



Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 12th February 2026 at 7.00pm in Bartestree Village Hall.

Minutes

Present:

Councillors: David Welton (Chair), Wendy Soilleux, Ron Williams, Siobhan Green, Jenny Karayiannis, Fiona Harris & Paul Hodges.

In Attendance:

Cllr Ivan Powell - Ward Member

5 Members of the Public.

Mr John Maddy & Val - Herefordshire Council Officers

1. To receive Apologies.

***To Note** - Apologies were received from Cllr A Thomas, Polly Smith & P Wargent.*

2. To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

***To Note** - There were no declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.*

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 20.01.26.

Resolution – The Council approved the minutes after making the amendments requested.

4. Highways Update.

The Herefordshire Council Officers presented the design plans via the screen for comments. They highlighted the following points.

- They said they hoped to start the crossing works over the school summer holidays.
- The cost of this works is going to cost about £400k.
- The next stage is to go out to tender, get a timescale for works and how the works will be due.
- The whole crossing is going to be raised.
- The Traffic Lights will work by on “Demand” so when the button is pressed the lights will change straight away.
- The drainage on both sides of the crossing will be improved and unblocked.
- The Village Hall entrance will be widened to take 2 vehicles.
- The footpath on the Right side of the crossing will be 2m wide and on the left side 1m.
- There will be dropped kerbs to make access easier.

Councillors asked the following questions.

a) The Parish Council understood the S106 money had to be spent by the 31st March 26.

This does not seem to be case, but the officers will look into it.

b) How long will the works take.

Will not know until the tenders and work plans are returned.

c) Will the whole highway be closed.

Will not know until the work plans have been received.



To Note – *The officers were thanks for their attendance and the presentation was noted by the Council.*

6. Open Session. (Brought forward for the benefit of the Ward Councillor.)

Cllr Ivan Powell (Ward Member) presented the following report.

School Streets.

Councillor Siobhan Green met the council officers on site on 27th January 2026. I met the council officers separately later that week as they were unable to make the arranged meeting at late notice due to flooding matters. We have discussed all matters raised with them and I will continue to press for next steps.

Traffic restriction orders – double yellow line markings.

I await a progress report from the highways officer which I have chased.

Road safety scheme A438.

Councillor Fiona Harris continues to lead on behalf of the parish on this work and is on the agenda for this month meeting I will continue to support Fiona and the parish where required and continue to offer to do so. The school streets visit in January 2026 did give me the opportunity to reinforce the synergy needed between the two projects.

County level strategic matters

Fair Funding Review and 2026/27 Budget Proposals

In giving an overview on the budget setting position for the council it should be understood that the funding formulae and demands assessment have been quite complex, probably easiest summarised to explain our funding outcome is that adjustments for rurality have been removed from all of the funding blocks with the exception of adult social care.

This ignores the additional costs of delivering services in a rural county including waste collection/disposal, transport costs, children's social care costs.

The allocation of funding through the Fair Funding Review has been targeted to areas of urban deprivation.

It should be noted that amongst the considerations by central government was modelling which assumed that local authorities would set the level of council tax at the maximum permitted i.e. 4.99%, in effect therefore the council tax has been set by central government.

The outcome of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 represents a total reduction in the council's allocation of funding from central government of £17.3 million over the multi-year settlement period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This reduction in funding compounds the pressures faced by the council and increases the challenge of maintaining delivery of services to residents in a rural county. As a reminder I have previously reported on the removal of the £7 million rural services grant by government last year 2024-25 which previously recognised the additional cost of delivering services in a rural authority area.

Estimates of the council's spending power reported by central government suggest an increase in our 'spending power' of £13.4m over the period to 28/29. The increase in the council's spending power is attributable to increases in locally raised council tax with an increase of £30.7m expected to 28/29 offset by reduced central government funding of £17.3m over the same period.

The proposed budget for 2026/27 ensures that the budget allocations across council departments are sufficient to meet the costs of service delivery; with £20.0m savings proposals identified to across 4 key themes: managing demand, increasing income, controlling costs and delivering efficiencies.

In-year performance against budget (2025/26)

Our revenue budget position for the year 2025/26 reports a forecast variance from budget of £7.0 million (3.0% of net budget), before action which is expected to reduce

the forecast overspend to £3.7 million by 31 March 2026.

