

MINUTES OF KEELE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL AND ORDINARY MEETING
Held on Monday 18th May 2026 at 7pm at Keele Village Hall

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Cllr T Arnold (TA), Cllr G Bibby (Chair, GB), Cllr S Hughes (SH), Cllr J Lefroy (late), Cllr. W Naylor, Cllr A Rowe (AR).

Present: Borough Councillor D. Jones, 2 members of the public and Clerk Designate N Lovell.

GB opened the meeting and welcomed Borough Cllr. D. Jones and Clerk Designate N. Lovell.

1/26 To nominate and elect the Chair and receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

WN nominated Cllr. G Bibby, AR seconded, no further nominations were received, council **resolved** unanimous in favour to appoint Cllr. G Bibby as the Chair of the parish council.

Council **received** newly elected Chair's signed declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk in attendance.

2/26 To nominate and elect the Vice chair

GB nominated Cllr. T Arnold, WN seconded, no further nominations were received, council **resolved** unanimous in favour to appoint Cllr. T Arnold as the Vice-Chair of the parish council.

3/26 To receive a Declaration of Acceptance of Office from all elected Councillors present at the meeting.

Council **received** elected councillors signed declarations of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Clerk in attendance.

4/26 To consider permitting duly elected councillor, Clive Ashton to make and deliver their declaration of acceptance of office at or before the next ordinary meeting of the Council on 8th June

Council **resolved** unanimous in favour to permit Cllr. C Ashton to make and deliver their declaration of acceptance of office at or before the next ordinary meeting of the Council on 8th June.

5/26 To receive apologies

Council **received** apologies from Cllr. C Ashton.

6/26 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

GB **declared** an interest in item 17/26 b) as a member of the Parochial Church Council.

7/26 Public Open Forum

Council **noted** the representations made by a member of the public during the Annual Parish meeting.

8/26 Confirmation of Minutes

Council considered and **resolved** unanimous to approve and sign as a factual record the minutes of:

- a) the ordinary parish council meeting held at **7:00pm on Monday 13th April 2026.**
- b) the extraordinary parish council meeting held at **11.30am on Friday 17th April 2026.**

c) the extraordinary parish council meeting held at **11.30am on Friday 1st May 2026.**

9/26 To review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as circulated
Council considered the notes circulated by the clerk and supplementary notes circulated by GB.

Council **resolved** unanimous that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be amended based on the notes circulated and be tabled for consideration at the June Parish Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO AMEND AND CIRCULATE AND ADD AN ITEM TO THE JUNE AGENDA.

10/26 To consider councillors roles and responsibilities
The chair moved this item to be considered alongside item 12/26.

11/26 To nominate representatives as follows and to receive reports.
Council **resolved** unanimous to make the following appointments:
a. Staffordshire Parish Councils Association – Cllr G Bibby
b. Borough Standards Committee – Cllr W Naylor
c. Village Hall Management Committee – Cllr S Hughes
Council **resolved** unanimous to defer appointment to the following roles to a future meeting:
d. Keele University Estates meeting
e. To nominate representatives for other responsibilities as appropriate

12/26 To nominate members to the following committees
Council **resolved** unanimous to make the following appointments:
a. Communications committee - Cllr G Bibby and Cllr A Rowe
b. Environment and assets committee - Cllr W Naylor and Cllr S Hughes
c. Planning committee - Cllr G Bibby and Cllr T Arnold
d. HR Committee - Cllr T Arnold, Cllr G Bibby and Cllr A Rowe

13/26 To receive reports from the following sub-committees
a. Communications committee
AR confirmed nothing to report.

b. Environment and assets committee
Written report received and circulated prior to the meeting.

No evidence of fly tipping on Quarry Bank, however the debris thrown over the bypass bridge has not been removed. The new tree and shrub growth is largely now covering this up.

Committee noted that the approach to and around the cenotaph looks messy. There are lots of weeds and twigs/branches from trees covering the ground on the approach to the Church. The small grassed areas and hedgerow will soon need trimming. GB advised that the church contractor is now tending to the area.

The tree outside Beracha House requires the lower branches trimming since they are at face level for pedestrians walking by. The area around the base of the tree is now looking very untidy after such a lovely display of snowdrops earlier in the

year.

A large, heavy branch from a tree on Quarry Bank has fallen onto the lane. This has been moved to one side but it is now blocking the pavement. The committee asked whether the branches overhanging the lane should be looked at from a safety point of view.

