

Sandon and Burston Parish Council Meeting Minutes

<https://sandonandburstonpc.org.uk/>

DRAFT Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 1st September 2026, at Sandon Parish Room, Lichfield Road, Sandon, Stafford ST18 0DN. The meeting commenced at 7.05pm.

Present: Cllr H Wildblood (Chairman), Cllr A Greaves, Cllr R Wildblood, Cllr G Wyatt including 4 members of the Public and Clerk.

26.09.001 APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES – Cllr Antcliff, Cllr Hudson -APPROVED

26.09.002 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS. NONE

26.09.003 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7th July 2026 AS A CORRECT RECORD. RESOLVED

26.09.004 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 17th August 2026 AS A CORRECT RECORD. RESOLVED

26.09.005 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public member 1. Wanted to congratulate the Parish Council on the work it undertook to ensure Footpath 36 footbridge was reopened. Advised meeting the footfall in Burston has increased since opening, with a party of 20 visiting yesterday. Ashton Marina has publicised the opening on its website.

Public member 2. Wanted to thank whoever is responsible for replacing Fiddlers Bridge.

Public member 2. Requested Parish Council to request from SCC that the footpath from the Pool to the first gate surface is replaced along with shoring up the brook bank, as footpath surface is falling away into the brook.

Public member 3. Asked Council to contact the contractor to remove the signs on Burston Bridge (Open Reach). Chairman advised Open Reach had been contacted to remove signs.

26.09.006 COUNCIL VACANCY – UPDATE

14.07.2026 - New advert put onto website – closing date 20th August

Council noted no applications. RESOLVED to readvertise the vacancy with a view to co-opt in November meeting.

26.09.007 TO CONSIDER DRAFT BUDGET 2027-2028 AND APPROVE AMENDMENTS FOR FINAL BUDGET TO BE CONSIDERED AND APPROVED IN NOVEMBER MEETING.

The Councillors were provided the DRAFT on 21.07.2026

RESOLVED to add the following to the DRAFT Budget:

Perch Seat for Sandon Bus Stop, Cost of installation (Permit to dig), increase Community Donation to £500.

Add two new items:

Land registry searches, capped at £250

Merchandise to promote Council, including pull up banner, leaflet holder, pens, capped at £300

RESOLVED for Clerk to update Budget and return to Councillors.

- 26.09.008 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE AMENDMENT TO MAY 2027 MEETING DATE
Election will be on Thursday 6th May 2027. Councillors take office on the fourth calendar day after the election. Clerk needs 3 working days for Agenda, so issues it on 11th May for Tuesday 18th May. RESOLVED to move May meeting to 18th May – website to be updated.
- 26.09.009 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE LAND REGISTRY FEE
Cllr H Wildblood wants Council to consider paying the Land Registry fee as and when the Council requires. RESOLVED to add to next year Budget with a limit of £250.
- 26.09.0010 TO CONSIDER UPDATES FROM EXTRAORDINARY MEETING (17.08.2026) REGARDING CLOSURE OF ST RUFIN'S CHURCH, BURSTON
Letter received from PCC, St Rufin's to be closed on 18th October 2026 and then to be sold. Parish Council held an extraordinary meeting on 17.08.2026 to discuss response.
Letter sent to Church Wardens of PCC from Parish Council. (20.08.2026)
Land Registry documents supplied to Church Warden, includes page 5 regarding transfer of ownership – 27.08.2026
SCC advised that a petition of over 1,000 signatures would enable SCC Cabinet to debate the closure. RESOLVED to inform Friends of St Rufins.
RESOLVED to include Parish Council letter as Appendix to these minutes.
RESOLVED for Clerk to request a meeting with both PCC and Diocese of Lichfield as soon as possible.
RESOLVED for Clerk to create a Frame of Reference for a Working Group for consideration in November meeting.
- 26.09.0011 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ABOUT PROGRESS OF RESOLUTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING
- FOOTPATH BRIDGE - FOOTPATH 36, BURSTON – ALL SAINTS WAY – UPDATE**
The footpath bridge re-opened 26th August 2026 at 10.30am, representatives from SCC and Parish Council cut ribbon. Press release issued to local press, item on website.
Council to consider writing a Thankyou letter to Cllr Mynors, Cllr Coles, Cllr Cotterill.
RESOLVED
The Council discussed maintenance of path leading from pool area to first gateway, Council RESOLVED for Clerk to gain two quotes to resurface path plus shore up bank on brook side of path. Clerk to liaise with Rights of Way Team regarding permissions.
RESOLVED to use Lengthsman Budget to carry out works, if permissions granted.
- BURSTON POOL MAINTENANCE– UPDATE**
SBC advised maintenance of Pool is responsibility of Simon Hartley Angling Club – 14.07.2026 – Simon Hartley Angling Club confirmed. NOTED.
Discussion regarding when maintenance of pool will take place, RESOLVED for Clerk to gain an update from Angling Club.
- BUS SERVICE IN PARISH – UPDATE**
Cllr Brendan McKeown (SBC) and Cllr Andrew Mynors (SCC) advised a new route for 151 launched with a stop in Sandon and Burston. This will be a one year trial starting 1st