The overspend includes in-year cost pressures of £5.6 million due to increases in client demand and complexity of care across adult social care budgets and increases in demand for temporary accommodation in the Community Wellbeing Directorate, pressures in public transport subsidised routes in the Economy & Environment Directorate and continuing budget pressures in SEND and Home to School Transport costs. In addition, £1.4 million projected savings targets brought forward from 2024/25 which were assessed as 'at risk'.

Expenditure controls are in place to manage spend to ensure we deliver services within the approved budget for 2025/26. These controls will continue into 2026/27 as the council seeks to manage future reductions in funding from central government.

Delivery of Savings.

Council approved a total of £3.9 million of savings for 2025/26 comprising targets in the Children & Young People Directorate aligned to refresh of the 3 Year Financial Plan. Savings of £11.9 million not delivered recurrently in 2024/25 were carried forward into 2025/26 and a review of the original proposals and planned activity was carried out to develop revised savings plans, where appropriate, to confirm activity to deliver savings in 2025/26. A total of £15.8 million savings has been monitored for delivery throughout 2025/26.

The delivery of savings at a time of increasing demand and budget pressures remains a significant challenge for the council.

The Quarter 2 2025/26 Budget Report presented to Cabinet in November 2025 reports forecast delivery of £14.4 million (£8.0 million delivered at Quarter 2 and £6.4 million in progress/on target for delivery) with the balance of £1.4 million assessed as 'at risk'. Whilst work continues over the remainder of the financial year to maximise delivery of these savings or identify mitigations, the delivery of recurrent savings, in full and on time, is critical to ensuring a balanced revenue outturn position to prevent risk to the council's reserves and pressure on future years' budgets.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

The cumulative DSG deficit is accounted for as an unusable reserve on the council's Balance Sheet, as permitted via statutory instrument, which will remain in place until 31 March 2028. This enables all local authorities to ring-fence the DSG deficit from the overall financial position in the statutory accounts.

Herefordshire, like many other local authorities, continues to experience increases in demand which are not met by corresponding increases in funding and the number of authorities with significant DSG deficits is increasing. This remains a significant risk for the council with a forecast deficit at Q2 of 2025/26 of £17.5 million within the High Needs block of the DSG; increasing the cumulative deficit to £37.5 million by 31 March 2026.

Very recent announcements from government indicate the government will cover payment of 90% of this deficit but we await the fine detail.

The council and partners are already coproducing with the Department of Education our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities reform plan.

In summary conclusion the council is working extremely hard within its budget setting and annual delivery processes to manage and meet that budget, against a backdrop of current government policy which favours urban areas as opposed to rural areas and it would be fair to say these are very challenging times.

To Note – The Council noted the Ward Member's report.

Members of Public.

Q1. A member of the Village Hall committee said that the Hall did not need a TV licence, and a refund will be made to the Parish Council.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

5. To approve a Co-Option.

Mrs Victoria Whittall

Mr Benjamin Pardoe

Both the candidates had already filled in a co-option form which each Councillor had received a copy, but the Chair asked both candidates to interduce themselves, which they did.

The Chair said the vote will be via a secret ballot.

Resolution – *Following the ballot, Mr Benjamin Pardoe was successful and duly signed the acceptance of office and given a declaration of Interest form.*

Two members of the public left the meeting.

6. Financial Matters.

7.1 - Unity Bank Main Statement.

a) Jan 26 - £3,494.97

7.2 - Unity Bank Saver Statement.

a) Jan 26 - £212,027.20

Resolution – *The Bank balances were noted by the Council.*

7.3 - Budget Monitoring.

a) Jan 26

Resolution – *The Council approved the Budget Monitoring for January 26.*

7.4 - Bank Reconciliation.

a) Jan 26

Resolution – *The Council approved the Bank Reconciliation for January 26.*

7.5 - Monthly Bank Transactions.

a) Jan 26

Resolution – *The Council approved the Monthly Bank Transactions for January 26.*

7. Payments.

	Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	Clerk Salary - Tax & NI – Feb 26	As per Contract		
8.2	HALC – Subscriptions 26/27	1620.38	324.08	1944.46
8.3	Daniel Squire – 78881 – Ash Trees	1800.00	360.00	2160.00
8.4	Wyevale Nursery – Trees Glebeland	£452.64	?	?
8.5	A Williams – Tree Planting	£154	?	?

Resolution – *The Council approved for all the invoices to be paid.*

8. Working Group Reports.

9.1 - Christopher Gibbon Field.

Cllr S Green reported that there had been no official meeting, but things were still progressing and highlighted the following.

- A design was currently being drawn up so the planning permission could be submitted.
- Council needs to decide which trees they would like planted on the field.