ACTION: AR TO REPORT CONCERNS TO THE HAWTHORNES GARDENING/ MANAGEMENT TEAM. EA TO MONITOR THE SITUATION.

A number of village residents had commented that the huge sign, artificial grass and plastic flowers erected at the Sneyd were not in keeping with the village conservation area. Council **resolved** that no further action be taken.

The committee noted that the bus shelter opposite Highway Lane required cleaning. **ACTION: THE CLERK DESIGNATE TO CONTACT S HOUGH FOR A QUOTE TO CLEAN THE SHELTER.**

The Yew Tree is looking really poorly and very shabby, should further works be considered. The grassed area at the base of the tree is also very untidy. This issue to be considered under item 20/26.

The fly tipping in Lymes Road has been removed and an acknowledgement received to council's report. The tyres and debris in the pond area are still there. This has been reported but no action taken since this area is privately owned.

Some areas of pavements were very uneven, particularly Station Road and Three Mile Lane.

ACTION: EA COMMITTEE TO UNDERTAKE PRECISE MAPPING OF THE PROBLEMATIC AREAS, INCLUDING PHOTOS. A REPORT MAY THEN BE SUBMITTED TO BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Litter appeared to be minimal around the village.

SH further advised that a large 'builder's sack' full of grass had been left at the edge of Hawthornes Lane/Quarry Bank Road.

ACTION: EA COMMITTEE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL. A REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE CLERK DESIGNATE IF REQUIRED.

- c. Planning committee
26/00100/FUL, Retention of temporary building at Keele university. Application approved.
SCC/25/0035/MDPO, Remove the restriction on the supply of Etruria marl from Keele Quarry. Application approved.

Planning applications:

26/00333/DET, Erection of telecommunications base station and pole at the Telecomms site off Hollywood Lane, Finney Green.

Council **resolved** unanimous that no comment be submitted,

26/00271/PIP Application for development/greybelt classification 3 to 8 dwellings, Keele Road - Ref. No: - Land South Of Hazeley Paddocks Keele Road, ST5 5AL (outside Keele Parish).

Council **resolved** unanimous that GB write a letter of objection due to the nature of the application and location of the site, which is near to the Keele parish boundary.

26/00133/PIP 26/00134/PIP 26/00135/PIP 26/00136/PIP 26/00137/PIP 26/00138/PIP

Applications for all 6 sites have been withdrawn.

DJ advised that Borough Council had sought legal advice regarding the 'salami slicing' of applications in order to ensure each application for development is below 10 dwellings and therefore fall outside the golden rules.

ACTION: DJ TO FOLLOW UP WITH ADAM JOGEE MP REGARDING A PREVIOUS REQUEST FOR ADAM JOGEE TO HOLD CONVERSATIONS WITH THE HOUSING MINISTER IN RELATION TO THESE ATTEMPTS TO CIRCUMVENT PLANNING RULES.

d. Pepper Street development.

GB reported that property sales were good and SCC are to review their decision to remove the lay-by following intervention from Adam Jogee MP.

14/26 To receive an update from Keele Village Hall Committee

A Health and Safety inspection had not identified any issues. Bookings for the venue remained positive. The old lamp outside had been restored by John Evans and photos and an information article written by Sally Evans had been added to the parish council's Facebook page.

15/26 Finance

a. Council approved payments, receipts and transfers (**Appendix A, appended to minutes**).

GB did not take part in discussions relating to the payment of the churchyard maintenance contribution due to his declared pecuniary interest as a member of the Parochial Church Council.

Council considered that the churchyard was a community asset and formed part of an historic area and as such should be supported and preserved, council also noted that it was a potential future asset of the parish council. DJ raised the possibility of grant funding available for the preservation and maintenance of Commonwealth War Graves. GB advised that the PCC had investigated competitive tenders for the maintenance works undertaken.

ACTION: GB TO RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS WITH THE PCC.

The clerk designate and chair reported that an alternative solution to making payments was being investigated due to the fact that the clerk designate did not yet have access to the online banking facility and the current clerk would not make any online payments after the audited period, the clerk had also advised that there were currently no cheque books available (since previous cheque books issued had been cancelled and the new cheque book ordered had not been received).

