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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on

Wednesday 12th November 2025

7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

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

In attendance: David Beckett – Footpaths Officer

Public: 5

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies have been received and accepted from Cllrs Weston and Powell and Ward Member Durkin.

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

Cllr Baldwin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8e, Cllr Hope a pecuniary interest in Agenda items 10a (253126 and 253118); S Cotton a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 10a (252909).

3. Open Session:

- a. To receive a report from the Ward Councillor. In his absence there was none. Members were reminded that the latest Ward report is on the parish council website.

- b. To receive representations from the public:

A member of the public wished to comment on Agenda item 10e and identified themselves as the new owners. The Chair clarified that without a planning application the parish council are unable to comment with regards to a future application. The member of the public wishes to apply for change of use to a full residential property. They would like to make some changes but these would be clarified at the time of an application. A member clarified that our response would be guided by the planning framework. The Steering Group for the Community Shop added that there is no conflict with them. Members welcomed them to the parish.

19.37 2 members of the public left.

The Community Shop Steering Committee informed members that they end the year in a strong position with several builders now able to provide quotes. They have held a number of successful fundraising events with £4000 raised. An additional £3500 profit from the 200 Club. They now hold £122000 in their bank account. Two shareholders have offered to increase their shares by £25000 each to aid the start of building works if needed and they are confident that by summer 2026 they will be able to commence construction. They have approx. 70 regular volunteers and have been very pleased with progress and how the community have come together. The Steering Committee were congratulated.

4. Minutes:

- a. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on the 10th September 2025.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record. They were duly signed by the Chair.

Minutes from the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on the 1st July 2025. Approved at the meeting held on the 10th September 2025 were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Much Marcle Parish Council Policies and Procedures:

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve and adopt the IT and Email Policy.

- b. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the Reserves Policy with the amendments shown in red.

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6. Assets:

- a. Members NOTED the addition of the two goal posts and two benches on the Bartons Field to the Asset Register.
- b. Members considered the report from the meeting held with the Headteacher and agree actions on the following:
 - Rabbits causing damage to the surface. Rabbits causing damage to the ground in the Bartons are entering from outside the area, presume from the Motte and Bailey. **It was RESOLVED:** to contact the pest control for advice.
 - Maintenance of the goal posts and benches. **It was RESOLVED:** to speak to a local contractor for advice on treating and repainting.
 - Perimeter fence bordering farmland. The material is in good condition but needs repairing. **It was RESOLVED:** to be discussed by the Working group and report at the next meeting.
 - Condition of the hedging to the border with the B4024. A lot of ivy growing within it and the school are using pallets to block sections. It needs new posts and wire the entire length. Clean the hedge up, replant and put a fence up on the internal side. Could buy a mix of traditional plants and would need guards. **It was RESOLVED:** a Working Group consisting of Cllrs Barber-Starkey, Cotton, Hope, Thomas and Jefferson to cost and move the project forward. Report at the next meeting. Planting would need to occur soon. **It was RESOLVED:** the Chair and Clerk given authority to approve purchase up to £2000 as per Finance Regulations.
 - Proposed purchase of picnic tables. A member recommended that the parish council look at recycled plastic picnic tables rather than wood to minimise maintenance requirements. This was agreed as a good option. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to research and provide options at the next meeting.
- c. Members considered the Annual Tree Survey for 2026 and whether the parish council or school are to complete it. The onus rests with the owner of the trees so the parish council owes a duty of care. **It was RESOLVED:** The Finance Working Group to consider and report at the next meeting.

7. Biodiversity:

- a. Members NOTED the letter sent to Westons on behalf of the parish council with regards to Dark Skies and the levels of lighting and the response received confirming action to reduce light pollution and to continue to monitor. Westons were thanked for their response and actions.

8. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for September and October 2025 with a total balance of £35179.34. Cllr Baldwin as a non-bank signatory duly checked the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- b. Members considered the annual rental charge to the school for the use of the Bartons. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting.
- c. Members considered the Draft Budget and Precept for 2026/27. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the draft budget and release for a period of public consultation. The budget and the precept will be approved at the meeting to be held on the 14th January.
- d. Members NOTED the successful Financial Internal Controls check of invoices, bank statements, salary and minutes completed by Cllr Baldwin on the 30th October 2025.
- e. Members considered the grant application received from Much Marcle Memorial Hall to support the cost of a defibrillator. Cllr Baldwin abstained from the discussion and decision. They have requested £600, it was confirmed that the full cost of a replacement unit is £660. **It was RESOLVED:** to award a grant of £600.
- f. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the Finance Working Group approval to move to Annual payment of the Microsoft Licence from the 1st November 2025.
- g. Members considered the request from the church for the parish council to provide a Christmas decoration to be displayed throughout the season. **It was RESOLVED:** to support. Cllr Hope and the Clerk to contact the church to clarify requirements with an approved budget of up to £50.
- h. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the following invoices for payment:

• Clerk Expenses – Microsoft Licence and printer ink	£146.32net/£175.59gross
• Rob Goddard – Awards for All Footpaths	£54.00net/£64.80gross

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- Rob Goddard – Awards for All Footpaths £71.00net/£85.20gross
 - MMMH Hall Hire September £15.00
 - PATA – Inflationary increase salary calculations £15.00
 - i. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the regular payments made between meetings:
 - Clerk Salary September and October to incl. PAYE As per contract
 - Unity Bank Fee September/October £12.00
 - j. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify payments made between meetings:
 - Cheque 100051 Balfour Beatty Living SIDS Assessment 1 £588.00 gross
 - Microsoft Licence September £10.30net/£12.36gross
 - Clerk Expenses S106 request £67.00
 - k. Members NOTED the income received:
 - Bank Interest September 25 £169.74
 - Precept second instalment £5675.00
 - l. Members NOTED the virements made between Unity Accounts:

• Instant Access to current	11.09.25	£500
• Instant Access to current and then reversed as in error		£4000
• Current account to savings	24.09.25	£5000
• Instant Access to current	25.10.25	£1000
- 9. Website and IT**
- a. Assertion 10 and councillor email addresses: Members NOTED the quote from Microsoft for £1152 per annum for 10 email addresses. **It was RESOLVED:** Microsoft charges excessive and Cllrs agreement to retain the current system and addresses.
 - b. Members NOTED the move to Digital telecommunications from January 2027. **It was RESOLVED:** to hold a Parish Meeting and invite the BT trainer to speak to residents in the Spring when lighter evenings.
- 10. Planning**
- a. Members considered the Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:

20.37 Cllr Cotton left the room.

 - 252909 Land at the Croft Paddock. Self-build dwelling and detached garage. **It was RESOLVED:** Support subject to Highways approval and use of suitable materials.

20.42 Cllr Cotton returned to the room.

20.42 Cllr Hope left the room.

 - 253126 Hellens, Monks Walk works to trees. Fell Ash due to dieback. **It was RESOLVED:** Support
 - 253118 The Plech. Work to trees. Reduce height of 4 Beech trees. **It was RESOLVED:** Support

20.45 Cllr Hope returned to the room.
 - b. Members NOTED the Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
 - 252581 Land at Hill Farm, conversion agricultural building to dwelling. Support.
 - 252738 Serendipity House First floor extension. Support
 - d. Members NOTED the following planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
 - 242372 Holmleigh alteration and part conversion of existing outbuildings to an annexe. Approved with Conditions.
 - 252312 Whinfields, single storey rear conservatory extension. Approved with conditions.
 - 252125 Land at 4 Monks Meadow, PIP for self-build dwelling and garage. Refused.
 - 252294 The Bounds retrospective new layby/turning area. Approved with conditions.
 - e. To consider the email received from the owner of the The Old Post Office to gauge Parish Council opinion on a proposal for change in use. Addressed in Agenda item 3b.
 - f. Members NOTED the S106 request for the Deed of Agreement for Glebe Orchard following parishioner concerns and receipt of said Deed of Agreement. Members considered the parishioner concerns regarding tidiness of a property at Glebe Orchard. **It was RESOLVED:** to write to the Housing Association to log concerns.