September 2026.

Bus route details on website in news area 04.08.2026.

Bus Shelter - Sent enquiry to Cllr McKeown to ask if bus shelter would be provided in Sandon opposite Sandon Room, advised would not provide as bus route only a one year trial (18.08.2026) - NOTED

GRAVEL UNDER WOODCOCK LANE BRIDGE, BURSTON – UPDATE

Clerk updated Council regarding contact made with ACRE, Association of Drainage Authority, Environment Health and SCC Flood Team.

Maps and watercourse route sent, asking SCC for permission to remove the gravel under the bridge.

SCC Flood Team responded:

Following an initial review of your request, we have contacted the SCC Highways Structures Team to seek further advice on the request to carry out works under this bridge. As the bridge is owned by SCC, this means SCC are also the riparian owner for the bridge structure. Therefore, before we are able to provide further advice regarding the possible requirement for Ordinary Watercourse Consent, we must first obtain guidance from the SCC Structures team to ascertain whether permission for a third party to undertake works under this bridge can be granted or if further investigation into the structure itself is required.

In the meantime, please treat this email as a holding response whilst we await their comments. We will contact you again as soon as we have received further information that allows us to advise you on the next steps.

RESOLVED for Clerk to continue efforts to gain permission.

CULVERT REPAIRS – BURSTON POOL – UPDATE

Cllr Aspin (SBC) contacted Streetwise to request repairs carried out – 21.07.2026

SBC proved the following update: SBC Officers met on site to look at the issues, and we agreed to discuss a way forward with our Property Services team. 12th August 2026

RESOLVED to continue efforts to get repairs completed before winter and to liaise with Cllr Aspin.

BURSTON BENCH – UPDATE

Project completed by SJS Home and Garden services on 11.07.2026

Cllr Mynors grant award certificate on website 13.07.2026

Thank you letters sent to Cllr Mynors and SJS Home and Garden services.

NOTED

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION – UPDATE

Sent an email on 28.07.2026 to strategicplanningconsultations@staffordbc.gov.uk with

Sandon and Burston PC comments on the Local Plan - <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/new-local-plan-2025-to-2045> Letter added to website in News area and sent to Ward SBC

Councillors. NOTED. If residents want a copy, please contact the Clerk.

BURSTON TEA PARTY – 12th August 2026 - UPDATE

The organisers advised Council they raised £1056.27; the monies will be donated to the War

Memorial Trust and Oak Tree Farm. News item on website – 18.08.2026

NOTED

SANDON FETE – 15TH AUGUST 2026 – UPDATE

The Council stand was a success and RESOLVED to book for next year.

Discussed that stand needed further merchandise to promote Council, pull up display, pens, leaflet stand. RESOLVE to add to next years budget.

Council would like to thank the 22nd Gurkha Regiment for their help to put up the gazebo.

Council would like to thank resident who donated the gazebo to the Council. Clerk to add to Asset Register.

MILESTONE MARKER – SANDON – UPDATE

Milestone marker Society membership confirmed 21.07.2026.

SCC provided permission for Council to carry out the works.

Paint specification for cast iron markers received from Milestone Marker Society.

