

04/25-26

MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on,
Wednesday, 14th May 2025
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs M Barber-Starkey (in the Chair), A Hope, E Thomas, S Cotton, J Baldwin, F Powell, T Weston, E Jefferson

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

Public: 7

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for 2025/26:

Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey opened the meeting and requested nominations for the position of Chair for the forthcoming year. Cllr Barber-Starkey was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Cllr Barber-Starkey duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received and accepted from Councillor David Griffiths.

3. To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation:

There was none.

4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2025/26:

Cllr Alison Hope was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Cllr Hope signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5. To adopt the General Power of Competence with criteria met of 2/3 councillors elected and a CiLCA qualified clerk: Members considered and agreed that the Parish Council met the criteria for eligibility. **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt the General Power of Competence.

6. Minutes: Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 12th March 2025. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

7. Open session:

a. To receive the Ward Members report:

Ward Member Barry Durkin gave the headlines from his Ward Report for May. He reflected on the loss of his colleague Cllr Phil Cutter. He also reflected on VE Day 80 on the 8th May and the bravery shown. A Parish Council Summit meeting was held last week with the objective to put together a Parish Council Charter. Small Electrical appliances, bagged and left on top of bins will be disposed of with the normal refuse collection, batteries need to be removed. The new library housed in Shire Hall will be open from Autumn 2026. He commented on the success of The Little Princess Trust. In 2024/25 £8 million was invested in resurfacing the roads. This year, HCC are investing £13.5 million so hopes that everyone will see an improvement. Food waste and garden refuse collection will hopefully commence from March 2026, funded by central government. Please see his full Ward report found on the Much Marcle Parish Council website under Ward reports. *A member asked how soon will we be informed of the roads to be resurfaced.* Very soon. Hopes to get local parish councils more involved in the decision making process.

b. To receive representations from the public:

A member of the public referred to Agenda item 9, Hills Ford Rally. *Why is it in Herefordshire and not Gloucestershire?* There are also stages in Gloucestershire. *Who benefits from the Hills Ford Rally?* Ward Member Barry Durkin offered to respond to the questions commenting that revenue to local hospitality venues increases. *A member of the public added that last year the Rally had said that they would give a donation to the Community Shop and it never appeared. A member of the public further questioned who passes the road closures, how is the licence granted and how are the public informed? Legally, how can people be forced to stay at home during the rally?* Hills Ford apply to Motorsports Uk for a licence which is

05/25-26

the legal side. They then approach the County Councils and inform of the roads that they would like closed. In his view this is the wrong way around, they should approach the County Councils ahead of Motorsport UK. The Delegated Officer then looks after the road closures. Hills Ford Representatives attend locally to speak to parish councils and local residents. Hills Ford now appreciate that they need to speak to local County Councils prior to applying for a licence from Motorsport UK. HART was badly affected last year and this year participants have been consulted and he has been told they are content, if anyone knows differently then please let him know. Members then moved to Item 9.

8. **Attendance:** Members NOTED the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2024-25.
9. **Hills Ford Rally:** Members considered the Hills Ford Rally and the letter received from HCC asking for parishioner comments. Ward Member Barry Durkin informed members that he has sent a letter to each parish council affected, members confirmed receipt. The letter asks for parishioners to be contacted and find out how many want/do not want the event and to provide comments. There will also be a social media campaign to ask for public responses to be sent to the Parish Clerks by the 26th May. *A member of the public commented that a large proportion of the public are not on social media so how will it reach them? HCC would write directly to households for a planning application so why not for this?* Hills Ford Stages have written to households affected along the proposed route. *A member of the public commented that people have been missed. Member of the public, who is benefitting again as the consultation is wasting parish council resources. What about Health and Safety?* Health and Safety is dealt with by Hills Ford Rally. *The noise levels are above what is safe. There is no plan as there is no route advertised currently.* Cllr Baldwin commented that it is the single biggest hiring income for the MMMH. *Member of the public commented that Hills Ford have suggested that it would have a European aspect next year.* The Chair thanked the members of the public for attending and raising their questions. **It was RESOLVED:** Cllrs Baldwin, Barber-Starkey and A Hope to collect household responses and send to Ward Member Durkin by the 26th May.

20.13 Ward Member Barry Durkin and 2 members of the public left the meeting.
Agenda item 8 was addressed before moving to item 10.

