

25/25-26

Minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on
Wednesday 11th March 2026
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Present: Cllrs A Hope (In the Chair); J Baldwin; T Weston; D Griffiths; S Cotton; E Thomas; F Powell; E Jefferson

In attendance: Rachel Freestone – Parish Clerk
David Beckett – Footpaths Officer

Public: 4

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr M Barber-Starkey and Ward Member Barry Durkin. In the Chair's absence it was agreed that the Vice-Chair, Cllr A Hope would preside over the meeting.

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 Member: In his absence there was none. The latest Ward Report had been shared with members previously and placed on the website.

A member commented that no potholes have been filled around our parish and wondered with the move to new supplier in June would the current staff be Tupe'd as they have no interest. The Locality Steward is on long term sick but no obvious replacement. Members are dissatisfied with the service provided by Balfour Beatty. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to write to Balfour Beatty and copy in Ward Member Durkin.

- b. To receive representations from the public:

A MofP asked what the criteria is for a pothole to be filled and the significance of white lines around them as after a couple of days they disappear in the bad weather. He reiterated that nothing is being done.

FoDDC District Cllr Kilmurray responded that a pothole 7cm deep should be prioritised. A white mark signifies it is on the to do list, may be missed if wears away before filled.

FoDDC District Councillor Gill Kilmurray spoke of the FoDDC Draft Local Plan Reg 18 Consultation and the proposed settlement 'Glynchbrook' at junction 2 of the M50. She is also a councillor for Dymock Parish Council. She explained that 'Glynchbrook' is a proposed settlement of 3500 houses on the border of Lowbands and Pendock. A development there would impact Ledbury. There is no infrastructure in place. A primary school would be provided but no secondary. There is provision in the plan for doctors, shops etc but no buildings, these would be market driven. Closing date for any representations to the Forest of Dean is 23.59 on the 18th March. She urged members and residents to look at the plan and consider a response, there is a form but it can also be emailed.

A MofP asked if a link could be shared? The Clerk can share as well as the recently received Malvern Hills Council response.

Cllr Hope explained that the item was not on the Agenda, she asked members if want to discuss it or arrange an Extra-ordinary meeting. **It was RESOLVED:** Respond as residents with the information received. Put the links on our website and local Facebook page. Distribute the leaflets. Clerk to send information to members.

4. Minutes:

- a. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on the 14th January 2026. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record. They were duly signed by the Vice-Chair.

5. To receive an update from the Community Shop:

In their absence an update had been received and previously circulated. There were no further comments.

26/25-26

6. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Cllr Baldwin provided a report on the Memorial Hall. There are a number of fundraising events arranged with the next being a Quiz night on the 8th May at 6.30pm. Nothing else to report.

7. Assets:

- a. Members considered the bus shelters, noticeboards, gates and defib for maintenance requirements. The bus shelter in Much Marcle will be sprayed when the weather improves to prevent it becoming overgrown. The Rushall bus shelter has an infestation of ivy which will be cleared. The noticeboards are in a satisfactory state and the defib is ok with all checks up to date.
- b. Asset Register – requirement to add size of and a proxy value for The Bartons common land. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the size and proxy value determined by the Finance Working Group.
- c. Members NOTED the purchase of the five picnic benches, to be installed once the ground has dried. *A member asked if they will need securing to the ground.* Not felt necessary currently as very heavy.
- d. Members received an update on the following items at the Bartons:
 - Rabbits causing damage to the surface. Cllr Jefferson has still to check with a thermal camera.
 - Perimeter fence bordering farmland. The Bartons including the fence and hedgerow were inspected by Cllrs Barber-Starkey and Cotton. The Clerk confirmed has emailed HC for advice on the hedgerow but not yet received a response. The intention is to renew the hedging from September 2026. With regards to renewing the fence, need to check the Bartons documents as believe neighbouring farm owner is responsible. It was suggested that October half term would be an ideal time to complete any work. Clerk to inform the school.
 - Condition of the hedging to the border with the B4024 – see above.

8. Much Marcle Policy and Procedures:

- a. Members considered Assertion 10, HALC internal audit 2025/26 and the requirement for councillor email addresses. The item has been discussed a number of times and members NOTED the information provided by the clerk. Members have considered individual laptops either which would be expensive to the parish council or the individual. Do not want to expect IT to be self-funded as it should not be a barrier to becoming a councillor. Members agreed that they do not want a .gov.uk email account on their own laptops especially as some use for work. **It was RESOLVED:** to not adopt gov.uk or org.uk councillor email addresses and accept fail the internal audit on this item.
- b. Members NOTED that the Data Controller as being the Clerk and RFO, Rachel Freestone
- c. Members considered the Accessibility Statement (previously circulated) and proposed amendments shown in red. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the policy with the amendments shown in red for 2026/27.

9. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for January and February 2026 with a total balance of £29676.39. Cllr Weston as a non-bank signatory duly checked the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- b. Members NOTED the Reserves statement and considered a transfer of further £100 to Defib Earmarked Reserve as per our Reserves Policy. **It was RESOLVED:** to trf a further £100 to the defib. reserves.
- c. Members NOTED the satisfactory completion of additional finance controls by Cllr Baldwin on the 2nd March 2026.
- d. Members NOTED the comments from the Headteacher of the Primary School that the French scheme of work purchased via a MMPC grant is enjoyed and beneficial.
- e. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the approval of the quote from Signworx for 10 'Keep Dogs on a Lead' signs for £96 net. A member asked where they are being placed? On the self-closing gates to replace landowner signs as many worn and cracked.
- f. Members NOTED the minutes (previously circulated) from the Finance Working Group:
 - i. Proposal to increase the annual Bartons rent to £150 from the next payment in 2027. Has been £75 for as long as has been in place. Work to trees and the tree survey are the parish council responsibility. Substantial costs to maintain the field. The rent should increase with inflation annually when felt the base is at a suitable level. **It was RESOLVED;** to approve the increase. It was NOTED that 1 member was against the proposal, 1 abstained.

