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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on,

Wednesday, 9th September 2026

7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs Mike Barber-Starkey (in the Chair); A Hope; J Baldwin; S Cotton; E Jefferson; F Powell; T Weston.

In attendance: Rachel Freestone – Parish Clerk
Barry Durkin – Ward Member

Public: 5

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr Griffiths and our Footpaths Officer David Beckett.

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

There were none.

3. Minutes:

- a. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Ordinary Meeting held on the 15th July 2026. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. Members NOTED the resignation of Cllr Elliott Thomas on the 15th July 2026. Members thanked Cllr Thomas for all his years of service.

- a. Members NOTED that Hereford Council have confirmed that a request for an election has not been received and MMPC are now able to Co-opt onto the council.

5. Open Session:

- a. Ward Councillor report: Ward Cllr Durkin presented the headlines from his latest Ward report which can be found on the MMPC website in full.
He congratulated Herefordshire students for their A level and GCSE results attained this year.
The Local Nature Strategy has been shared for parish councils to comment.
Herefordshire Firefighters were thanked for all their work during a challenging summer.
Weekly food waste collections will start in 2027 for all households. Trying to dissuade people from dumping waste in laybys, there will be placards installed at laybys.
New special school with 40 places in Ross-on-Wye and a further £9 million given to Herefordshire Council to support schools for SEND provision.
19.42 Cllr Baldwin left the room unwell.

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

6. MM Policies:

- a. Financial Internal Controls and Risk Assessment. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the policy for 2026/27.
b. Co-option policy and application form. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting.

7. Community Shop:

- a. Members received an update from the Community Shop. They were very pleased with the results from all the events held over the summer, a significant amount of money raised. They hold an information and fundraising session at every Hellens monthly market which continues to be successful. They have received a couple of quotes which do not include all the work required but have also received an all-inclusive quote from a local builder and they are also in talks with a local architect who can help provide detailed construction drawings. *A member asked if this is for a permanent structure? Yes. A member asked if there*

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is a projection for a realistic start date? Planning consent runs out in October 2027 so work needs to have commenced before then.

8. Assets:

- a. Members NOTED the OPCC grant for SIDS was declined due to lack of funds. It was agreed to wait to see if the fund is replenished. The Clerk to ask our PCSO when it could reopen.
- b. To receive an update on the defibrillator in Rushall. In his absence from the room it was deferred to the next meeting.
- c. Members considered the actions required for the replacement hedgerow around the Bartons. Agreed that Autumn is the right time for the work with hedgerow plants being available mid to end of November. The fencing will need to be replaced first. It was suggested that the work is completed in sections with the fencing from the gate towards the church actioned first and then follow towards the school. It has been agreed that the fence will be chestnut stakes and horse netting. **Action:** Cllr Cotton to obtain prices for the fencing and send to the Clerk.

Cllr Weston will be able to provide temporary fencing whilst the work is being completed.

Action: Cllrs Jefferson and Cotton to support with contacts for the hedging. A MofP asked if the Woodland Trust had been considered? **Action:** Clerk to look.

We will need to write to the school to advise what doing when dates are known. **Action:** the Clerk.

- d. Expired lease between Much Marcle Parish Council and Hereford and Worcester County Council for the land used by the school: The Chair explained that an email had been found containing a copy of the 1997 lease between the school and parish council. It has been found that the £75 annual charge was originally for the area that is now part of the playground and not Bartons field. The lease expired in November 2018. We need to revisit who is responsible for what. **It was RESOLVED:** the Finance Working Group to meet and discuss further and bring comments to the next meeting. We need to find a solution which is suitable for both the parish council and the school/academy.

20.09 Cllr Baldwin left the meeting.

Ward member Durkin requested that Planning items be addressed next.

Items 10 considered.