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11. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Cllr Baldwin, the Parish Council Representative, informed members that there is a hole in the roof where the joint is which is being repaired, there may however be some rot which is of concern. Nothing further to report.

12. Flooding:

- a. Members NOTED the receipt of the Flood equipment including Aquasacs. The equipment is currently stored at Cllr Barber-Starkey's property as easy to access from the crossroads.
- b. Members considered the appointment of a Flood Warden. **It was RESOLVED:** to approach a local resident to ask if interested. To provide an update at the next meeting.
- c. Members received an update from the Flooding Working Group. Cllr Barber-Starkey reported that he has arranged a meeting with Jason Hemsworth (Balfour Beatty) and Henry Snell (Hereford Council) to discuss the funding application next week. They will also look at Rushall and Kynaston. To report findings at the next meeting.

13. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. To receive an update on the Footpath Regeneration project. David Beckett provided a report attached. He presented a quote for signs for the new stiles. **It was RESOLVED:** beware animals not required but the Awards for All/name of path signs approved with a budget of £175.
- b. To consider any other matters raised by the Footpath Group and agree actions. There was none.
- c. To consider any other matters raised by the Highways Working Group. Cllr Barber-Starkey informed members that the Community Speedwatch Group had been confronted and harassed during a session at the crossroads. This was reported and our PCSO has paid a home visit to the person involved and they have been informed to keep their distance.

14. Members NOTED the following Correspondence received:

- Much Marcle Primary School Admissions Consultation for 2027/28.
- Call handlers at West Mercia Police to receive dedicated rural crime training.
- Herefordshire Capital Funding program for playgrounds – expressions of interest closing 31st January 2026.
- Hereford Council – Leaders Update.

15. Items for the next meeting – no discussion:

Budget, parish tidy up, dates for the diary and all items deferred from this meeting.

- 16. Next Meeting:** members NOTED the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 14th January 7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Signed:*Mike Barber-Starkey*..... **Date:**...14th January, 2026
Chairman

The meeting closed at 21.10

Parish Council Meeting 12-11-25

Footpath Update

Notice board by Carpark on Marcle Ridge ref Alison. Spoke with Phil Hawkins, WoolHope PC footpath officer. He said that this notice board was mentioned at a recent PC meeting and it turns out it is not a Parish Notice board but was installed by Hereford Council. WH PC are currently re-newing their NB's as funds allow.

Spoke with Steve Organ and he said he would look into it.

Had a site meeting with Steve Organ at the bridge in New Normandy ref ditch overflowing, ref parishioner concern.

Turns out it is not a Hereford Council built bridge, but rather built by the landowner of the time and likely that a waver was signed as ownership changed hands is the best explanation.

Since the original concern was raised in 2024 the ditch has since been cleared of all the fallen branches etc and now it flows nicely.

The exposed sub soil / stone caused by the erosion can just be filled in as the situation is un-likely happen again in Steve's opinion.

Email from Ross Walkers are Us saying they have finished their 3 year project installing 132 stiles including three new gates on Marcle Ridge is complete.

This opens an extensive stile free walking area from Much Birch, Little Dewchurch & Woolhope to name a few.
Jubilee Walk

The self -closing gate proposed by Cllr Tim Weston has been installed.

This consisted of a new 4 plank foot bridge, double handrails with infills and anti -slip mesh.

The hedges were cut back to improve visibility but is it possible for the council to place pedestrian crossing signs in both directions to draw awareness of the A449 crossing as the traffic does thunder past the crossing.

Sheepwash Walk.

A parishioner and myself surveyed and agreed actions for the first 6 self-closing gates.

We plan to start installing soon now the ground is a bit easier to dig.

Artwork for the signage has been completed and a quotation generated, see copy.

Question, what is the best statement ref :- Keep dogs on leads when entering this field, great for sheep but not good for cattle discuss.