

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

80 Hewell Road, Birmingham, B45 8NF

0121 447 9893

exec@barntgreenparishcouncil.gov.uk
www.barntgreenparishcouncil.gov.uk



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Barnt Green Baptist Church, Bittell Road on Monday 27th April 2026 at 7pm

The Meeting was chaired by Cllr Robert Cholmondeley, Barnt Green Parish Council Chairman.

In attendance: 3 members of the public
Parish Councillors: C Hotham, P Perry, O Pardo-Roques..
WCC Cllr Alan Bailes
BDC Cllr Charles Hotham
Eleanor Choudry, Executive Officer, Barnt Green Parish Council

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present.

2. Apologies

Cllr Tucker, Cllr Whitehand.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 28th April 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports from local council representatives

a) Chairman's report

Copies of the Chairmans report were available to those in attendance and provided at Appendix 1. Cllr Cholmondeley highlighted aspects of his report.

b) Report from District Councillor for Barnt Green and Hopwood Ward – Cllr Hotham reported that the District Council has appointed both a new Chief Executive and a new Financial Officer this year. The previous Financial Officer left after just six months, during which time an interim agency officer was employed at a cost of £170,000. A new permanent Financial Officer is now in post and is working to understand current priorities. The Strategic Plan was recently subject to public consultation, which was extended to allow for greater engagement. A number of presentations were held across the district, including a public session at the Scout Hut in Barnt Green. In total, around 8,000 responses were received and have since been categorised by ward. These responses are due to be published shortly. Cllr Hotham advised that the feedback broadly reflected expected concerns, particularly around infrastructure provision. However, during the consultation period, changes to government rules meant that the results could not be directly incorporated into the plan-making process, despite earlier expectations. As a result, the consultation responses will not formally form part of the new Strategic Plan. A further consultation on a revised plan is expected within the next 12 months and may differ significantly from the current version. There has been a rise in speculative planning applications in areas such as Wythall and Hagley. If these developments proceed, they may reduce the overall housing requirement, which would in turn affect the Strategic Plan already consulted upon. While site sizes have yet to be finalised, it is anticipated that 20% of sites will consist of fewer than 50 homes, and 10% will consist of fewer than five homes. Progress on the Plan has been slow, but an updated timetable is expected in May. Local

Government Reorganisation (LGR) will result in Bromsgrove District Council being abolished in May 2027. The new Strategic Plan is expected to be adopted in May 2029. BDC will continue for a year to oversee the transition to the new unitary authority. Residents have recently received new bins as the Council moves away from diamond-lift profile wheelie bins. These are becoming obsolete due to a lack of available spare parts, necessitating the purchase of new vehicles and bins. Also government policy now requires the collection of food waste. Although Bromsgrove initially planned to collaborate with Redditch and Wyre Forest, Wyre Forest withdrew, and the contractor declined to proceed with only two councils. Consequently, Bromsgrove will introduce its own food waste collection service starting in November. Households will receive two caddies—one for indoor use and one for outdoor use—with weekly collections. Fly-tipping remains a concern, exacerbated recently by the Birmingham bin strike. It is hoped that incidents will decrease now that the strike has ended. Some offenders have been successfully identified through investigation of dumped waste. Cllr Hotham noted that Bromsgrove District Council remains in a strong financial position. As a result, a £1.25 million grant fund has been established for community projects, and the delegated Ward Fund available to Councillors has increased to £5,000 per year.

c) Report from County Councillor for Alvechurch South – Copies of Cllr Bailes report were made available to those in attendance and provided at Appendix 2. Cllr Bailes highlighted aspects of his report.

d) Parish Council Finances

A summary (attached appendix 3) of the parish council's accounts for 2025/26 was made available to those in attendance. The parish council is in a strong position financially. Due to difficulties making withdrawals from the Cambridge Building Society, funds are to be moved to the Unity Trust Bank ensuring that the parish council complies with the Financial Compensation scheme limits.