Council considered quote for primer, white and black paint, RESOLVED for Clerk to order at a cost of £71.49 +VAT plus delivery. Council advised 5 milestone markers in the Parish which were last restored in 2007.

INFORMATION BOARD – STOCKS – UPDATE

The Council consider the size required for the information board and RESOLVED for a 50cmx50cm board.

RESOLVED to accept JCA Graphic quote for a lectern style board to be supplied, including possible one hour artwork charge. RESOLVED for Clerk to place order, once the wording has been agreed by Sandon Hall Archive Team. RESOLVED for SJS Home and Garden to install, once received.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – UPDATE

The government has today confirmed its decision on local government reorganisation in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It will see two new unitary councils covering areas, as follows:

Unitary in South and Mid-Staffordshire - Cannock Chase, Stafford Borough, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Tamworth

Unitary in the North - Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The two new councils will replace Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's ten existing county, city, district and borough councils, and they will be responsible for delivering all council services including Waste Collections, Children's Services, Planning, Adult Social Care, Highways. Further details <https://staffordshirestokegr.org.uk/>

Council NOTED, but have concerns regarding the handover process.

26.09.0012 TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND RECEIVE PLANNING DECISIONS:

APPEAL

25/41639/PAR - Concrete Framed Barn Hollywood Farm Uttoxeter Road - Prior Approval - Conversion of redundant agricultural building to three dwellings – APPEAL

– **Planning Inspectorate Reference: 601 4547** – Appeal start date: 25.08.2026. To make any

additional comments, or modify/withdraw your previous representations, you can do so at <https://appeal-planning-decision.service.gov.uk/comment-planning-appeal/enter-appeal-reference> NOTED

26.09.0013 TO RECEIVE ORAL/WRITTEN REPORT FROM WARD BOROUGH/COUNTY COUNCILLOR
Cllr Aspin (SBC) updated Councillors on the following:

Asset Transfer Training – Monday 7th September – provided online by SPCA.

Stafford Town Centre plan – drop in sessions currently being held.

Bloor Homes – provided timeline for development: First phase finish by Spring 2027, new school by mid 2027, residential complete by 2028. Bloor Homes confirmed development name would be Sandon Gate.

Noted that a Traffic survey is in place on B5036, assuming that it is measuring weight of lorries using bridge.

Stafford Town Council – vote will be taken in 8th September SBC meeting regarding creation of a Town Council.

Planning Change – 31st October 2026 – National Delegation Scheme - planning applications will no longer be called into the Planning Committee by a Ward Councillor, instead will be subject to a Gateway Test, details of the gateway test can be found on the Government website. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/854/made>

26.09.0014 FINANCE – TO CONSIDER & AUTHORISE PAYMENTS OF LIST BELOW

Footpath maintenance – Scheme of Delegation policy used, confirmed by Cllr H Wildblood and Cllr A Hudson for Clerk to request TGM Ltd to remove vegetation from both sides of footpath (stream side/hedge verge) – quote requested 06.08.2026 - £95 +VAT – quote accepted, work to be carried out w/c 17.08.2026

SAAA – Auditor – account created for PC – 11.08.2026

VAT 126 reclaim for £372.66 sent 20.08.2026

RESOLVED to make following payments:

Ref/Cheque	Item	Amount
31/bt	SCC Speed and Volume Count on A51 Sandon	£316
32/bt	The Milestone Society – annual membership	£25
33/so	SCC Pension fund - July	£97.82
34/so	Council Administration – July	£368.23
35/so	Homeworking Allowance - July	£10
36/dd	HP Ink – July	£6.49 (inc £1.08)
37/1135	Noticeboards Cumbria – 2 noticeboards, Sandon and Burston Bus Stops	£1,565.86 (inc £260.98 VAT)

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38/dc	Post Office	£7.10
39/bt	Sandon Fete – Stall fee	£25
40/dc	Lavins Printers – Council leaflets and letters for Fete (250)	£120
41/so	SCC Pension – August	£97.82
42/so	Council Administration - August	£368.23
43/so	Homeworking allowance - August	£10
44/1136	Sandon Room, Sandon – extraordinary meeting room hire	£40
INVOICES RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA ISSUED		
1137 - VOID		
45/1138	Oak Tree Farm – replacing 5 planters with summer draught resistant flowers	£200
46/1139	TGM Ltd – grass cutting plus two extra areas of cutting	£495 (inc £82.50 VAT)
RECEIVED		
6	SCC Community Grant	£253
7	NatWest interest	£11.63