10. To review the following policies for Much Marcle Parish Council:

- a. Code of Conduct. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Code of Conduct for 2025/26
- b. Financial Regulations. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Financial Regulations with the 2025 amendment.
- c. Standing Orders. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Standing Orders with the 2025 amendment.
- d. Risk Register. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer for the Finance Working Group to consider.
- e. Risk Management Policy. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer for the Finance Working Group to consider.
- f. Reserves Policy. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Reserves Policy for 2025/26.
- g. Members agreed to comply with the transparency code.
- h. The Clerk reminded councillors of the self-disqualification law.

11. To appoint Members to serve on Working Groups:

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Councillors as follows:

- a. Finance and Staffing – Cllrs M Barber-Starkey; A Hope; E Jefferson and J Baldwin. Cllr Hope to lead.
- b. Planning – Cllrs T Weston; J Baldwin; E Jefferson; E Thomas. Cllr T Weston to lead.
- c. Highways – Cllrs F Powell and S Cotton. Cllr F Powell to lead.
- d. Footpaths – Cllr J Baldwin alongside the Footpath Officer.
- e. Environment and Community (to add Flooding to this group) – Cllrs S Cotton and E Thomas. Cllr S Cotton to lead.
- f. Flooding – added to the Environment and Community Working Groups responsibilities.

12. To Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies:

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint Cllr Julian Baldwin as the Much Marcle Memorial Hall representative. Cllr Baldwin reminded the meeting of the requirement to appoint a representative to the Much Marcle Community Fund Assessment Panel.
It was RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Baldwin as the representative to the Assessment Panel.

06/25-26

13. Assets:

- a. **Asset Register:** Cllr Barber-Starkey recommended that the printer be removed as it is no longer in use. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the Asset Register with the removal of the printer.
- b. Members considered the Health and Safety Inspection of assets for 2025/26 and how to report over the coming year. **It was RESOLVED:** for the Finance Working Group to create a schedule of inspection.

14. Finance:

- a. Members NOTED the End of Year budget versus actuals, bank reconciliation and bank balances with a total £34976.39.
- b. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for March and April 2025 of £40616.79. Cllr Baldwin as a non-bank signatory duly checked and signed the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- c. Members NOTED the HALC internal audit report for 2024-25 not yet completed and that an extra meeting will be required in June to complete the statutory obligations. **It was RESOLVED:** to hold an extra meeting on Wednesday 18th June. The Clerk to book the Hall.
- d. Members NOTED the dates for the Notice of Public Rights as 3rd June to 14th July with the notice being available to view on the website and noticeboard.
- e. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the list of payments made over £100 for 2024-25.
- f. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the summary of regular payments for 2024-25.
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the VAT claim for 2024-25 as £1792.17 to be submitted to HMRC via a 126 form.
- h. **It was RESOLVED:** To appoint HALC as the competent internal auditor external to the council for 2025-26.
- i. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the use of the “payments and receipts” accounting method for 2025-26.
- j. Members considered the Unity Bank signatories. **It was RESOLVED:** to confirm Cllrs M Barber-Starkey, A Hope and F Powell as signatories.
- k. Members NOTED the insurance provision for 2025-26 is due for renewal in August and to defer to the next meeting.
- l. **It was RESOLVED:** to confirm the appointment of PATA payroll services for 2025-26.
- m. **It was RESOLVED:** To confirm the clerk’s delegated authority to make payments between meetings as necessary.
- n. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the following invoices for payment:
 - MMMH Hall Hire APM £15.00
 - PATA payroll Annual Service fee £149.40The Clerk asked members to consider that we will receive an invoice on the 15th May for the cost of the 21 stiles ordered at approx. £4430 with £210 to be reimbursed by Ledbury Rugby Club. With the clerks’ annual leave for 2 weeks **it was RESOLVED:** to approve payment of this invoice on receipt.
- o. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the following made between meetings:
 - Clerk Salary March to incl. PAYE As per contract
 - Unity Bank Fee February, March, April £18.00
 - Clerk Expenses £75.94net/91.13 gross
 - MMMH Hall Hire March meeting £15.00
- p. Members NOTED the income received:
 - Precept £5675.00
- q. Members NOTED the virements made between Unity Accounts:
 - Instant Access to Current 18.03.25 £1000
 - Instant Access to Current 19.03.25 £1000
 - Current to Instant Access 30.04.25 £4500

