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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on,
Wednesday, 6th May 2026
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs M Barber-Starkey (in the Chair), A Hope, E Thomas, J Baldwin, T Weston, D Griffiths,

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

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The Chair informed members of the sad passing of Ted Newman, the parish council website developer and the Clerks IT support. Members held a minute's silence.

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for 2026/27:

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. Cllr Hope thanked Cllr Barber-Starkey for all his work over the last year. The Clerk was also thanked. The Chair thanked Cllr Cotton as he has been working hard for the parish recently.

2. To receive and accept apologies for absence:

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs Cotton, Powell and Jefferson.

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

Cllr Hope declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning applications 261002 and 261161.

4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2026/27:

Cllr Hope was proposed, seconded and duly elected.

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 11th March 2026. **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 Councillors report: In his absence there was none.
- b. To receive representations from the public: There was none.

8. Attendance: Members NOTED and approved the record of councillors at meetings during 2025-26.

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

- a. Code of Conduct. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Code of Conduct for 2026/27.
- b. Financial Regulations **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Financial Regulations for 2026/27.
- c. Standing Orders **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Standing Orders for 2026/27.
- d. Risk Register **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Risk Register for 2026/27.
- e. Risk Management Policy **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Risk Management Policy for 2026/27.
- f. Reserves Policy **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Reserves Policy for 2026/27.
- g. Transparency code. **It was RESOLVED:** to follow and adopt the Transparency Code for 2026/27.
- h. The Clerk reminded councillors of the self-disqualification law.

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10. Assertion 10 and email addresses:

- a. Members NOTED the HALC recommendation for councillors to have a parish council email address from the same provider as their personal email addresses to meet audit requirements and protect from FOI requests.

11. To appoint Members to serve on Working Groups:

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Councillors as follows:

- a. Finance and Staffing – Cllrs Jefferson; Hope; Barber-Starkey; Baldwin and the Clerk. Cllr Hope to lead.
- b. Planning – Cllrs Weston; Baldwin; Jefferson and Thomas. Cllr Weston to lead.
- c. Highways – Cllrs Powell and Cotton. Cllr Powell to lead.
- d. Footpaths – Cllrs Baldwin; Griffiths and Footpaths Officer David Beckett.
- e. Environment and Community – Cllrs Thomas; Cotton and Barber-Starkey. Cllr Cotton to lead.

12. To Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies:

- a. Much Marcle Memorial Hall **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint Cllr Baldwin.
- b. Much Marcle United Fund **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint Cllr Baldwin. *A member asked whether the fund is still active?* Yes it is.

13. Assets:

- a. Members considered the Asset Register as of 1st April 2026. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve as a correct record.
- b. Members considered the Inspection and Maintenance of assets for 2026/27. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to add as a regular agenda item.

14. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the End of Year Budget versus Actuals with no comment.
- b. Members NOTED the End of Year bank reconciliation and total EOY bank balance of £34976.39.
- c. Members NOTED the End of Year Reserves statement with no comment.
- d. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and total Bank Balances for March and April 2026 as £40616.79.
- e. Members NOTED the EOY balance of the La Barroux grant stands at £2245.
- f. Members NOTED the HALC internal audit report for 2025-26 is not yet completed and that an extra meeting will be required in June to complete the statutory obligations.
- g. 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.
- h. Members considered the list of payments made over £100 for 2025-26. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve.
- i. Members considered the summary of regular payments for 2025-26. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve.
- j. Members NOTED the VAT claim for 2025-26 as £2053.23 submitted to HMRC via a 126 form.
- k. Members considered a competent internal auditor external to the council for 2026-27. **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint HALC.
- l. **It was RESOLVED:** to use the “payments and receipts” accounting method for 2026-27.
- m. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve Cllrs Powell; Hope and Barber-Starkey as the Unity Bank signatories. The Clerk to add a further signatory.
- n. Members NOTED the insurance provision for 2026-27 is due for renewal in August and to defer to the next meeting.
- o. **It was RESOLVED:** To confirm the appointment of PATA payroll services for 2026-27.
- p. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the clerk’s delegated authority to make payments between meetings as necessary.
- q. **It was RESOLVED:** To approve the following invoices for payment:
 - Rob Goddard Awards For All £54net/64.80 gross
 - Rob Goddard Awards for All £36net/£43.20 gross
 - MMM for last week pay
- r. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the following regular payments made between meetings:
 - Clerk Salary March and April to incl. PAYE As per contract