Councillors asked the following questions.

- The trees need to be carefully considered
- Any planning permission needs to come before Council before it is submitted.

Cllr P Hodges said that the trees should be things like flowering cherries, apple or pear, ideally the fruit should be of the edible variety.

Cllr W Soilleux proposed and Cllr P Hodges seconded a motion that the trees should be Apple & Pear dwarf stock.

Resolution – *The Council approved by Council.*

Cllr W Soilleux proposed and Cllr P Hodges seconded a motion that the planning permission should come back to Council before it is submitted.

Resolution – *The Council approved by Council.*

9.2 - Highways & Infrastructure.

Cllr F Harris reported that following the presentation by the Herefordshire Council Officers which was different to conversation previously had by Cllr F Harris and other officers of the Herefordshire Council. Cllr F Harris said that she will be arranging to meet with Herefordshire Council Officers to discuss and clarify the passion.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council, and they look forward to receiving the information.*

9.3 - Environment.

a) Recycle Bin

The Clerk reported that following the constructive concerns of some Councillors, on the size and usage of the bin the Clerk felt that this needs to come back to Council for agreement.

Resolution – *Council approved the purchase of a new recycle bin with a double compartment for the blister packs and a single compartment for foil.*

9.4 - Play Areas.

Cllr W Soilleux said that there had been no changes and therefore no report.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

9.5 - Finance & Admin.

The Clerk reported that there had been no meeting but there will be one before the end of the financial year.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

9.6 - Communications.

Cllr D Welton reported that there had been no meeting due to not finding a date when everyone could meet.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

9.7 - Land & Building Working Group

Cllr D Welton presented the following report.

Present: Dom Robertson, Jonathan Jackson, Jenny Karayiannis, Wendy Soilleux, David Welton (Group Co-ordinator).

Apologies: Richard James (PC Clk), Yvonne Robertson

Discussion Points:

1. Confidentiality within the group is paramount, and its work must not be discussed with outside organisations or individuals not active members of the Working Group.

On legal advice, endorsed by HALC, the original letters between the Solicitor and the Parish Council will remain confidential and not shared. It is noted that members of the Village Hall Committee were disappointed with this decision.

2. Notwithstanding the above, in the interests of clarity, the latest advice and opinion on the options being considered by the Working Group were circulated and discussed (serial 6-8 refers).

3. Discussion of Land and Buildings issues:

The Working Group resolved to classify the Parish Assets under two Option headings:

a. Option 1: Green Areas that cover pitches, fields and non-developed estate, further resolving to manage these with a lease offered by the Parish Council to the PFA.

b. Option 2: Built Estate that covers the Village Hall and car park, and the Cricket Pavilion. This second option has two sub-options for management purposes.

4. The working Group further resolve that there are two sub-options under Option 2, which will be the focus of the recommendations to be made to the Parish Council.

i. Option 2a Lease: Village Hall Committee takes on a lease for the full management, maintenance and other liabilities for the Village Hall, less the carpark and play area.

ii. Option 2b Transfer: Transfer the ownership of the Village Hall, less any playing fields (blue land), to the Village Hall Committee. This option includes the relinquishment of the Village Hall committee's beneficiary status to the Parish Council for the cricket pavilion and cricket pitch area (red land).

5. Before making recommendations to the Parish Council, the Working Group felt that these sub-options should be referred to the Parish Land and Buildings Solicitor (Lamb Corner) for opinion and advice, and a response was received from them on 2nd January 2026.

6. The opinion and advice received were supportive of lease action for all Option 1 and Option 2a assets. This reflects and represents the simplest route, given the previous opinion and advice on ownership of all assets. The advice also reflects on the Parish Council's legal duty of care to the parishioners they represent.

7. The advice goes on to note that leases are the correct mechanism for governing in detail how land is operated, especially where the parish is

going to continue to have a vested interest for its parishioners. Transferring ownership of current Parish assets under Option 2b does not fulfil the duty of care responsibility or allow the exercise of a vested interest by the Parish Council and may attract adverse criticism from parishioners.

8. The Working Group have also sought advice from the solicitor in terms of steps that can be taken to protect the land assets from development, and this is still awaited.
9. Additionally, the Working Group wish to pursue the full legal definition of Trusteeship in terms of classification and the duties and responsibilities therein. This is specific to the title of the Cricket pitch and pavilion only. This later issue of Trusteeship status will be instructed to the solicitor shortly.
10. Insurance indemnity and liability implications: Current arrangements were discussed.
The Village Hall is currently covered; however, the Pavilion may require a survey for insurance purposes to ensure the correct level of cover is in place.
11. Charities Commission; advice has been sought by the Village Hall Committee as to the current status and any corrective action in respect of the Village Hall.
12. AOB. None.
13. Date of Next Meeting: TBC

To Note – This report was noted by the Council.

