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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held
Wednesday, 12th March, 7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs M Barber-Starkey (in the Chair); A Hope; S Cotton; E Jefferson; J Baldwin; E Thomas

In attendance: Rachel Freestone - Clerk
Barry Durkin – Ward Member
David Beckett – Footpaths Officer

Public: 6

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence:

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs T Weston, D Griffiths and F Powell

2. To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items.

There were none.

3. Open Session:

a. To receive a report from the Ward Councillor:

Ward Member Durkin provided headlines from his March Ward report which can be found on the website. Herefordshire Council Tax is 4.99% this year, higher than anticipated as the government have removed the Rural Sparsity Grant. Work has commenced on the new fire station for Hereford which is due for completion in 2027, the new Crown Court in the city is now open. Work on the Hereford Local Plan has been halted due to the government increase in housing targets to 27260 from 16000. Aviation Flu has return to the area and all birds must be housed, there has been a case in Fownhope. The council continue to invest additional funds towards road improvements.

A member of the public asked whether Housing Needs Analysis is completed as there are unsold houses in the area? Ward Member Durkin replied that it is but this is now not relevant due to the increased targets. A member of the public added that the area needs 2 and 3 bedroom houses and affordable homes.

b. To receive representations from the public:

A member of the public referred to Agenda Item 4 and the minutes of the last meeting and thanked members for their attendance at the Local Mapping training session. With regards to Agenda Item 8, he thanked members for their use of the NDP to lodge an objection to the PIP. He added that with regards to Agenda Item 10 he recommended that members refer to the Met Office UK Climate Projections (UKCP), a set of tools and data that shows how the UK climate may change in the future. He gave apologies for the community litter pick but had been out and collected some litter that day observing that there are obvious repeat offenders.

Representatives from the Community Shop informed members that they are currently focussing on fundraising and the fete. There will be an Easter Bingo event held in the Memorial Hall. The fete will be organised by Community Shop fundraisers but other organisations will be involved fundraising for themselves. The number of Shareholders continues to increase and now stands at 264.

A member of the public referred to Agenda item 8; objections had been sent and relieved that the pc objected also. The parish council Biodiversity policy had been read and she questioned what the pc is doing with regards to light pollution with Glebe Orchard having two bright lights and Westons being very bright and can't see the night sky. This item to be added to the Agenda for the next meeting.

Members agreed to bring forward Agenda Item 10d.

7.58pm member of the public left.

4. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 8th January 2025. It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record. They were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Much Marcle Memorial Hall:

a. Cllr Baldwin reported that the Memorial Hall roof is still to be fixed and this was in hand.

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6. Highways:

- a. The Chair invited Alan Brace to report on behalf of the Community Speedwatch Group. He informed members that 9 volunteers were trained. The sessions made a difference and could see cars slowing, the top speed was 55mph through the 40 zone. Signs are placed when the Speedwatch Group are in position. Motorists receive a standard letter if get caught speeding (10% +2). If caught three times a police response and if 20mph above the limit is police response and a fine. The group would like to operate in other positions in the village and he will speak to Kirsten Kysow (PCSO).
- b. Cllr Barber-Starkey provided an update on the progress of SIDS in Cllr Powells absence. Several models of SIDS have been researched and a number of locations in the parish considered. He explained that information received costs Balfour Beatty location analysis at £490 per location, this cost is being queried and yet to receive a response. Ward Member Durkin added that the locations have to be approved, there may be a grant available to help with the costs. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer this item pending clarification on costs.
- c. Members considered the parishioner email on the need for more and cleaner 30mph signs through the village. It was agreed that the signs can be cleaned during the Spring clean/Litter Pick. Ward member Durkin informed that there are regulations on the distance between signs. HCC Highways specify the distances and repeater signs.
- d. Members considered the positions of grit bins following the receipt of the maps from Balfour Beatty. Cllr Barber-Starkey informed that Cllr Powell had checked each grit bin to see if in situ and the condition they are in. There are a number of broken ones. A member commented that the Sunnybank area needs one as always ice there. Ward Member Durkin informed members that there will be an audit of all bins shortly where Balfour Beatty will be instructed to report on broken bins and to make sure they are in the right place. He would expect parish councils to be involved in the audit. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer pending the results and actions from the audit.
- e. Members were informed that Cllr Powell continues to report potholes and is frustrated as many have not been completed. The Locality Steward has been on long term sick leave but back operational now. Ward Member Durkin added that there will be a new initiative where all pot holes in an area will be filled where one reported.

