Signed G Bibby Dated 9/10/26

MINUTES OF KEELE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on Monday 13th July 2026 at 7pm at Keele Village Hall

Attendees: Parish Councillors Cllr. C Ashton (CA), Cllr G Bibby (Chair, GB), Cllr S Hughes (SH), Cllr J Lefroy (JL), Cllr. W Nayton (WN), Cllr A Rowe (AR).

Present: Borough Councillor D. Jones (also applicant for parish councillor co-option (DJ)), A Farr (applicant for parish councillor co-option, (AF)) A. Fear (applicant for parish councillor co-option (AFE)) and 1 member of the public.

The chair changed the order of matters on the agenda in order to consider the co-option of councillors at the commencement of the meeting.

59/26 Parish Councillor Co-option

a) Council considered whether to resolve to exclude the public and press for this item. Council **resolved** unanimous to exclude the public and press for this item due to the confidential nature of the information to be considered relating to the business to be transacted.

b) Council **considered** the 4 applications received for the current 4 parish councillor vacancies.
3 of the applicants attended the meeting. Council **resolved** unanimous to defer consideration to the September parish council meeting of the application received from the applicant who did not attend and also invite the applicant to the September parish council meeting.

c) Council resolved unanimous to **approve** the co-option of:

Adrian Farr, Council **received** Cllr. Farr's signed declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Chair.

Andrew Fear, Council **received** Cllr. Fear's signed declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Chair.

David Jones, Council **received** Cllr. Jones' signed declaration of acceptance of office, witnessed by the Chair.

ACTION: THE CHAIR TO CIRCULATE REGISTER OF INTEREST FORMS TO THE NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLORS, TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE CLERK WITHIN 28 DAYS.

d) To **consider** any further action required in order to obtain further applications.
This item was considered under item b) above.

52/26 Public Open Forum

Val Newman addressed the council regarding the Asset of Community Value application which she had prepared.

58/26 Other matters

a) Asset of Community Value – Sneyd Arms
Council **considered** any action in relation to registering the Sneyd Arms as an asset of community value. Councillors considered the circulated draft application to renew the Sneyd Arms' registration as an Asset of Community Value and noted the importance of maintaining this protection for the community. The Council thanked Val Newman for her work on the application.

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Council **resolved** unanimous to proceed with the Asset of Community Value application and to approve expenditure of £14 for a Land Registry search to verify the current ownership details, as required by the application process.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO ARRANGE THE LAND REGISTRY SEARCH AND FINALISE THE APPLICATION FOR SUBMISSION.

50/26 To receive apologies
Council **received** apologies from County Cllr. S. Tagg, Parish Cllr. T Arnold and the Clerk.

51/26 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
None disclosed.

53/26 Confirmation of Minutes
Council considered and **resolved** 6 in favour and 3 abstentions to approve and sign as a factual record the minutes of the ordinary parish council meeting held at **7:00pm on Monday 8th June 2026.**
(All councillors present at the meeting resolved to approve the minutes.)

54/26 To receive reports from the following sub-committees

a. Communications committee
Road Closure advice was circulated regarding works at Keele University Campus.

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

Council considered a number of vegetation, footway and signage matters. The Committee was asked to identify and photograph the precise locations of obstructions along the Three Mile Lane pavement and monitor the position towards autumn.

ACTION: ENVIRONMENT AND ASSETS COMMITTEE TO PHOTOGRAPH AND MONITOR THE THREE MILE LANE PAVEMENT OBSTRUCTIONS.

Council considered the overgrown vegetation reported along the passage off the A525 to Chapel Close.

ACTION: CHAIR TO INVESTIGATE AND REPORT BACK TO COUNCIL.

Further matters arising from the report were considered under item 56/26.

c. Planning committee
Planning applications:

- 26/00467/FUL Lennard-Jones Building, Keele University Proposed new plant machinery on existing flat roof, and replacement of 7No external windows.
  Council **noted** the report of the planning committee and **resolved** unanimous that no objection be submitted.

d. Pepper Street development.
Council **noted** that the development was progressing well and that the newly landscaped pond was attracting wildlife.