!0. Planning.

10.1 - Planning Report & Minutes

Cllr W Soilleux presented the following report.

Members: Paul Hodges, Jenny Karayiannis, Wendy Soilleux, Paul Wargent, David Welton.

Planning Committee Comments based on visits to three properties by our Tree Officer:

1.Application: P260072/K: Braemar, Lugwardine HR1 4AE.

Works to trees in a conservation area:

T1. Fraxinus excelsior (Common Ash) –Evidence of Ash Dieback & dropping branches.

Works - remove canopy of tree and replace with new oak, set further in to the garden.

T2 Quercus robur (English Oak). – overhang risks.

Works - reduce the canopy by around 20-25%, with a view to repeating the process on a 3-5year cycle-depending of the tree's response.

Parish Council Comments:

Application supported as work is to be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon and trees to be managed or replaced & managed.

2. Planning Application: P260114/K: Kiawah, Lugwardine HR1 4AE.

Works to trees in a conservation area:

T1 - Lawsons Cypress (Chamaecyparis lawsoniana) – remove and replace tree due to shade issues and risk from multi-stems.

Parish Council Comments:

Application supported as work is to be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon and tree is to be replaced & managed.

3. Planning Application: P260127/K: 12 St. Peter's Close, Lugwardine HR1 4AT.

Works to trees in a conservation area: Crown reduction to a larger maple tree in the corner of the garden where it borders the main road.

Parish Council Comments:

Application supported provided that the work is carried out by a qualified tree surgeon as it would prevent branches falling into the footway and the A438 road.

Decisions by Herefordshire Council:

Application P253435/FH: The Cannisters, Bartestree HR1 4DD.

Extension with associated demolitions and internal alterations.
Application approved with conditions.

Application P241620/L: Longworth Hall Hotel, Lugwardine HR1 4DF.

Listed Building Consent to clean and replace damaged section of rear elevation external brickwork where damaged or spalled.
Application approved with conditions.

Application P252809/FH: Monks Orchard, Lumber Lane, Lugwardine HR1 4AG. Alterations and extensions. Application approved with conditions.

Application to be considered by the Parish Council:

P260177/FH: Tower View, Lumber Lane, Lugwardine HR1 4AG.

Provision of tarmac to extend parking area.

Resolution – *The Bartestree with Lugwardine Parish Council SUPPORTS this application.*

To Note – *This report was noted by the Council.*

10.2 NPPF Consultation.

Cllr. Soilleux agreed to circulate comments for consideration by all councillors so that agreed opinion can be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council.

11. Other Reports.

11.1 - Lengthsman.

a) New Possible Lengthsman

Cllr P Hodges said that he had found a gentleman who was interested in becoming the Parish Lengthsman.

Resolution – *Council approved for the lengthsman to work for the Council on a self-employed basis. The Clerk would write a suitable contract along with a schedule of works.*

11.2 - PROW.

a) Footpaths Officers Register.

The Clerk reported that the Herefordshire Council is going to hold a Footpaths Officers' Register and look at

b) Footpath Detail Plan.

The Clerk said it would be a major project, but it would be most useful if the whole Public Rights of Way network was mapped, where all stiles, gates and bridges were recorded along with their “What3Word” location.

c) Plan of Works for 26/27

The Clerk reported that we need to start and get a detail plan of works, with pictures of the problems and the “What3Word” location, as the PROW repair grants will not last forever.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

11.3 - Tree Warden.

Cllr P Hodges reported that the trees had now been planted on the Glebe Land and stakes and guards had been fitted.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

11.4 - Blister Packs

The Clerk read out a short report from Cllr P Smith, which showed concerns about the other items being put into the blister pack containers, from tin foil rubbish, part full pill packs, general bathroom rubbish and some downright yucky things.

Reports had got back to Cllr P Smith that other Parishes were now bring their empty blister packs to our Parish.

Also, Cllr P Smith, said due to her health she would very much welcome some help with the emptying.