Bank Accounts		Statement date
Current Account	10,712.68	27.07.2026
Business Reserves	16,123.71	11.08.2026
	£26,836.39	
unpresented income	0.00	
unpresented cheques	£2,929.01	
	£23,907.38	

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Unpresented Cheques		
	37-1135	1,565.86
	38-dc	7.10
	39-bt	25.00
	40-dc	120.00
	41-so	97.82
	42-so	368.23
	43-so	10.00
	44-1136	40.00
	46-1139	495.00
	46-1138	200.00
	Total	£2,929.01

Receipts and Payments		
a. Opening Balance 1st April 2026		£23,711.87
b. Total Receipts		9,126.79
c. Total Payments		8,931.28
d. Suplus in year		£195.51
e. Closing Balance		£23,907.38

26.09.0015 CORRESPONDENCE

Nottingham Hepatitis C Operational Delivery Network sent details for Simon Hartley Angling Club – provided our website link for contact details.

Asset Transfer Training – SPCA – 7th September at 6.30pm – clerk to attend.

Burston Bus Stop – A resident has offered to pay for the bus stop to be painted and have ivy removed. Council to write to resident explaining Council carries out Asset refurbishment. Council NOTED that Ivy removal had been undertaken and RESOLVED to pay SJS Home and Garden invoice.

Council RESOLVED for a Thank you letter to be sent to resident.

RESOLVED for Clerk to gain a quote for painting of Burston Bus Stop to be considered in November meeting.

26.09.0016 CLERK REPORT

Oak Tree Farm - Clerk confirmed acceptance of quotation to replant the Council's 5 planters with summer draught resistant flowers. – 09.07.2026

Canal Working Group - Clerk sent details to resident who requested information – 09.07.2026

Burston Bench refurbishment – project completed on 11th July 2026 – community fund certificate on website in news area 14.07.2026. Thank you letter to Cllr A Mynors and Simon Shelley SJS Home and Garden sent 28.07.2026

Council leaflet and letter (250) ordered for Sandon Fete – 16.07.2026

The Milestone Society – membership application and fee sent 16.07.2026 – membership documents received and sent to Councillors

Noticeboards – accepted order 28.07.2026, artwork confirmed 17.08.2026

War Memorial Project – letter sent to Sandon Estate Manager. Requested update 27.08.2026

e-newsletter subscribers list updated 06.08.2026

Data Gap Analysis training provided by SCC Data Protection Team via Teams – 18.08.2026- policy additions needed, templates to be provided.

26.09.0017 COUNCILLORS REPORTS (information only)

Cllr G Wyatt and Cllr R Wildblood are booked onto free SPCA health and wellbeing training – new date October 2026.

Cllr A Greaves – reported Sandon Bus Stop structurally sound but does need paint work maintenance. RESOLVED for Clerk to gain quote.

Cllr A Greaves – reported white village entrance signs in need of cleaning (plastic). Clerk to contact TGM Ltd, as within contract.

ITEMS FOR e-NEWSLETTER – Bridge reopening, local plan comments made (rosemary letter), Sandon Fete, Burston Tea party (amount raised), information board for Stocks, Post Office opening hours (Tuesday 10am-12pm), Sandon Room – how to book and list of activities currently being held in Sandon Room.

RESOLVED to include Sandon Room activities on Parish Council website in Local Services page <https://sandonandburstonpc.org.uk/about-the-parish/local-services/>

Council discussed venue for next meeting and RESOLVED to continue at Sandon Room.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The Next Parish Council meeting will be held on 3rd November 2026 at 7pm. The meeting was formally closed at 20.59

Signed.....

Appendix A

Letter from Parish Council to PCC Church Wardens – St Rufins Church, Burston

20th August 2026

Dear Stephen Butt and Elizabeth Jarrett

All Saints and St Rufin's Church closure

I am writing to you with regards to the planned closure and sale of St Rufin's Church Burston.

