

21/25-26

MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on

Wednesday 14th January 2026

7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

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

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

Public: 3

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr David Griffiths.

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 commented on items of interest within the January Ward Report (available in full on the Much Marcle Parish Council Website). The Electoral Boundary Review is currently going ahead, this affects Ward Boundaries not Parish Council. New Highways provider (M Group Highways Ltd) will start officially on the 1st June, replacing Balfour Beatty. *Member asked re. reputation of M Group Highways.* A good company with more information to follow once contracts are signed.

He shared a presentation by the Leader of the Council regarding the Hereford Council deficit, a £30million funding gap for 2026/27. (Full details and presentation currently available on MMPC website under Hereford News on the front page). He added that 66% of council tax received is spent on Adult and Children social care including SEND. *A member asked whether the level of Council Tax spent on Adult and Child social care is comparable with other councils?* Answer unknown.

A member asked whether the new electric dustbin lorries are working well in the cold weather? Ward Member Durkin responded as far as knew.

- b. To receive representations from the public: There was none.

4. Minutes:

- a. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on the 12th November 2025. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record. They were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Members received an update from the Community Shop Steering Group. Shareholders have increased yet again to 269. They have the amazing fundraisers to thank for all the community events held last year and also to all those who attended. How can the community support to get the project over the line? Currently able to sign up for the 200 Club, details are on the shop website. Fundraising concert on the 21st March at St Bartholomew's church. Towards the end of May there will be a vintage car rally and the second Much Marcle Open Gardens during the last bank holiday in May. They thanked Westons for their generous offer of the tractor and trailer which will enable them to incorporate gardens on the Much Marcle ridge.

19.50 Barry D left.

6. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Cllr Baldwin, the Parish Council Representative commented that not much to report as their next meeting is next week.

22/25-26

7. 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:
 - Rabbits causing damage to the surface at the Bartons: The Chair reported that he had completed a check of Bartons and there are a number of holes. *A member asked if we know where the burrows are?* The Chair thinks the field, they are coming through the netted fence which has some holes in it. **Action:** Cllr Jefferson to check the Bartons with a thermal imaging camera and report to members. He added that the safest option to deal with them would be a ferret and net. Agreed that this requires immediate action before the school uses the field.
 - Maintenance of the goal posts and benches: **It was RESOLVED:** Cllr Thomas to lead a group when the weather improves.
 - Perimeter fence bordering farmland: The Chair commented that conditions had been too wet. A member suggested installing rabbit proof fencing when repairing? The working group will investigate once the weather improves.
 - Condition of the hedging to the border with the B4024: A member commented that there is no point replanting whilst rabbits are a problem, planting may have to take place in the autumn. **It was RESOLVED:** the working group to arrange a site meeting and defer to next meeting for recommendations.
 - Proposed purchase of picnic tables: **It was RESOLVED:** The Clerk to purchase the contract set of 5 for £2000 from NBB Recycled.

8. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for November and December 2025 with a total balance of £ 32773.82. Cllr Baldwin as a non-bank signatory duly checked the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- b. Members considered the Draft Budget against the Budget versus Actuals to 31st December 2025 and NOTED that there were no public comments from the consultation period. It was NOTED that the increased website budget allocation would not be required. **It was RESOLVED:** to move £500 from website to repairs for the upcoming work required at the Bartons.
- c. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the Budget for 2026/27 with the amendments to the website budget.
- d. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the Precept at £11800 for 2026/27, a 4% increase.
- e. Members NOTED the increase in monthly Bank Charges from 1st February 2026 from £6 to £7 per month.
- f. Members NOTED the cancellation of cheque number 100051 £588 to Balfour Beatty following confirmation of no charge for the initial service. The Clerk reported that no update has been provided from Balfour Beatty following an enquiry. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to contact Ward Member.
- g. Members NOTED that £1677.67 has been awarded from the Hereford Council for the flood grant which has to be used by the 31st March 2026 and claimed by the 10th April 2026.
- h. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the following invoice for payment:

• Rob Goddard – Awards for All Footpaths	£65.50net/£78.60gross
--	-----------------------
- i. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the regular payments made between meetings:

• Clerk Salary November and December to incl. PAYE	As per contract
• Unity Bank Fee November/December	£12.00
- j. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the following payments made between meetings:

• Clerk Expenses Screwfix Awards for All Footpaths	£26.82net/£32.18gross
• MMMH Grant awarded	£600
• Signworx Awards for All Footpaths Grant	£192net/£230.40 gross
• MMMH Hall Hire	£15
• Newman Design Website Annual Fee	£411.37
• Rob Goddard Awards for All Footpaths Grant	£93net/£111.60gross
- k. Members NOTED the income received:

• Bank Interest December 25	£181.70
-----------------------------	---------
- l. Members NOTED the virement made between Unity Accounts:

• Instant Access to Current Account	25.11.25	£1500
-------------------------------------	----------	-------

9. Planning

- a. Members NOTED there are no Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council.
- b. Members NOTED the Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
 - 253194 Holmleigh, oak tree to be removed. Request for a detailed report to substantiate claim.
 - 253414 Meadow Cottage, work to trees in conservation area. Support
 - 253273 Hellens, Monks Walk. Listed Building consent installation of EV point. Support
- c. Members NOTED the planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council listed on Appendix 2.
- d. Members NOTED the response received from Platform that their Housing Team would assist in resolving the issues at Glebe Orchard. *A member of the public informed members that there has been no change with damage now to the footpath where they are driving over and parking.* **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to contact Platform housing again.

10. Flooding:

- a. Members considered actions to use the Flood grant awarded by the 31st March 2026. The Chair informed members that the amount awarded is much less than was asked for. Applications for the flood grant were oversubscribed hence a smaller amount. The Working Group are looking at flooding at the crossroads and had met with Henry Snell, flooding officer at Hereford Council and Jason Hinsworth from Balfour Beatty to walk around the affected areas in the parish. Hereford Council are to contact Homme House to explain their responsibilities with a blockage on their land. There are a number of overgrown ditches. **It was RESOLVED:** The Chair to obtain a quote to clear as many ditches as possible with the funds allocated. The Chair informed members that Hereford Council have said they will fund the installation of a new culvert in 26/27 year which will help relieve the pressure at the Walwyn crossroads. *A member added that the new sewage works are still throwing sewage into the stream through the overflow, Hereford Council are aware.*
- b. Cllr Cotton informed members that the ditch at Picadilly Bridge in Rushall had been cleaned by Balfour Beatty but is already as bad as was before. *A member commented that the drain there is only 12 inch concrete.* The Chair added that roots from a willow tree are growing into the drain. **It was RESOLVED:** to remove the tree that is growing into the drain as part of the Flood Grant works.

11. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. Members received an update on the Footpath Regeneration project from David Beckett the Footpaths Officer. Not too much progress since the last meeting due to the weather. Signs are received, ready for when the stiles are installed.
- b. Members heard that the Footpath Group have completed a repair on a Homme House stile and anti-slip mesh installed. They have started to install the self-closing gates on the Sheepwash Walk.
- c. Members NOTED the water leak in Rushall and subsequent dangerous road conditions and agree actions. It is still leaking with no progress. It is dangerous, with thick ice in the cold conditions. It has been reported to Welsh Water and Balfour Beatty but they say is on Private land which is disputed by the landowner. **It was RESOLVED:** Cllr Powell to speak to the landowner, Clerk to inform Ward Member Durkin.
- d. Members NOTED the poor condition of the Dymock Road road surface through Much Marcle Village. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to email to Ward Member Durkin. *A member commented that this item had been raised 18 months ago and wasn't acted on.* The Chair responded that the sub-strate has dropped further and we should request a test, the extra traffic from the bus hasn't helped.
- e. Members considered the request from a parishioner for a grit bin to be placed on Watery Lane. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to follow up with Ward Member Durkin.
- f. Members NOTED that the repairs have been successfully completed at Kynaston to improve drainage and at Picadilly Bridge (actions Agenda item 10b).
- g. Members NOTED that M Group Highways have been announced as successors to Balfour Beatty from June 2026.
- h. Cllr Powell informed members that there are a lot of pot holes on the Kempley Road. The road surface on the Rushall to Much Marcle Road near Picadilly Bridge is particularly poor. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to report to the Locality Steward.

24/25-26

12. Dates:

- a. Members considered a date for the Parish Tidy. **It was RESOLVED:** Saturday March 14th 10am meeting in both Much Marcle and Rushall. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to put in the Mercury and MM Facebook page. Clerk to check with Cllr Weston if any equipment needed.
- b. Members considered the dates for meetings in 2026/27. **It was RESOLVED:** Annual Parish Meeting 22nd April; Parish Council Annual Meeting 6th May; 15th July; 9th September; 11th November; 13th January 2027; 10th March. The Clerk to check dates with the MMMH. The Clerk to arrange a date following the Parish Meeting for BT to meet with residents.

13. Members NOTED the following Correspondence:

- Hereford Council Electoral Review Consultation and cut-off date of 2nd February 2026.
- Hereford and Worcester First Responders offer of free CPR and AED community training. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to speak to them and the Memorial Hall for suitable dates.
- Parishioner email regarding litter picked in the parish

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

Report on Bartons, water leak, Glebe Orchard, flooding.

15. Next meeting: members NOTED the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 11th March, 7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Signed:.....*A Hope*..... Date:.....11.03.2026

Chair

The meeting closed at 20:58