20.14 Ward Member Durkin left the meeting.

9. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for July to 23rd August 2026 with total funds of £32787.16. Cllr Weston as a non-bank signatory duly checked and signed the documents.
- b. Members NOTED the Reserves Statement to 23rd August 2026.
- c. Members NOTED the successful internal controls completed by Cllr Julian Baldwin on the 20th July 2026.
- d. Members NOTED the agreed NJC scales increase of 3.3% and consider approval of the backdated increase to 1st April 2026. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the backdated increase.
- e. Members NOTED that there are no invoices for payment.
- f. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the regular payments made between meetings:
 - Clerk Salary July to incl. PAYE As per contract
 - Unity Bank Fee July £7.00
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** To ratify the payments made between meetings:
 - Rob Goddard – Awards For All £45 net/£54 gross
 - Rob Goddard – Awards For All £36 net/ £43.20 gross
 - The Rushall Club Hall Hire July 2025 and 26 £40
 - MMMH Hall Hire April £15
- h. Members NOTED no income received.
- i. Members NOTED the virements made between Unity Accounts:

Instant Access to Current	17.07.26	£1000
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10. Planning

- a. Members NOTED no Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council.
- b. Members NOTED the Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
 - 261540 Pound Cottage Variation of condition to amend the roof pitch - Support

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- c. Members NOTED the planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
- 261078 Kittles Replacement of windows listed building consent – Approved

11. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. To receive a report from the Parish Council Representative. In his absence there was none.

12. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. Footpath Regeneration project. In his absence the Clerk read the report provided (Appendix 1). Members agreed that the footpaths team are doing a great job. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the purchase of the wooden gate.
- b. To consider any other matters raised by the Footpath Group. There was none.
- c. Highways Working Group: Cllr Hope informed that we had received notification to no longer use Fix my Street. Cllr Powell added that the new system is not simple with an onerous drop-down list to choose from. Pot-holes are still not being filled, the new team seemed to start well but service quality has reduced. The Speedwatch Team were given time to present. **Action:** Clerk to add as a standing item. A letter of complaint had been sent to John Campion by the team (listed in item 13). They had sent data between April and July and became concerned with no feedback. Our PCSO intervened and they then contacted that not received any data following an issue with email addresses. Frustrating as in this period 66 offenders were caught. They have agreed to look at data from the 1st July. They had requested other sites to be reviewed but they have been turned down due to safety. The team feel despondent. Do we carry on with the scheme? Members asked for them to continue as their presence is making a difference to speeds through the village. Four our records they caught 13 in August, 9 in September. **Action:** Clerk to communicate with our PCSO regarding permanent Speedwatch cameras that are used in Gloucestershire.

13. Correspondence (Previously circulated) – **Members NOTED:**

- Letter of complaint sent by the Community Speedwatch team to the Road Safety team and response received.
- Parishioner request for position of the fire hydrants in Much Marcle (Phone call to the Clerk).
- Locality Steward update.

14. To consider items for the next meeting – no discussion. – Lease, Budget, hedge.

15. Members NOTED the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 11th November 7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Signed:..... Date:.....

Meeting Closed at 20.39

Appendix 1 – Footpath Officer Report

Sheepwash Walk

All 8 gates are now installed with only a few "D" rail fixings to be added when the fences have been finished by Westons.

Tom the farm manager is aware.

The OS map app has a new feature where by people can add comments to footpaths which is linked to the definitive map.

There were 2 blockages on MM11 & MM1A so we asked David Griffith to clear them as he lives nearby. Blockages are now clear on the OS map.

Awnells Farm

Following a request for a replacement stile via Simon, we opened conversations with Awnells Farm about installing 5 self-closing gates.

A proposal has been drawn up to replace 5 stiles and submitted to CRT for comment / approval, hopefully.

Homme House

Following a lot of discussions, Homme House has agreed to allow a self-closing gate to be installed, replacing the stile that leads into their meadow behind the church.

The concession is that the gate will be made of treated wood but still be self-closing.

The gate will be purchased by the PC and HH will repay the cost difference between the wooden & metal gates.

The PC will install as normal practice.

Parish Map

I have managed to open up discussions with Hannah Ferguson, owner of the Secret Gallery and artist of the illustrations in Down The Line, the Daffodil Line booklet & website.

Basically her workload is fairly heavy at the moment, so I will make contact in October to outline our requirements so Hannah can advise costs.

Hannah was delighted to be asked to get involved with our parish map and values the benefits that can roll out to the area and the Daffodil line.