Sandon and Burston Parish Council (PC) held an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on Monday 17th August 2026. The meeting was called to explore the PC response to the PCC letter informing Burston residents of their decision to close St Rufin's Church for worship from Sunday 18th October and to ask the Diocese to sell the building. The letter referenced the full report on St Rufin's that had informed the PCC's decision.

The PC meeting explored and agreed next steps on the following Agenda items:

1. The PC response to the letter issued by All Saints with St Rufin's Parochial Church Council (PCC) regarding the closure and subsequent sale of St Rufin's Church Burston
2. To consider the Parish Council's powers and duties regarding closure of St Rufin's Church Burston and actions required.

Sandon and Burston PC is made up of Councillors drawn from both Sandon and Burston. Councillors who reside in Burston declared and recorded their interests in these Agenda items as required by PC operating principles and standards of best practice.

PC concerns on the letter issued by the PCC and its contents were as follows:

- The absence of communication and consultation with the PC as well as residents of Burston was disappointing, and whilst the PC recognised that there was no legal obligation for the PCC to communicate or consult on their discussions, the lack of consultation fell short of the published Diocese's current guidance on a church that is at risk of closure which states 'the first thing to do, as early as possible, is to hold a public meeting'. The PC holds regular meetings and at no stage has the PCC approached the PC to explore how the PC could support the PCC.
- The Diocese has guidelines on its website specifically detailing how to close a church and whilst there is no formal requirement to consult where a church is not consecrated or is a mission church, it still recommends consultation as being best practice.
- The PC expressed their concerns regarding the pace at which the closure and subsequent sale was being progressed: "surely as the church has been open for some 170 years, there need be no precipitous action to close it with such short notice"?
- The PCC letter acknowledges their full awareness that their actions were likely to cause upset amongst the residents of Burston by taking their actions however they have chosen to ignore a more inclusive approach.

Sandon and Burston PC believe whilst there have been clear failures of the PCC process and associated decision making, the most important approach given the timescales and for the community of Burston, was to look forward to considering the PC response and actions required.

In the Report for Title Registration Document in 2022 (5.11.22) sets out recommendations for the future of St Rufin's Church and the PCC's decisions that St Rufin's was no longer financially viable as a place of worship. The report sets out that an approach to the future of St Rufin's could be a willingness to transfer the building to either the village of Burston or else the Parish Council of Sandon and Burston and that the agreement could be supervised by a village council, Trust or management committee or taken over by the Parish Council directly.

The PC agreed that this was to be explored further as a viable option for St Rufin's, thereby removing the financial burden of St Rufin's from the PCC but retaining the asset within the

community of Burston for its use as a community asset supporting informal worship and providing an opportunity to be used as a space for personal contemplation and reflection which would retain a connection with its former role as a place of worship. It would also be available to the passing pilgrims and walkers that have in the past sought sanctuary of whatever form on their journey.

The Parish Council is very aware of the decision by the PCC that it is their intention and desire to close St Rufin's for worship along with neighbouring churches in the Benefice.

Sandon and Burston Parish Council would like to explore jointly with the PCC in a timely manner, how a successful transfer of St Rufin's to the community under the Parish Council might be achieved in a smooth and non-confrontational way to the benefit of all concerned.

It is clearly understood by the Parish Council that there are numerous issues that impact the property, including its title, lack of services, future maintenance as well as any possible planning matters, all of which either the local residents or the Parish Council are no doubt best positioned to deal with.

If the church is closed for worship on 18th October 2026, the PC resolved to request that the PCC allow St Rufin's to remain available for the benefit of local residents and users of Two Saints Way and other visitors alike.

Sandon and Burston Parish Councillors request a meeting with the PCC and or its nominated representatives to discuss an approach to transferring the property at your earliest opportunity.

Our next Parish Council meeting is on 1st September 2026 and if we could have a response before then, it would be appreciated, as we would like to update residents within our meeting/minutes.

Kind regards

Mrs Ginny Gibson
Parish Clerk

sent on behalf of Sandon and Burston Parish Council.