5. Open Forum

Parking issues on Hewell Lane were discussed. It was noted that many vehicles are parking in the area to access the train station or to drop off passengers, making the road increasingly difficult to navigate. It was agreed that any future parking survey should include weekend activity to fully capture the extent of the problem. Concerns were also raised about vehicles mounting the pavement, causing difficulties for pedestrians, particularly those with pushchairs or mobility scooters. Cars are also parking along Bittell Lane. One resident suggested that the recent 10-month closure of the train station car park may have led to people becoming accustomed to not paying for parking. They proposed that introducing a period of free parking in the station car park could encourage drivers to return to using it. The possibility of introducing a byelaw to prevent pavement parking was also raised. Cllr Hotham advised that a future Unitary Authority may be able to secure funding to implement regulations similar to those in London and Edinburgh. Cllr Cholmondeley explained that the tiered planters, which have remained empty for some time, were being held while enquiries were made to see if another parish council wished to take them. They are due to be removed shortly. In the meantime, Parish Councillors have been maintaining the planters themselves, resulting in cost savings. A resident suggested sourcing plants from a local florist to improve quality. A resident also congratulated Cllr Cholmondeley for his persistence over more than ten years in progressing the station lifts project, which has now been successfully completed alongside the footbridge at Cofton. Concerns were raised regarding the new announcements on trains stopping at Barnt Green stating that the doors of the 2 rear carriages do not open. In practice they do open except for northbound services from Redditch at Platform 3 because the new trains are longer and create sighting difficulties for the conductors. Cllr Cholmondeley confirmed he is due to meet with West Midlands Rail within the next six months and will raise the issue. A question was asked about adding additional parking bays within the centre of the station car park. It was explained that space must be retained for emergency service access and rail replacement buses (although these usually stop at Fiery Hill). Should demand increase, this suggestion could be raised. Residents asked whether they could remove flags that had been attached to streetlamps using long-handled tools. The Parish Council confirmed that it would like the flags

removed and expressed disappointment that the official flagpole has been unusable due to flags being tied partway up the mast. However, the Council could not formally comment on actions taken by residents. The footpath linking Butterwick Close to Cherry Hill Road was also discussed. Residents of Butterwick contribute financially towards the section leading to the cricket club and Bromsgrove District Council's Ruth Bamford has confirmed that the footpath should remain accessible throughout its full length. Councillor Hotham agreed to follow this up. The protective wire mesh surrounding the fruit trees in Bittell Road playing fields will remain in place for approximately five years to protect the trees from deer and other damage. A resident noted the relatively low attendance at the meeting. It was confirmed that the meeting had been publicised via the parish noticeboard, website, and Facebook page. The Executive Officer will include information in the parish bulletin regarding local WhatsApp groups to improve communication. A suggestion was made to create additional parking spaces near the upper entrance to Bittell Road playing fields, close to the fruit trees. Birmingham City Council own the playing fields. Cllr Bailes will contact the BT Asset Team regarding parking. It was reported that Bromsgrove District Council's Traffic Enforcement Team previously allocated 10% of its time to areas outside Bromsgrove town (including Wythall, Alvechurch, Hagley, and Barnt Green), but this has now increased to 20%. Enforcement Officers are required to observe a vehicle for five minutes before issuing a penalty notice, whereas the police can issue tickets immediately. Cllr Bailes has requested the installation of two additional bollards outside Warwick Butchers on Hewell Road.

6. Summary of discussions and close of business.

Cllr Cholmondeley wished to express his thanks to everyone who supports and is involved with the Parish Council whether they are paid or volunteers.

The meeting ended at 20:13hrs.

Signed Chairman..... Date.....