15. Planning

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** To confirm the clerk’s delegated authority to respond to planning queries between meetings.
- b. Members NOTED there are no Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:

07/25-26

- c. Members NOTED there were no Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
- d. Members NOTED the planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
 - 250617 – Hellens Lodge, extension to existing dwelling Approved with Conditions
 - 250540 – Application for permission in principle for the construction of up to 9 dwellings – Approved with Conditions.
 - 250515 – Serendipity House, Rushall Road, single storey extension – Approved with conditions
 - 250479 – Oakfield, proposed extension and alterations – approved with conditions
 - 243198 – Barn to northwest of The Old Lodge, Kempley conversion of a barn to a dwelling approved with conditions.
 - 241873 – Hellens, erection of a gallery. Approved with conditions
 - 242410 – Land opposite Hardwick Oaks, Kempley Road demolition of barn and erection of 2 semi-detached dwellings. Approved with conditions

16. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Members received a report from Cllr Baldwin. The Memorial Hall AGM is being held next Monday. A key volunteer is likely to be moving away from the area so they will be urgently advertising for volunteers to join the team.

17. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** To appoint David Beckett as Footpath Officer for 2025-26. Members thanked him for all his hard work, the new accessible routes are a great success.
- b. To receive an update on the Footpath Regeneration project: Footpaths Officer David Beckett reported. The footbridge dedicated to Jim Edwards was formally opened on the 29th April. 20 gates have been ordered and are ready for delivery. Once they are received he will formulate a plan of installation. We still have not received an invoice from HCC for the abutments for the bridges, he will chase. *A member commented that the footpath from the Jubilee tree to the main road has no gates and they would be beneficial due to the proximity to the main road.* **It was RESOLVED:** to speak to the landowner to ask permission.
- c. To consider any other matters raised by the Footpath Group: There was none.
- d. To consider any other matters raised by the Highways Working Group: Cllr Powell informed members that he is still reporting the pot holes. Some have been reported twice and still not completed. *A member asked Cllr Powell to report to Ward Member Durkin that an area in need of resurfacing as a priority is the road from Rushall to Much Marcle.*

18. Events:

- To receive an update on the VE-Day 80th Anniversary Event on the 8th May:
Cllr Hope reported. The beacon was lit by Cllr Weston with a number of people attending. *A member added that residents in Bishops Frome could see the beacon.* Ellen Jones from Ledbury Royal British Legion attended and spoke a few words to mark the event. She had confirmed subsequently that donations to the RBL had been very generously received. *Cllr Cotton added that some residents had suggested that they would have liked an afternoon tea for the older parishioners.* Cllr Baldwin responded that the volunteers are not available to be able to put on all the events. More help is needed.

19. Correspondence:

- Notification of the Much Marcle Dog Show, Fete and Shindig on Sunday 27th July 2-8pm. It was confirmed that this is a community event not just in aid of the Community Shop.
- Ledbury Rugby Club new 'Services Breakfast' on alternate Wednesdays starting May 7th from 9am. Free to attend and no need to book.

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

Hills Ford Rally, Insurance, Risk policies and asset management.

21. Members NOTED the amendment to the date of the next meeting to the 1st July in Westons Meeting Room at 7.30pm.

The Clerk informed members of the email from the Rushall Club asking if we could

08/25-26

consider use of the Rushall Club for meetings. Standing Orders do not allow for meetings to be held when there is an open bar. The bar at the Rushall Club is only open on a Wednesday so the meeting on Tuesday 1st July could be considered. Members are keen to hold some meetings in Rushall to reach parishioners who may not otherwise be able to attend. **It was RESOLVED:** The Clerk to ask if there is availability on Tuesday 1st July.

20.30 5 members of the public left the meeting

Confidential Item:

22. To receive an update on the Clerks Appraisal from the Finance Working Group and to consider the Clerks salary.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Cllr Hope highlighted that during the appraisal communication with parishioners had been raised and should be considered as an agenda item. We put articles in The Mercury but not everyone reads it, Facebook only goes to a few and not many look at the website. A member responded that the pc only hear from residents when they have a problem/issue. The question is how do we communicate certain items to vulnerable residents? **It was RESOLVED:** to defer as an agenda item.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Signed.....*M Barber-Starkey*..... Date.....01.07.2025.....

Chair

The meeting closed at 20.50