7. Footpaths:

- a. Footpaths Officer David Beckett reported on the Footpath Regeneration Project (Report Attached). HCC charge for the abutments is yet to be received. Cllr Barber – Starkey reported that alongside the Footpaths Officer a footpaths information and feature map similar to the style of the Dymock Walks map is being considered which will outline the parish's footpath features & self-closing gate walks. A quote has been received from Newman Designs to complete the map for £250 with printing at an additional cost. The aim is for the map to be on the website and printed for distribution at local venues. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the design of the map.

8. Planning:

- a. Members commented on the following Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
 - 250515 Serendipity House Single storey extension. **It was RESOLVED:** SUPPORT.
 - 250518 The Bounds, proposed variation of conditions of planning permissions 223195. **It was RESOLVED:** no further comment required.
 - 250479 Oakfields, proposed extension and alterations. **It was RESOLVED:** SUPPORT
- b. Members NOTED the following Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
 - 250540 – Permission in Principle, Dymock Road. – OBJECT. Cllr Baldwin explained the PIP (Permission in Principle). Is the site suitable in principle, is not about building shape or size and can not comment on these aspects at this stage. The details come later. The parish council commented with reference to Biodiversity as the plot is in a traditional orchard.
- c. Members NOTED the following Planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
 - 243157 Caerswell Farm Listed Building Consent – REFUSED
 - 242396 Hardwick Oaks vehicular access – APPROVED with CONDITIONS
 - 242866 Pound Cottage, replacement outbuilding APPROVED with CONDITIONS

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- 230691 Dobbins Pitch APPROVED with CONDITIONS

9. Assets:

- Cllr Thomas reported that the vegetation around the bus shelter has been cut and it will be sprayed. Members were asked whether preference is to re-tile or use a more modern method to waterproof it? **It was RESOLVED:** to replace the tiles as more aesthetically pleasing.
8.40pm Ward Member Barry Durkin left
- Cllr Hope reported that the trees at Bartons Field are in a satisfactory condition following the recent storms. The inspector had observed that the hinges on the Bartons gate need reversing or welding to prevent theft. **It was RESOLVED:** To arrange for them to be welded.
- Members NOTED the reply sent to Place Group (company formalising the Primary School Academy status) stating their responsibilities at Bartons Field. The letter states that the trees are the school responsibility and the parish council currently inspect them? **It was RESOLVED:** The Clerk to request copies of any tree inspections once the school joins the Academy.
8.45pm member of public left.
- Members considered the request for a fete and dog show to be held on The Bartons on either 26th or 27th July in aid of the Community Shop. A member of the public explained that a Dog Show will be the main event. **It was RESOLVED:** to give permission as long as dog mess is picked up. A member asked if this will be an annual event? They hope to alternate between Open Gardens and a fete.

10. Environment and Community:

- Members NOTED the Community Litter Pick/ Spring Tidy to take place on the 29th March with a 10am meet in both Much Marcle and Rushall.
- Members considered a Flooding Working Group to address this specific problem in the parish. **It was RESOLVED:** Cllr Cotton to Chair with a number of local parishioners engaged to help. Cllr Barber-Starkey reported on the sources of the flooding with accumulation by the crossroads. They have looked at solutions to alleviate the problems. Cllr Cotton is in contact with HCC to access funding opportunities.
- To receive a report from the Environment Working Group on flooding findings to date. As Item 10b. Agenda Item 10d addressed following item 3b at 19.58
- Members NOTED Cllr Baldwins and the Clerks attendance at the Local Nature Recovery Mapping Webinar. Cllr Baldwin reported that this is a national project that HCC have taken up. A draft map (which identifies categories such as ancient orchards) has been published with priorities for nature recovery. The pc have been asked to comment for accuracy. The map is not easy and feedback is not a simple process, Cllr Baldwin is still awaiting a satisfactory response to a question. Cllr Barber-Starkey added that there are no co-ordinates or ways to create an outline of an area. The different layers are good but there is no definition for each layer.
A member of the public commented that multiple data sources have been used which has led to errors. He would be able to provide contact details of the lead officer to us if required and asked for the pc to reflect on the current Defra framework for their policy direction and the Environmental Improvement Plan.
- Members considered 1 or 2 cuts of the verges in 2025. **It was RESOLVED:** to authorise 2 cuts at the moment but will need to review for the Biodiversity Action Plan in the future.