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- Unity Bank Fees March and April £14.00
- ICO £47.00
- s. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the following payments made between meetings:
 - MMMH Hall Hire March meeting £15.00
 - Rob Goddard – Awards For All £45net/£54gross
 - Signworx – Awards For All £96net/£115.20 gross
 - Clerk Expenses £23.32net/£27.99gross
- t. Members NOTED income received:
 - Bank Credit Interest 31.03.26 £148.65
 - Bartons Rent £75
 - HCC Drainage grant £1677.67
 - Precept £5900.00
- u. Members NOTED virements made between Unity Accounts:
 - Instant Access to Current 02.02.26 £1200
 - Instant Access to Current 16.03.26 £2500

15. Planning

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** To confirm the clerk's delegated authority to respond to planning queries between meetings.
- b. Members considered the Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
 - 261078 Kittles, Much Marcle. Listed Building Consent Replacement windows and French style door. **It was RESOLVED:** Support.
 - 261017 Land opposite Hardwick Oaks, Kempley Road. Variation of condition 2 of permission 242410. Change of condition is a minor change. **It was RESOLVED:** Support.

Cllr Hope refrained from comments and decision.

 - 261002 Bartons Well, Much Marcle, Work to red oak, beech and cypress trees Quite significant tree. Insurance put in application due to subsidence. **It was RESOLVED:** insufficient information received.
 - 261161 Windrush, Much Marcle. Remove oak tree close to ground. There has been no reason given on the application. **It was RESOLVED:** insufficient information to make a judgement.
- c. Members Noted the Planning Response Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
 - 260743 – The Old Post Office, Much Marcle. Self-build project to change the use. Support with consideration given to materials used.
- d. Members NOTED the planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
 - 242763 – The Slip Tavern Change of use of staff living accommodation Retrospective. Refused.
 - 251540 – Track at Ribston Lawn and removal of hedge. Approved with Conditions.

16. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Cllr Baldwin informed members that there was nothing further to report following the recent Annual Parish meeting.

17. To receive a report from the Community Shop Representatives.

The representatives had nothing further to report following the report given at the Annual Parish Meeting.

18. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. Footpath Officers for 2026-27. David Beckett was proposed, seconded. **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint David Beckett. Everyone agreed that he is doing a great job.
- b. Footpath Regeneration project update. Members NOTED that the Awards for All cfwd is £4513. They are installing a gate at Little Puckmore. Discussing how to remove stiles situated in the field at Sheepwash. Sadly, Ted Newman was to design the footpaths map, will need to reassess in due course following his sad passing. He would like to look at footpaths noticeboards and where they could be placed, this can be decided later. All agreed that David has been and continues to be a brilliant asset. Cllr Baldwin has also given a lot of time to improving our footpaths, he was also thanked.
- c. To consider any other matters raised by the Footpath Group and agree actions. No other matters raised.

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- d. Members NOTED that the SIDS site has been approved by Balfour Beatty and a grant application provided by the Commissioners Community Fund. Three quotes will be obtained to understand the amount of grant required. In the absence of Cllr Powell this was deferred to the next meeting.
- e. Members NOTED that Drainage Grant Applications 26/27 are due in by the 17th May. Unlikely to have a project and details in place by this time.

19. Correspondence:

- HCC reminder that home phone lines change to digital in January 2027. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to put an information segment in the Mercury.
- HCC Delivery Plan for 2026/27.

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

SIDS

- 21. Next meeting:** Members NOTED that the meeting will be held on the 15th July in the **Rushall Club** at 7.30pm.

Signed.....*M Barber-Starkey*..... Date:15.07.26.....

Chair

The meeting closed at 20.38