- b. Council approved the annual insurance payment to Zurich Insurance.
- c. Council considered the renewal of the Data Protection Service for The Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR with Staffordshire County Council at a cost of £197. The clerk advised that this service would be required when conducting the data audit and updating current policies. The clerk further advised that any break in cover provided under the service would then require a GAP analysis to be undertaken at a cost of £192 before the service could be reinstated. Council **resolved** unanimous to renew the Data Protection service level agreement with SCC.

GB left the meeting.

- d. Council unanimously approved the Chair's Allowance (Section 115 LGA 1972), fixed at 10% above the 2025/26 allowance figure.

GB returned to the meeting.

- e. Council noted and approved the bank reconciliation to 31st March 2026. Council noted that this reconciliation was now outdated. (**Appendix B, appended to minutes**).
- f. Council noted and approved the budget report. (**Appendix C, appended to minutes**).

16/26 Year-end accounts 2025/26

- a. Council **noted** the outcome of the Internal Auditor's report in relation to the Accounts year ending 31 March 2026. Council thanked the 2025/26 clerk for her diligence.
- b. Council **resolved** to complete the Certificate of Exemption (for authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2026 and wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. Council certified its exemption and **authorised** the chair to sign the certificate of exemption.
- c. Council **confirmed** that the assertions in Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Return were correct for year ending 2025/26 and **authorised** the chair and clerk to sign section 1.
- d. Council **approved** the Accounting Statements of the Annual Return and **authorised** the chair to sign section 2 of the AGAR.
- e. Council **noted** the dates for the exercise of public rights. The clerk advised that the period for the exercise of public rights must include the first 10 days of July, therefore the earliest date the period could commence was 3rd June 2026, ending on 14th July 2026. Council **resolved** unanimous to approve these dates.

17/26 Actions arising from the meeting held on 13 April 2026

- a. Council considered whether to increase the Election Costs earmarked reserves. The clerk advised that election costs of £8,000 were incurred for a parish council election during 2024. GB advised that the precept had been increased by 33% for 2026/27 in order to finance the expenditure in relation to the Neighbourhood

Development Plan and proposed that this level of precept be maintained in coming years, with the funding to be used to increase the election reserves. Council **resolved** unanimous in favour of the proposal.

- b. To **consider** the churchyard maintenance contribution. This item was considered under item 15/26 a).
- c. Council **considered** the production of the parish council newsletter. Council **resolved** unanimous to produce one final hard copy of the newsletter in late summer/Autumn in order for the contact details of new councillors to be included.
- d. Council **considered** parking issues near the junction of Westerdale Drive and Station Road. Council **resolved** unanimous that no further action be taken since the situation had now improved.
- e. Council **considered** the subscription to the online mapping service. The clerk had advised that the subscription had not been renewed for 2026/27.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO REVIEW BUDGET AND REMOVE ITEM IF STILL INCLUDED.

- f. Council **considered** any action to progress the migration of the hosting of the parish council website from Moon Creative to 123 Reg. Council **resolved** unanimous that the website hosting be moved to 123 Reg.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO COMPLETE ANY OUTSTANDING REQUIREMENTS.

JL arrived.

- g. Council **considered** any action regarding the handover of ownership of the parish council domain name.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO LIAISE WITH V. NEWMAN, CLERK AND MOON CREATIVE TO PROGRESS THE TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF THE DOMAIN.

- h. Council **considered** any further action required regarding the letter to the Haying Wood 4x4 group.

ACTION: EA COMMITTEE TO ATTEND SITE DURING THE NEXT EVENT AND OBTAIN CONTACT DETAILS. EA COMMITTEE TO DRAFT LETTER TO THE GROUP HIGHLIGHTING THE ISSUES/CONCERNS REGARDING ROAD CONDITIONS. EA TO CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND TAKE PHOTOS WHERE POSSIBLE. IF NO IMPROVEMENT THE MATTER TO BE REPORTED TO SCC HIGHWAYS.

- i. Council **considered** any further action required by the Environment Committee in contacting SCC Highways regarding a litter pick of the A525.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO CONTACT COUNTY COUNCILLOR TO REQUEST A LITTER PICK OF THE BY-PASS.

- j. Council **noted** letters of thanks had been written to the Village Hall Management Committee and litter pickers

18/26 Actions arising from the meeting held on 17 April 2026

Council **received** an update regarding the grant application for the provision of a new noticeboard.

