Council wishes to discuss stepping away from the role of Custodian Trustee, as she believed the current working relationship between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council had become to strained because of his involvement against the Parish Councils request.

The Clerk added that, following discussions with Support Staffordshire, it was considered unusual and potentially confusing for the Parish Council to act as both Custodian Trustee and landlord. Cllr P White interrupted again to state that the Parish Council was not the landlord.

Cllr K Deeth requested that the Parish Council approve writing to a former councillor to request the return of any Parish Council documentation still in their possession. Several councillors confirmed recalling documentation being removed from the Parish Office by the former councillor during previous discussions relating to ownership of the Village Hall. It was noted that the former councillor had since become involved with the Village Hall Committee.
Resolved: that the Parish Council write to the former councillor requesting the return of any Parish Council documentation still held.

The Parish Council also agreed that correspondence should be forwarded to the Charity Commission, as the Village Hall Committee had not responded to the Parish Council's previous two letters. Cllr P White abstained from the decision, stating that he had not seen the correspondence due to the Parish Council's decision not to share details with him on the grounds of a perceived conflict of interest.

Cllr A Sandiford suggested an enhanced search on the Land Registry and the Parish Council approved.

AMC025/26 – Councillor Updates / Items

a) Footpaths

Cllr P Meakin informed the meeting that the first of five planned footpath clearance sessions took place on 5 May. Although volunteer attendance was non-existent, the Wardens and members of the Stone Ramblers continued with strimming and clearing membrane along Footpaths 38 to 39. Staffordshire County Council had installed two new fingerposts; however, no funding was currently available for the replacement of stiles. It was agreed that enquiries would be made as to whether Staffordshire County Council would approve the Wardens' undertaking replacement stile works. The next footpath clearance session is scheduled for Tuesday 2 June at 10:00am.

Cllr A Noblett raised concerns regarding rabbit holes on Grindley Park, and the Clerk confirmed that the Footpath Warden would arrange for them to be filled.

Cllr T Bryce advised the meeting that complaints had been received regarding another overgrown footpath and confirmed that the location details would be provided to the Clerk.

Cllr T Bryce also informed the meeting that residents had enquired about the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Grindley Lane. The Clerk advised that she had responded to residents with the history of the matter, noting that former Councillor Ian Parry had previously arranged for a survey to be undertaken, which concluded that a crossing was not required. As the Parish Council did not hold a copy of the survey data, this had been requested again.

Cllr C Baskin raised complaints relating to pebbles spreading from a driveway onto the highway. The Parish Council agreed that this was a civil matter.

Cllr P White informed the Clerk that the address on her email signature block had not yet been updated.

Cllr A Meredith proposed that future meetings of Fulford Parish Council commence at 7:00pm rather than 7:15pm. The proposal was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

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

AMC026/26 Items for next Agendas.

Community Awards, Wardens' gifts, Remembrance plaques and bulb planting.

AMC027/26 To **confirm Date**, Time and Location of next meeting.
Thursday 11th June 2026 at 1900hrs at Springcroft Primary School

Meeting Closed at 2025hrs

Signed Date Position