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55/26 To receive an update from Keele Village Hall Committee
Council **noted** receipt of the Keele Village Hall accounts as previously circulated.
Nothing further to report.

56/26 Finance

a. Council resolved unanimous to approve payments, receipts and transfers, as appended to minutes.

b. Council **noted** and **approved** the bank reconciliation. Council **noted** the receipt of bank statements and **resolved** unanimous that all future bank reconciliation statements would be reviewed alongside the relevant bank statements. Council **resolved** unanimous to appoint Cllr C Ashton, a non-signatory to the parish council's bank account, to oversee financial transactions, including checking bank reconciliations and carrying out a monthly financial review.

c. Council **noted** and **approved** the budget report.
Councillors noted insurance costs and website accessibility work had resulted in budget overspend, both items were considered essential. Council further **noted** the litter-picking contract and Neighbourhood Development Plan costs, however the precept had been increased by one third to support the Plan costs. Overall Council remained ahead of budget, assisted by growth in the number of properties in the parish.

d. Council **considered** arrangements for the secure retention of a parish council bank account cheque book. Council **resolved** unanimous that a cheque book be retained by Cllr C Ashton for use in the event of the clerk being unable to issue online banking or cheque payments.

ACTION: A CHEQUE BOOK BE PROVIDED TO CA FOR SECURE RETENTION.

e. Payroll
Council **considered** the clerk's report and any action with regards the processing of employee salaries. Council **resolved** unanimous to discontinue use of the VAST payroll service and process payroll using the free to use HMRC payroll software.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO CONTACT VAST TO TERMINATE THE CURRENT CONTRACT AND ONCE TERMINATED COMMENCE PAYROLL PROCESSING USING HMRC BASIC PAYE TOOLS.

f. To **consider** the amendment of the clerk's employment contract.
i) Council **considered** whether to resolve to exclude the public and press for this item. Council **resolved** unanimous to exclude the public and press for this item due to the confidential nature of the information to be considered relating to the business to be transacted.
ii) Council **considered** the amendment of the clerk's employment contract to reflect the increase to the national approved mileage allowance payment from 45p per mile to 55p per mile, backdated to 6th April. Council **resolved** unanimous to amend the Clerk's employment contract to increase the mileage allowance from 45p to 55p per mile, backdated to 6 April 2026.

The Staffing Subcommittee, comprising Cllrs Graham Bibby and Andy Rowe, approved the Clerk's holiday leave request.

57/26 Actions arising from the meeting held on 8th June 2026
a. Application to Staffordshire County Council Community Fund

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Council **considered** any action regarding applying to the SCC Community Fund for works to clear vegetation around the sculptures at Station Road, including the approval of match funding of approximately £375 by the parish council.

Council **resolved** unanimous to pursue SCC Community Fund support for the £750 vegetation-clearance project and to approve Parish Council match funding of £375.

ACTION: THE CHAIR TO COMPLETE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT TO COUNTY COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG'S COMMUNITY FUND.

b. Overgrown Hedge at 50 Pepper Street
Council **considered** any action in relation to the overgrown hedge at 50 Pepper Street, which is encroaching on to the pavement.

Council **noted** that works to the hedge at 50 Pepper Street had already been addressed. Cllrs reported that a separate overgrown hedge at 44 Pepper Street was now overgrown and obstructing the footway. Council **resolved** unanimous to write to the owner/occupier of 44 Pepper Street requesting that the hedge be cut back. Council further **resolved** that councillors continue to monitor the hedge along the Pepper Street footway and, if necessary, request a cut by the landowner at the beginning of September.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO WRITE TO THE OWNER/OCCUPIER OF 44 PEPPER STREET.

c. Council **considered** any action in relation to the overgrown hedge enclosing the field immediately behind the Station Road sculpture. Council **resolved** unanimous that the owner/occupier of the field be contacted requesting that the hedge be cut back