GB advised that the parish council safeguarding policy had been updated as required by the funding provider. No further update had been received following submission of the application.

19/26 Actions arising from the meeting held on 1 May 2026

Council received an update regarding the Clerk handover arrangements, including arrangements to ensure financial continuity during the hand-over period.

Council **resolved** unanimous that the parish council obtain a Microsoft 365 account and obtain confirmation from the clerk that she no longer had access to parish council documents.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO SET UP A PARISH COUNCIL MICROSOFT ACCOUNT PRIOR TO THE CLERK'S HANDOVER OF PARISH COUNCIL FILES.

GB advised that the clerk would not make further payments via the on-line banking system and that the whereabouts of the 3 cheque books issued to the parish council was unknown. Therefore, payments contained in the May payments schedule would be delayed.

Council **resolved** unanimous that GB telephone the parish council's banking provider to cancel the 3 cheque books issued and request that a cheque book be posted to the chair's home address in order for payments to be made. Council further **resolved** that an extraordinary council meeting would be held at 11am on 22nd May in order for council to resolve to remove the clerk and add the clerk designate to the authorised account signatories.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO COMPLETE BANKING MANDATE TO REFLECT THESE CHANGES AND REMOVE V. NEWMAN AND ADD A. ROWE TO THE BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES AS RESOLVED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 13TH APRIL.**ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO CIRCULATE AND PUBLISH THE AGENDA FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THIS MEETING.****20/26 Other matters**

- a. Council considered any potential bid to the community fund for planting at the Community Orchard.

Council **resolved** unanimous that WN investigate options and requirements.

ACTION: WN TO FOLLOW UP AND INVESTIGATE THE BID PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS.

- b. Council **considered** the proposal for irrigation of the yew tree and planting of snowdrops around the base of the tree. WN advised that snowdrops had been planted and the parish council contractor would mow the area shortly. WN further advised that the irrigation system for the yew tree be activated for 1 hour per day, since there were signs of new shoots from the tree.

Council **resolved** 4 in favour and 2 abstentions to continue with the current

arrangements and monitor the condition of the tree, with any possible future action to be decided at a later date.

- c. Council **considered** the offer received from a resident to volunteer litter-picking around the parish.

Council resolved unanimous to accept the offer.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO SEND A COPY OF THE RESIDENT'S EMAIL TO WN WHO WOULD LIAISE WITH THE LITTER PICKING TEAM AND RESIDENT TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS.

- d. Council **noted** that the Clerk designate would undertake a data audit and identify any issues arising with regard to storage and dissemination of files.
e. Council considered any action with regards to establishing Parish Councillor emails with an "@keeleparish.gov.uk" domain.

Council **resolved** unanimous for the clerk designate to move forward with the arrangements with the email provider (Netwise).

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO CONTINUE TO MAKE THE REQUIRED ARRANGEMENTS.

- f. Council **noted** that parish council meetings cannot (at present) be held remotely.
g. Council **considered** the purchase of a parish council Microsoft 365 Account. Subscription cost of £7.08 per month, which includes the 'Teams' meeting facility.

Council **resolved** unanimous to obtain a Microsoft account, as per item 19/26.

21/26 Parish Councillor Vacancies

Council **noted** the procedure for the co-option of councillors. Council **resolved** unanimous that the 4 vacancies be advertised via the council's website, Facebook page, printed posters and be included in the parish council bulletin. Council further **resolved** to consider any applications received at the June council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK DESIGNATE TO PREPARE PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND APPLICATION FORM.

22/26 To note written reports circulated in advance:

- a. Chair's report
b. County Councillor Simon Tagg not present. Borough Councillor D. Jones confirmed the planning situation as detailed in the chair's report.

23/26 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Data Breaches (72 hrs)/Information Security/Subject Access Requests. None received/reported.

24/26 Keele Neighbourhood Plan (Standing Item)

GB advised that the final stages of the plan were now moving forward at pace.

25/26 Borough Local Plan (Standing Item)

No update available in relation to the Borough Council Local Plan since no decision has been made by the Planning Inspector.

Signed

Dated

26/26 To note the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Bulletins and correspondence received.

SPCA bulletins noted

27/26 Any other business for future agendas

ACTION: Clerk Items to be included on the next agenda:

I) REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL POLICIES

II) ACTION REGARDING THE DIRECTION OF THE SIGN FOR FINNEY GREEN

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL