

DUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Dunstall Parish Council, held Thursday 21st May 2026, in Dunstall Church Hall at 7:30pm

Present - Cllr Marie Ward, Cllr Jan Gill, Cllr Simon Clarke, Cllr Rosemary Roberts and Cllr Ian Roberts.

Clerk - Robert Pritchard

Member of the public – 0

1. **Election of Chairman:** Cllr Ian Roberts was elected Chairman of the Council and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the Clerks presence.
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman:** Cllr Marie Ward was elected Vice-Chairman of the council and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the Clerks presence.
3. **Apologies:** Cllr Peter Sloan.
4. **Declaration of interests and dispensations:** None
5. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th March 2026 were approved.
6. **Reports from Borough & County Councillors:** None
7. **Reports from Parish Councillors:**

Cllr Ward reported that following, the building of the new warehouses on the A38, road noise has increased significantly to nearby residents, this is due to the sound bouncing off the new buildings. We will raise the issue with the County Councillor and ask for a site meeting (on a Thursday) and the planning department at ESBC. High fencing is needed to deflect the sound.

Cllr Jan Gill asked if the speeding sign is being replaced, the council will ask the County Councillor.

Dunstall Hall hedges are starting to encroach on the highway (View Lane and Dunstall Road). Report to Staffordshire County Council.

8. **Clerk's Report:** The report was approved.
9. **Planning:** To Consider the following planning applications: None
10. **Financial Matters & Approval of Payments:** To following payments were approved.
- 10.1 Pending payments:

SPCA Membership Fee:	£165.31
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Initials _____

Staffordshire Archive Charity: £75.00

Stationery: £5.25

10.2 Delegated payments since the last meeting:

Staffing Costs April: £225.39

Stationery: £22.35

Payroll Costs: £143.64

Charity Trust Donations £500

John Taylor High School £50.00

10.3 The purchase of Scribe financial software was approved.

11. **To Record any Matters Raised in the Public Session:** None

12. **Neighbourhood Governance Pack:** The following motion was approved.

This Council notes:

1. That the Government's English Devolution and Community Empowerment (EDCE) Bill introduces a new duty on all local authorities to establish "effective neighbourhood governance" structures, with further detail to be set out in forthcoming regulations.
2. That the Government has stated it wants all local authorities to have a way of working with neighbourhoods "**so they are not relying on town and parish councils to do it,**" indicating that parish and town councils may not automatically be recognised as the primary neighbourhood governance mechanism.
3. That the Secretary of State will have powers to define neighbourhood areas and set criteria for neighbourhood governance arrangements, but these definitions and criteria have **not yet been published**, creating uncertainty about the future role of parish and town councils within the new framework.
4. That parish and town councils are the most local and democratically accountable tier of government, with established relationships in communities and a strong track record of facilitating local engagement and service delivery.

This Council believes:

1. That parish and town councils should play a **central and influential role** in any new system of neighbourhood governance, reflecting their democratic mandate and deep local knowledge.
2. That any new neighbourhood governance structures should **complement, not duplicate or marginalise**, existing parish and town councils.
3. That clear guidance from Government is essential to avoid confusion, overlap, and the dilution of local democratic accountability.
4. That parish and town councils are offered the opportunity to join any neighbourhood governance structures created in their area.;

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This Council resolves to:

1. **Call on our local Member of Parliament** to press the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to:
 - Ensure that parish and town councils are formally recognised as key partners within the emerging neighbourhood governance framework;
 - Guarantee that the forthcoming regulations and guidance clearly set out how parish and town councils will be integrated into neighbourhood governance structures;
 - Provide assurance that new neighbourhood governance arrangements will not duplicate functions or undermine the democratic legitimacy of parish and town councils.
 2. **Write to the MP** enclosing this motion and requesting active lobbying on behalf of parish and town councils during the development of regulations under the EDCE Bill.
 3. **Engage with our principal authority** to express the Council's expectation that parish and town councils be meaningfully involved in shaping local responses to the neighbourhood governance duty.
 4. **Publicly communicate** this Council's position to residents, reaffirming our commitment to maintaining strong, local, democratic representation.
13. **Policies:** The following policies were approved.
- Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Data Audit
 - Risk Assessment
 - Grant Awarding Policy
 - To carry over any policies approved in the past 12 months.
14. **Appointment to Outside Bodies:** The following appointments were approved -
- Dunstall Trustees for the Henry Warford Charity (Estate Trustees) 217341 – Cllr Marie Ward and Cllr Simon Clarke.
 - Dunstall Trustee for the Barton under Needwood & Dunstall Key Trust 217929 – Cllr Simon Clarke.
15. **Items for Next Meeting:** AGAR (Extraordinary Meeting in June).

Schedule of future ordinary meetings - 16th July 2026, 17th September 2026, 19th November 2026, 21st January 2027 & 18th March 2027.

Time and date of next meeting – Parish Council Meeting, 7:30pm on Thursday 16th July 2026, Dunstall Church Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.49 pm.

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Signed _____

Date: 16th July 2026

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