ACTION: DJ TO CONTACT THE OWNER OF THE FIELD IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THE STATION ROAD SCULPTURE AND REQUEST THAT THE HEDGE ADJACENT TO THE FOOTWAY BE CUT BACK.

d. Council **considered** any action in relation to vegetation along the Church Wall alongside Keele Road. Council **resolved** unanimous to obtain a contractor's quotation for spraying vegetation growing through the church wall, and delegated authority for approval of the quotation to the Clerk and Chair.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO OBTAIN A QUOTATION; THE CLERK AND CHAIR TO DETERMINE APPROVAL WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY.

A tree between Baraka House and 1 Church Bank was also discussed. Council is of the understanding that there is a dispute regarding the responsibility of the boundaries of the properties between the adjoining private landlords and the Diocese of Lichfield. Council **resolved** unanimous that the Clerk report the tree to the Diocese of Lichfield and request that it also confirm whether it has responsibility for the boundary.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO REPORT THE TREE TO THE DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD AND REQUEST CLARIFICATION REGARDING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BOUNDARY.

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e. Council **noted** the cleaning of the bus shelters (opposite Highway Lane and Station Road) in June.

f. Signage within the Parish

i) Council **considered** any action with regards to the condition and location of signage within the parish, including directional signage, street signs and parish welcome signs.

A branch from 'The Lodge' was reported to be obscuring the speed-limit sign on Three Mile Lane. Council **resolved** unanimous to write to the relevant residents requesting that the branch be cut back.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO WRITE TO THE OWNER/OCCUPIER OF THE LODGE.

ii) To **consider** any action with regards to the cleaning of road signs within the parish.

The speed sign and school sign on Keele Road were reported to require cleaning. Councillors considered this a safety matter and requested prompt action by Staffordshire County Council Highways. Council **resolved** unanimous that the clerk report the matter to Staffordshire County Council Highways. If prompt action is not forthcoming, the Council to consider obtaining a contractor's quotation.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO REPORT TO SCC HIGHWAYS.

g. Keele Bus Gate
Council **considered** any action with regards to the bus gate development and local bus services. Council **noted** the update on campus road closures and the associated traffic issues.

h. Provision of Waste Bins and Dog Waste Bins
Council **considered** any action with regards to signage affixed to bins and the location of current waste and dog waste bins and **considered** any further bins required and/or relocation of existing bins.

Councillors noted gaps in waste bin provision near the new Pepper Street properties and on the Keele Road route to the rear entrance of the University campus. Council **resolved** unanimous to request a Borough-funded general waste bin adjacent to the Pepper Street bus stop and to seek relocation of the dog-waste bin outside the Sneyd Arms to Keele Road near the rear University entrance.

ACTION: DJ TO PURSUE BOTH REQUESTS WITH THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

58/26 Other matters

a. Asset of Community Value – Sneyd Arms
This item was considered at the beginning of the meeting.

b. Council **considered** possible projects for the re-instated Borough Councillor Community Fund (£2500). Council **noted** that further information was required regarding the fund's rules and audit process before applications could be progressed. Therefore, no application was progressed under this item.

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c. Council **considered** a proposal by WN to bid for funding from the Newcastle Borough Council Community Fund to renovate the community orchard at the cemetery, including replanting soft-fruit bushes and cutting back overgrowth. Councillors raised concerns regarding planting currant bushes in congested beds and requested further information on the site's condition, the intended works, volunteer involvement and continuing maintenance responsibilities. Council **resolved** to defer approval of the proposal pending a detailed plan supported by photographs and maintenance proposals.

ACTION: WN AND DJ TO VISIT THE ORCHARD, ASSESS THE WORK REQUIRED AND DEVELOP THE PROPOSAL BEFORE ANY GRANT APPLICATION IS CONSIDERED.

d. Council **noted** the successful grant application to the Welcome Break Fund and **resolved** for the chair to sign the grant funding agreement on behalf of the parish council. Council further **authorised** that an application be submitted to Staffordshire County Council requesting permission to site the noticeboard on the verge by the bus stop, the associated application costs to be funded from the grant funding received.

ACTION: CLERK TO COMPLETE APPLICATION AND SUBMIT TO SCC.

e. Council **considered** any action with regards to speed limits within the parish. Councillors considered visibility and road-safety concerns, including the approaches to the school and village junctions. Council **resolved** unanimous to pursue a reduction of the core village speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph, supported by evidence from continuous traffic monitoring.

ACTION: JL TO LEAD ON THE PROPOSAL AND LIAISE WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG.

f. Council **considered** any action with regards to parking around St John's primary school. Council considered vehicles parking on double yellow lines and in the staff car park. Council noted that the current approach emphasised education rather than enforcement.

ACTION: DJ TO CONTACT THE RELEVANT TRAFFIC-ENFORCEMENT TEAM AND REQUEST A VISIT NEAR THE SCHOOL.

g. Council **considered** any action with regards to the vehicle activated speed sign at Station Road. Council **noted** that the sign is currently functioning.

ACTION: THE SIGN TO BE MONITORED.

h. Council **noted** the completion of the parish council's re-declaration of compliance to the Pensions Regulator and the formation of a parish council employee pension scheme with NEST.
i. Council **noted** the creation of a parish council Microsoft Account.
j. Council **noted** the progress of the transfer of the parish council .org domain.
k. Council **considered** the appointment of a representative to the Newcastle Town Deal Board. Council **resolved** unanimous to appoint the Chair, Cllr Graham Bibby, as the Council's representative to the Newcastle Town Deal Board.

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l. Council **considered** the suspension of the parish council August meeting. Council **resolved** unanimous to suspend the August pansh council meeting and delegated authority to the Clerk and Chair for urgent matters and payments during this time.

m. Council considered whether to resolve to exclude the public and press for this item. Council **resolved** unanimous to exclude the public and press for this item due to the confidential nature of the information to be considered relating to the business to be transacted.

Council **considered** a request received regarding confirmation of historical access to properties and St. John's Church carpark. Council **resolved** unanimous not to issue or sign the requested statement of truth due to the fact that Free Church Bank is a private road and the Parish Council has no records or oversight of repair, maintenance or access arrangements over recent decades.

ACTION: THE CLERK TO REPLY ADVISING THAT THE ROAD IS A PRIVATE ROAD AND THAT THE COUNCIL HOLDS NO RELEVANT MAINTENANCE OR ACCESS RECORDS. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE COUNCIL TO SIGN A STATEMENT OF TRUTH.

60/26 To note (only) written reports circulated in advance:

a. Council **received** the Chair's report.

b. County & Borough Councillors.
Borough Cllr. D. Jones provided an update to the parish council, including the Borough Council's adoption of the Borough Local Plan, campus road closures and associated traffic concerns, and cancellation of the proposed solar farms development near to the cemetery. Cllr. Jones further advised that this year's Civic Pride Day would take place on 23 September. Suggestions for activities included bulb planting, planters and involvement by local schools and Scout groups, rather than a traditional litter pick.

ACTION: ALL PARISH COUNCILLORS TO SEND CIVIC PRIDE DAY IDEAS TO THE CLERK AND CLLR D JONES; CLLR JONES TO LEAD LIAISON WITH THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

61/26 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Data Breaches (72 hrs)/Information Security/Subject Access Requests. None.

62/26 Keele Neighbourhood Plan (Standing Item)
Council **noted** that the Neighbourhood Development Plan and supporting statements had been submitted to the Borough Council and that Regulation 16 consultation was expected to begin towards the end of July. Related expenditure was considered as part of the finance report.

63/26 Borough Local Plan (Standing Item)
Council noted that the Borough Local Plan had been adopted by Borough Council.

64/26 To note the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Bulletins and correspondence received. Noted

65/26 Any other business for future agendas: None.
Council noted the date of the next meetings of **14th September 2026.**

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Signed G Bibby Dated 19/10/26

The meeting closed at 9:03 pm

Payment Schedule July 2026

Date	Chq no.	Details	Description	Net £	VAT £	Total amount £
13.07.26	BACS	Ms M Jeffries	Litter picking contract May & June 2026	195.36	0.00	195.36
13.07.26	BACS	Ms N Lovell	Clerk Salary July 2026	494.88	0.00	494.88
13.07.26	BACS	VAST	HMRC month 3	179.05	5.00	184.05
13.07.26	BACS	Keele Village Hall Management Committee	Room hire	22.00	0.00	22.00
13.07.26	BACS	G Bibby	Chairs allowance	264.00	0.00	264.00
13.07.26	BACS	S Hough	Noticeboard Inspections & Yew Tree grass cut & Bus shelter clean x 2	220.00	0.00	220.00
13.07.26	BACS	Urban Vision	NDP	4335.00	867.00	5202.00
13.07.26	BACS	Microsoft Office	Annual Subscription to 04.07.27	70.83	14.16	84.99
13.07.26	BACS	123 Reg	.org.uk Domain & Wsite Hosting	41.88	8.38	50.26
		Total		**5823.00**	**894.54**	**6717.54**

NOTE: Cheque payments made to Keele Village Hall in May & June (total £44) to be added to the July BACS payments - KVH to return cheques issued at July parish council meeting

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Keele Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation for the period ending 30 June 2026

	£	£	£
Balance per Bank Statement 30 June 2026			
Current account		22,117.72	
Deposit account		13,931.51	
			36,049.23
Less: unpresented payments			
			0.00
Adjusted bank balance			**36,049.23**
Opening balance per cashbook	15853.13		
ADD			
Receipts 01.04.26 - 30.06.26	27,470.32		
DEDUCT			
Payments 01.04.26 - 30.06.26	-7,274.22		
Cash in Hand 30.06.26 (per cash book)			36,049.23

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BUDGET REPORT 2026/27 TO 30.06.26

BUDGET HEADER	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BALANCE
PAYROLL	**£9,700.00**	**£2,801.12**	**£6,898.88**
OFFICE EXPENSES	**£560.00**	**£189.52**	**£370.48**
GENERAL ADMIN			
ROOM HIRE PRINTING CLLR EXPENSES	£450.00	£492.80	-£42.80
DATA PROTECTION OFFICER	£200.00	0.00	200.00
AUDIT FEE	£140.00	£137.83	£2.17
INSURANCE	£240.00	£505.94	-£265.94
REMEMBRANCE DAY WREATH	£22.00	£0.00	£22.00
GENERAL ADMIN TOTAL	**£1,052.00**	**£1,136.57**	**-£84.57**
WEBSITE/IT	**£110.00**	**£412.98**	**-£302.98**
SUBSCRIPTIONS	**£610.00**	**£436.37**	**£173.63**
MAINTENANCE			
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, SHELTERS NOTICEBOARDS			
YEW TREE REPORT	£5,000.00	£510.00	£4,490.00
YEW TREE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE	£780.00	£376.00	£404.00
LITTER PICKING CONTRACT	£800.00	£223.78	£576.22
MAINTENANCE TOTAL	**£6,580.00**	**£1,109.78**	**£5,470.22**
OTHER EXPENSES			
WAR MEMORIAL	£340.00	£0.00	£340.00
CHAIRMAN EXPENSES	£280.00	£0.00	£280.00
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN	£6,069.00	£0.00	£6,069.00
OTHER EXPENSES TOTAL	**£6,689.00**	**£0.00**	**£6,689.00**
SECTION 137			
CHURCHYARD CONTRIBUTION	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£0.00
DEFIBRILLATOR PADS	£380.00	£0.00	£380.00
CHURCH CLOCK	£240.00	£0.00	£240.00
SECTION 137 TOTAL	**£1,720.00**	**£1,100.00**	**£620.00**
TOTALS	**£27,021.00**	**£7,165.01**	**£19,855.99**

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