To Note – *Council said that at a previous meeting it was agreed that Cllrs Hodges and Harris would help with the emptying.*

11.5 - Drainage

Cllr W Soilleux reported that

Wye Water Services will be carrying out the drainage works in Blackhole Lane and Cotts Lane before the end of February as per the drainage grant obtained from Herefordshire Council.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

12. Parish Matters.

12.1 - Safer Routes for Schools.

Cllr S Green reported that there had been a few issues with the safer routes to school. The parking around the surrounding streets was nothing but a nightmare with residents not being able to get out of their driveways. Enforcement Officers are making the issue worse by telling bad drivers and illegally parked drivers that they will not ticket them due to possible bad publicity. The scheme needs to include the whole of Barneby Avenue and Burdon Drive.

To Note – *This was noted by the council and were not overly impressed, and supported Cllr S Green in her actions to get the situation improved.*

12.2 - Parking and Speed on Burdon Drive

Cllr R Williams, said he had received several complaints about the bad parking and speeding in Burdon Drive, mainly caused by the safer routes to school's programme. This had been highlighted in the early days when the safer routes to schools was being discussed, and assurances were given that this would not be an issue as there would be traffic enforcement present.

To Note – *This was noted by the council, which felt that a more proactive approach was needed to resolve these issues and if this mean issuing parking tickets so be it.*

12.3 - Wilcroft Park Entrance

Cllr R Williams reported that the entrance of Wilcroft Park was now back into a dangerous condition, the patching work which was done last year was poorly done and within weeks the potholes had returned even worse, now with loose gravel in the surface. Anyone on a motorbike or pedal cycle is in great danger.

To Note – *Council acknowledged this is an ongoing problem, and the whole entrance needs resurfacing. The Clerk will contact the Locality Steward and the Ward Member.*

12.4 - Wilcroft Lane – Unadopted Road

The Clerk had received a request from a resident of Wilcroft Lane about the condition of this lane and would the Parish Council consider contributing to the cost of having it resurfaced at a total cost of £17k.

To Note – *The Council after some discussion said that this was an unadopted road and was the sole responsibility of the residents who live in this lane.*

12.5 - Annual Dates – (Amended)

The Clerk said that due to some working groups struggling to arrange meetings, it may be a good idea to have a diary where the dates were set for the year, so Cllrs and members could programme the dates into their diaries.

Resolution – *The Council approved the Annual dates.*

12.6 - Large Pothole Stall Lane

The Clerk reported that he had received a complaint about a large pothole in Stalls Lane. The Clerk said he had contacted the Council contractor to get the pothole filled un the Clerks emergency powers.

A member of the public in the gallery said that there was also a pothole in the Village Hall Carpark as you drive in which needs attention and as the carpark is owned by the Parish Council, they are responsible.

Resolution – *The Council ratified approved the Clerks decision under his emergency power and asked the Clerk to get the contractor to fill the pothole in the Village Hall carpark.*

12.7 - Change the Name of the Playing Fields to “Nigel Shore Playing Fields”

There had been a request from the Playing Fields Committee for the name of the Playing Fields to changed to reflect the dedication of the late Nigel Shore.

Resolution – *A Majority of Councillors supported ~~this request~~ and approved the request.*

12.8 - Flood Equipment Storage

The Council has now picked up its flood defence equipment, it is presently stored in the Parish Council office, which is clearly not ideal as this equipment needs to be accessed 24/7. Cllr F Harris said that they had a steel lockable container they would be happy to donate to the Parish Council.

After some discussion it was agreed to site this container at the back of the Parish Office out of sight but available 24/7.

Resolution – *The Council approved this location and thanked Cllr F Harris for her donation.*

12.9 - Flood Officer/s.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council needs to appoint Flood Officer/s for the Parish.

Resolution – *The Council approved the appointment of Cllrs F Harris and J Karayiannis.*

12.10 - Disposal of Assets

a) Old Laptop

b) Cannon Printer

The Clerk asked the Council if it was possible to dispose of the old laptop once the information is taken off it and the hard drive destroyed. The printer is also old and is not Wi-Fi compliant and the ink is expensive.

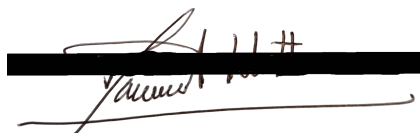
Resolution – *Council approved the disposal of these assets.*

13. Future Agenda Items.

Apology from Cllr. P Wargent for the March Meeting.

*Date of next Council Meeting **12th March 2026 at 7pm.***

The meeting closed at 9:25pm



Signed:

Chair of the Parish Council

Dated: 12th March 2026