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026 Chairman's Report

The council had its full complement of 8 councillors during the year. It had been planned to repeat the Social Eats event in the summer, but the organisers cancelled. This not only left the Council without a social event in the summer months but also a loss of £2,500 budgeted income for the provision of the Bittell Road Playing Field for the event. The Christmas Light Switch On was successful with music on a stage after 5.00 p.m. Our thanks again go to Danny Bromage who arranged many the features of, and support for, the event. The Council again organised a Wassail Walk between Christmas and New Year which attracted over 90 people, another record, up from 70 in the previous year. The issue that has triggered the highest level of contact from residents has been opposition to the flags which were attached to lamp posts from August 2025. The Parish Council has not given consent to the flags and wants them removed. The cost to do safely is approximately £1,000 each time which is prohibitive for a small parish council. It's pleasing that Network Rail has now installed lifts at the railway station following the persistent pressure from the Parish Council over the previous 10 years. The shortage of new homes on a national level looms large. In June 2025, Bromsgrove District Council published a consultation on its Draft Development Strategy to 2043. The Parish Council responded, having sought the views of residents from a survey and a public meeting. Of concern is the strategic thrust of Bromsgrove District Council that new housing should be located where there are railway stations and existing infrastructure. There does not seem to have been any assessment of the state of that infrastructure or a realistic analysis of the adequacy of the railway service. The consultation proposed that the Barnt Green area would accommodate an increase of 40% in its housing stock, the biggest increase across the Bromsgrove District Council area, which averaged 15%. The introduction of a Unitary Authority in the next few years will devolve greater responsibilities to parish councils. The specific details are not yet known, though it has been recommended that parish councils have adequate reserves to accommodate the probable changes. This was one of the main reasons behind the decision to raise the precept by 6.5% for the 2026/7 year. The other main reason was to maintain adequate reserves following capital expenditure in 2025 of £9,800 on 5 replacement lampposts. I thank everyone who has worked for and supported the Parish Council in the last 12 months.

Robert Cholmondeley

Worcestershire County Councillor - Annual Report

Barnt Green Parish Council Annual Meeting – April 2026 County

Councillor Report – Alan Bailes Alvechurch Division

Thank you for inviting me to give my annual update.

Over the past year I've represented residents across four parish councils, and I've focused on being visible, responsive, and practical. I sit on the Communities and Corporate, Environment (including Highways), and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels, and I also serve on the Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority.

A key part of the role is directing local funding. This year that included: a £4,000 local fund supporting community projects; a £10,000 divisional fund used for bus-shelter improvements and two vehicle-activated signs; and a £22,000 highways fund, which I'm carrying forward to build a larger pot for priority schemes.

We're still awaiting confirmation of next year's allocations because of wider financial pressures, but councillors have supported keeping these local funds, because they make a real difference on the ground.

On highways, the County Council agreed a new Speed Limit Policy. I've raised concerns that it can be too reactive, because it relies heavily on recorded injury-collision data and can undervalue local evidence. One consequence is that our request to reduce the speed limit on Blackwell Road is now unlikely to be approved under the new criteria.

Alongside policy work, I've been pushing through everyday issues: confirming road-sweeping is on a four-month rota; confirming the Station Road access has been resurfaced and is being reviewed for possible adoption; helping resolve land ownership and overhanging trees issues in Greenbank; and I'm pleased officers will also consider additional warning signs on Cherry Hill Road.

In Barnt Green, Hewell Road remains a priority. After persistent follow-up, officers are now involved in reviewing servicing arrangements and illegal parking outside the shops. We're planning a stakeholder meeting with businesses, residents, and partners to agree the issues and work up practical solutions. I'm also discussing with Charlie Hotham, your District Councillor, whether we can commission a parking study to give us up-to-date baseline data, including around pavement parking in Sandhills Road.

Looking ahead, I'm working to build a stronger programme of highways improvements. I'm currently seeking officer support to tackle speeding on Bittell Road and improve pedestrian safety on the route to the playing fields, and I'll update you as plans develop.

Finally, the County Council agreed its 2026/27 budget in February, including an 8.98% Council Tax increase. I know this is a concern for many households, and I will keep pressing for decisions that are respectful, transparent, and focused on what residents need.

Thank you again for your time, and to everyone who has shared issues and ideas with me over the year. Please do keep in touch—your feedback helps set the priorities for the months ahead.