11. Finance

- Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for January and February 2025. Cllr Baldwin as a non-bank signatory duly checked and signed the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- Members NOTED the financial internal controls review by Cllr Baldwin on 5th March, check of all invoices, bank statements and regular payments with no amendments or comment.
9pm member of the public left
- Members considered the Risk Assessment for any changes over the last financial year. **It was RESOLVED:** no amendments required.
- Members considered the Le Barroux Grant request from the primary school for £1062 net which is higher than the estimate provided due to a better alternative scheme of work being sourced. **It was RESOLVED:** to provide a grant for the full amount and request an annual progress report.
- Members NOTED the increase in the ICO subscription fee from £35 to £47 due by DD on the 26th March.

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- f. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the following invoices for payment:
- Clerk's Expenses Microsoft Licence and litter hoops £63.79net/£76.55gr
 - HALC Annual Affiliation Fee £657.70net/£789.24gr
 - MMMH Hall Hire January £15
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the following regular payments made between meetings:
- Clerk Salary December, January, February As per contract
 - Unity Bank Service Charges 31.01.25 £6
- h. Members NOTED no other payments made between meetings
- i. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the payment made from the Awards for All Footpath Grant:
- Ultimate One Limited Footbridge anti-slip wire £114.45net/£137.34gr
- j. Members NOTED income received:
- HCC Bartons Rental £75.00
- k. Members NOTED the virements made between Unity Accounts:
- Instant access to current total £1000
- A member of the public asked if we have we received a grant yet from the Hills Ford Rally? No but not requested one. Suggest that the Community Shop make their own request.*

12. Training:

- a. Members NOTED no training had been undertaken but will keep monitoring.

13. Diary Dates:

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** To light the beacon to mark VE Day 80, 9.30pm on the 8th May 2025. Cllr Hope to talk to the Walwyn Arms to suggest they provide food as before.
- b. Members NOTED the Annual Parish Meeting agreed for the 16th April 2025 from 7pm. **It was RESOLVED:** no refreshments.
- c. Members considered the meeting dates for 2025/26 as 14th May, 9th July, 10th September, 12th November, 14th January and 11th March. The Clerk to contact MMMH to change 9th July to 2nd July.
- d. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Clerks request for annual leave the weeks commencing the 19th and 26th May and 1st September.

14. Members NOTED the following Correspondence:

- Next Parish Summit is Tuesday 8th April 5.30pm-9pm.
- To note the Hills Ford Stages information sessions at The Royal Oak, Much Marcle on 5th April 2-4pm and 5-7pm.

15. To consider items for the next meeting – no discussion.

Light Pollution, Bin outside Walwyn Arms, SIDS.

- 16. Next Meeting:** Members NOTED that the next meeting of Much Marcle Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 14th May in Much Marcle Memorial Hall. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on the 16th April at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall.

Signed:*Mike Barber-Starkey*..... Date:.....14.05.25
Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.12pm

Approved Minutes - Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 12th March 2025

Footpath Office Report – March 12th 2025

All footbridges on the MM3 circular walk now have a steel mesh to help reduce slips in wet conditions. The footbridge from the cricket pitch to Watery Lane has also had mesh applied and we are looking at ways to install a single sided handrail.

The footbridge on MM23-PT13 at Kynaston has finally been installed, an article has been sent to the Mercury. Hopefully the footbridge on MM16-AL1 will be installed soon, subject to ground conditions.

The 2nd circular stile free walk proposal for the Sheep Wash – Shire Hill walk has been approved by Hellen Thomas.

Following an email ref John Smart, Ross Walkers are Welcome contact was made. John represents ANOB, working on a 51 self-closing gate project from Much Birch to Marcle ridge. Following John's request, a survey was made on MM10 from Cherry Orchard to Marcle ridge to check for suitability of installing additional self-closing gates. Land owner permission has been agreed verbally which has secured 3 self-closing gates on MM10, which are to be installed by ANOB going forward.