27/25-26

- ii. It was NOTED that the FWG are satisfied Internal Controls are being met as per the Finance Controls policy.
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the following invoices for payment:
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| • Rob Goddard – Awards for All Footpaths | £53.40net/£64.08gross |
| • MMMH Hall Hire January | £15.00 |
| • HALC Annual Subscription 2026-27 | £703.33/£844.00 |

The Clerk informed members that the invoice from Coley's Groundworks for £2000net/£2400 gross had been received that day to pay for the ditching works. The invoice to be sent to Hereford Council to enable the return of £1677.67 from the grant. **It was RESOLVED:** to pay the invoice and send to HC.

A member asked who is responsible for clearing rubbish out of the ditches? The parish council have said will help. A member asked why the trees are still in situ following the ditch work? Only a limited amount of funds, have completed what can within the grant with a small amount added by the pc.

- h. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the regular payments made between meetings:
- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • Clerk Salary January and February to incl. PAYE | As per contract |
| • Unity Bank Fee January/February | £12.00 |
- i. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify payments made between meetings:
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| • Clerk Expenses Screwfix Awards for All Footpaths | £26.82net/£32.18gross |
| • Rob Goddard – Award for All Footpaths | £65.50net/£78.60gross |
| • Clerk Expenses – printer ink | £23.12net/£27.75gross |
| • No Butts Bin Co – picnic benches | £1800net/£2160gross |
| • 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 |
- j. Members NOTED no income received.
- k. Members NOTED the virements made between Unity Accounts:
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| • Instant Access to Current Account | 19.01.26 | £3000 |
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10. Planning

- a. Members considered the Planning Application for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
- 260598 Bodenham Farm, Much Marcle. Works to trees in a Conservation Area. **It was RESOLVED:** no comment required.
- b. Members NOTED no Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers.
- c. Members NOTED the planning decision made by Herefordshire Council:
- 253273 Hellens, Monks Walk Installation of EV point. Approved.
- d. Members NOTED the response received from Platform on the 16th February that their Repairs Surveyor is to attend the site to assess whether improvements can be made with additional parking or by installing bollards. **It was RESOLVED:** The Clerk to chase a response from Platform on any decisions made.

11. Flooding:

- a. Members NOTED the work undertaken on the ditches using the Flood Grant. Thanks were given to Cllr Cotton for his help organising. They are much improved. A member asked for an update on the culvert. Hereford Council have agreed to the work there. A member commented that the proposed settlement 'Glynchbrook' would impact flooding, not in Much Marcle but in the wider area.

12. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. Members received an update on the Footpath Regeneration project from David Beckett. The weather has been poor so progress limited. A gate has been installed at Lower Wolton. Contacted landowners at Little Puckmore and the Point and the installation of the gates has been agreed. New Keep Dog on Leads signs have been purchased. Cllr Baldwin and himself had attended a Risk Assessments course set up by Hereford Council and presented by Rospa.

28/25-26

- b. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the response of 'No Objections' to the proposed public path diversion of MM5 (Hellens), relating to planning application 241873.
- c. Members NOTED that no response has been received from Balfour Beatty re their SIDS initial evaluation. The Clerk informed that Ward Member Durkin had been informed. **Action:** The Clerk was asked to raise it again.
- d. Water leak at Rushall. Nothing has been resolved as yet, it is still leaking. Welsh Water have stated that is on private land and will contact the landowner. The Highway is of concern. Welsh Water are responsible. There is an impact to the parish with the condition of the road. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to write to Welsh Water and ask for a response and copy Ward Member Durkin.
- e. To consider any other Highways matters arising. Cllr Powell reported that is continuously registering potholes but told not big enough.

13. Events:

- a. Members NOTED the Parish Tidy on Saturday March 14th. Cllrs Baldwin and Weston have all the kit. The Clerk to forward the Risk Assessment.

14. Dates:

- a. Members NOTED the date of the **Annual Parish Meeting as Thursday April 30th 2026**. Start time of 7pm. Invite the usual attendees including the Community Speedwatch team.

15. Correspondence: Members NOTED the following:

- Invitation to the HALC AGM on the 21st March at Hampton Bishop Village Hall.

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

Glynchbrook; Flood grant for 2026/27, Speedwatch as a standing item.

A Mof P asked whether the damaged bench at the Triangle is to be repaired? Yes, Cllr Weston has offered to repair. The bench was put in 1977 for the Jubilee and the tree was planted for Queen Victoria. The bench and tree are a PC asset. Referred to as the Jubilee Tree.

Speedwatch - They are trying a camera. 63mph fastest speed coming from Ross direction, this would warrant an automatic visit from the police. 46mph and above they log with a letter warning that been caught. 2nd final warning, 3rd is a police visit. Central system so speeds are also recorded in neighbouring parishes. Believe the system is working as can see vehicles slow down. They would like to have positions at the Royal Oak and by the Jubilee Tree, our PCSO is involved with this. They have to work in 3's so difficult to get volunteer availability. Members thanked the team.

17. Members NOTED the date of the next meeting as the Parish Council Annual Meeting on Wednesday 6th May 7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Signed: ...*M Barber-Starkey*..... Date:06.05.2026.....

Chair

Meeting closed at 20.45