DRAFT

Eleanor Choudry EO
Appendix 3 – Summary of Draft Financial Accounts for 2025/2026

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL				
Financial Report of 2025/2026: Receipt and Payments				
Annual Parish Financial Report				
RECEIPTS	2024/25	summary totals	2025/26	summary totals
Precept received in current year	37,750.00		78,500.00	
Interest	3,499.92		2,485.38	
Lengthsman Refund	2,391.13		2,486.40	
Miscellaneous	13,695.00		2,225.99	
Hires	2,531.25		1,130.25	
Total Receipts		59,867.30		86,828.02
PAYMENTS				
ADMINISTRATION :				
Staff Costs	25,953.39		28,357.41	
Chairman's Allowance	137.30		129.99	
Office Running costs	10,216.53		8,355.07	
Training and Publications	185.00		-	
Meeting Rooms and Refreshments	140.50		80.00	
Subscriptions	2,349.02		2,056.58	
Insurance	1,082.29		1,423.44	
Auditor Fees	686.20		686.20	
Legal Fees	-		-	
Election Costs	-		-	
Grants and Donations	1,000.00		940.00	
General Administration Costs	589.13	42,339.36	1,178.04	43,206.73
COMMUNICATION Newsletters	936.00		1,095.00	
COMMUNICATION Website	256.00	1,192.00	180.00	1,275.00
MILLENNIUM PARK Mowing	840.00		840.00	
MILLENNIUM PARK Maintenance	1,822.86		755.00	
Park Safety Inspections	94.00	2,756.86	98.00	1,693.00
PLAYING FIELD Mowing	2,740.92		3,474.29	
PLAYING FIELD Maintenance	534.15		406.22	
PLAYING FIELD Safety Inspections	94.00	3,369.07	98.00	3,978.51
ENVIRONMENT Hanging baskets	524.65		524.71	
ENVIRONMENT Planters	1,377.30		2,575.67	
ENVIRONMENT Maintenance	4,382.76		3,379.35	
ENVIRONMENT Outdoor Parish Caretaker	7,910.40		7,934.00	
ENVIRONMENT Pollinator Site	209.88		6.99	
ENVIRONMENT Commuter Car Park	-		-	
ENVIRONMENT Covid-19	-	14,404.99	-	14,420.72
FOOTPATH LIGHTS Maintenance	5,905.00		13,756.74	
FOOTPATH LIGHTS Electricity	2,260.79		2,443.23	
LIGHTING Christmas lights	5,270.00	13,435.79	11,446.00	27,645.97
HIGHWAYS Lengthsman charges	3,084.31		2,342.90	
HIGHWAYS Miscellaneous	2,389.99	5,474.30	1,304.16	3,647.06
MISCELLANEOUS Events	898.24	898.24	1,644.36	1,644.36
N'hood Plan/ capital projects	17,329.46		-	
FIXED ASSETS	343.14	17,672.60	791.98	791.98
Net Total Payments		101,543.21		98,303.33

BARNT GREEN PARISH COUNCIL RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY 2025/2026						
RECEIPTS	2024/2025	2025/2026	PAYMENTS	2024/2025	2025/2026	Variance %
Precept received in current year	37,750.00	78,500.00	Administration	42,339.36	43,206.73	2.01
Interest	3,499.92	2,485.38	Communication	1,192.00	1,275.00	6.51
Lengthsman Refund	2,391.13	2,486.40	Millennium Park	2,756.86	1,693.00	-62.84
Miscellaneous	13,695.00	2,225.99	Playing Field	3,369.07	3,978.51	15.32
Grants Received	-	-	Lighting	13,435.79	27,645.97	51.40
Hires (room / playing field)	2,531.25	1,130.25	Environment	14,404.99	14,420.72	0.11
			Highways	5,474.30	3,647.06	-50.10
			Events	898.24	1,644.36	45.37
			Capital projects	17,672.60	791.98	-2131.45
Total Receipts	59,867.30	86,828.02	Total payments	101,543.21	98,303.33	-3.30
VAT Refund	9,532.28	6,113.79	VAT PAID	9,039.98	8,508.95	
Annual Receipts	69,399.58	92,941.81	Annual Payments	110,583.19	106,812.28	

Notes to the report of 2025/2026 Receipts and Payments account:

1. These draft accounts are presented on a Receipts and Payments basis and have yet to be externally audited.
2. The impact of the precept for 2025/26 upon the Parish Council Taxpayer was £75.47 per Band D Annual Council Tax payment. The first instalment of the precept for 2024/25 of £37,750 was paid by Bromsgrove District Council into the financial year 2023/24 in error which is why the precept figure shows as only £37,750 in 24/25. The actual precept for 2024/25 was £75,500 and this was increased by £3,000 for the 25/26 precept to £78,500.
3. Other income variances:
 - a) Interest rates decreased, and therefore the amount of interest raised via deposit and savings account reduced.
 - b) The Lengthsman scheme continues via Worcestershire County Council. The parish council paid March and April's invoice in 2026/27.
 - c) VAT refund fluctuates from year to year with the Parish Council claiming VAT on non-business activities. The amount reclaimed depends on what purchases (predominantly Capital Expenditure) are made during the year. It would be fair to state that the parish council should not depend on VAT reclaimed each year to support the future budget and class it as income to reduce the precept.
 - d) Miscellaneous income for 2025/26, consists of £1,000 rent payment from Equan for the electric car charging point in the community car park, grants from BDC totalling £1,000 and a wayleave of £125 from Cadent Gas. A £10,000 grant from Barnt Green Medical Trust towards the cost of the new children's play equipment in Bittell Road playing fields was received in 24/25.
 - e) Hire income includes fees paid by Total Football for use of the playing field and adhoc business hire of the meeting room. In 24/25 hire income increased due to the Social Eats event hiring the playing field in Bittell Road for the street food and music festival.

4. Expenditure variances:

- a) Administration: Staffing costs have increased in line with the Local Government revised pay rates. Office energy costs have decreased. Insurance has increased as the landlord has passed on the cost of insuring the parish council office. Grants were paid to support Bromsgrove Citizens Advice and Barnt Green Cricket Club. General admin costs have increased due to the purchase of a bleed kit and a publicised station lift article.
 - b) Communication: The Parish Council issues two Bulletins during the year, which are delivered free to residents of the parish. The website hosting fee had increased to £256 in 24/25 due to a required change to .gov.uk website and email addresses.
 - c) Millennium Park and Playing Field: In 24/25 the rope bridge was showing signs of wear and therefore a replacement rope bridge was purchased. In 25/26 payment was made to a pest control company after a rat sighting. The grounds maintenance contract renewal cost increased.
 - d) Environment: Vegetation management including hedge and around streetlights was carried out in 24/25. A new planter was purchased in 25/26 to replace the large, tiered planter that was difficult to maintain.
 - e) Footpath and Christmas lighting: Footpath lighting maintenance costs have increased significantly due to a structural survey advising 5 replacement street light columns costing £9808. Existing lanterns are also obsolete and the replacements are expensive. The Christmas tree cost had increased, and festoon lights were purchased for the tree in Millennium Park to replace the faulty lights.
 - f) Highways: The Lengthsman scheme continues to be appreciated by the parish council and residents, and as this is a delegated service via Worcestershire County Council there is almost nil net cost to the parish council. A new vehicle activated sign was purchased in 24/25 and six replacement bollards were purchased in 25/26.
 - g) Events: During 2025/26 the parish council was able to host a number of events. These included the Christmas lights switch on, Chairmans Christmas Buffet, the Wassail Walk and the best dressed Christmas window competition. The Christmas lights switch on was a larger event than previous years including a stage, singer, food/drink vans and a bouncy disco dome.
 - h) Capital projects / Exceptional items: In 24/25 two bespoke children's Christmas lights were purchased as part of a Christmas competition with St Andrews First School and new children's play equipment was installed in Bittell Road playing fields, this was subsidised by a grant from Barnt Green Medical Trust.
 - i) Fixed Assets: A new office standing desk was purchased.
 - j) VAT: There are special arrangements for parish councils to reclaim the VAT on all purchases that are described as for non-business purposes. A VAT claim from 1.12.25 to 31.3.26 will be paid into financial year 2026/27.
5. The full version of the parish council's accounts may be inspected during the audit period, between Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July 2026. To view the accounts please contact the office. A summary of the unaudited accounts will also be available on the parish council's website during that period: barntgreenparishcouncil.gov.uk

Eleanor Choudry
Responsible Financial Officer

21/04/2026