

MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of an Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 19.30 at Marden Community Centre

Present

Councillors: David Bennett (in the Chair), Kate Ryan, Rod Lees, Chris Morgan, Mike Blake, Richard Paske and Lesley Hayward.

In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils);
Ward Councillor Kema Guthrie, and 16 members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Patrick Meredith and Paula Barrett
2. **Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests:** Cllr David Bennett declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6.2; Cllr Lesley Hayward declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 6.2 and 9.5; and Cllr Richard Paske declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 6.2 and 6.4. The Declarations of Interest book was signed accordingly.

Before the discussion of agenda item 6.2, Cllr David Bennett presented a written request for dispensation to allow a quorum of vote.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the written dispensation to allow Cllr Bennett to vote on agenda item 6.2.

3. Public Participation:

- 3.1 **West Mercia Police and Fire & Rescue Service Report:** there was no report.
- 3.2 **Ward Councillor Report:** Ward Cllr Guthrie has submitted a written report and summarised the following items:
 - 3.2.1 The Government-appointed Commissioner for Children's Services has submitted their report which will shortly be available to download from <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>;
 - 3.2.2 Herefordshire Council have agreed the 23/24 budget;
 - 3.2.3 Herefordshire Council have been awarded £19.9million from the national Levelling Up Fund for the Hereford Transport Hub;
 - 3.2.4 Single bus journeys to cost no more than £2 are available on most routes across Herefordshire until 31st March 2023;
 - 3.2.5 Cllr Guthrie's report contains the Helpline and Telephone number for the Talk Community team and the meeting was directed to the website <https://www.talkcommunity.org/>

3.3 Members of the Public:

- 3.3.1** A member of the public raised a query concerning the Asset Register, specifically the locations of litter bins, quantity of noticeboards and the Clerk's digital drives currently missing from the register. The Chairman confirmed matters concerning the noticeboard and agreed that the digital drives are present and will be added to the register.
- 3.3.2** Multiple comments were raised concerning Planning Application 221524: proposed polytunnels at Drakeley Farm, HR1 3ES. Residents raised concerns about the proposals in terms of: Loss of prime agricultural land; Drainage matters; Feelings of misinformation; Highways and transport concerns; Disappointment at the timeframe allowed for responses given the quantity of information provided with the application. The Ward Cllr was asked whether an extension could be approved. She confirmed that the PC had been granted an extension but that 21 days is the usual timespan for planning responses. However, she will feedback the general view that it was insufficient in this instance and felt not to represent a fair playing field.
- 3.3.3** Further comments were raised concerning Planning Application 230133: agricultural building at Litmarsh, HR1 3EJ. Residents raised concerns about further possible development on the site; the perceived mockery of the planning system; the quantity of development in Litmarsh, and the design of the proposed building. Positive comments were received concerning the environmental standards proposed with a desire to see these applied to the existing barn.

4. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 17th January 2023; Confidential Minutes of 15th November 2022 and 17th January 2023:

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th January 2023, and the Confidential Minutes of 15th November 2022 and 17th January 2023.

It was RESOLVED: to approve all three sets of minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

5. Finance:

5.1 Virements:

The monthly accounting report has been distributed to members and uploaded to the website for public view. A number of virements were proposed to balance the budgeted figures against actual expenditure.

It was RESOLVED: to approve virement £130.00 from Stationery & Postage to Website & Communication; £100.00 from Contingency to Subscriptions; and £300.00 from Contingency to N&V.

5.2 Bank Account:

Members were informed that the balance of the current account at 13th February 2023 was £119,565.23, including earmarked reserves £6798.65 donations for community facilities;

£53,173.52 future loan repayment/community facilities work; £20,000 village green; £2,000 Marden Recreation Ground Trust; and £406.96 Marden Links. It was noted that the Marden Links reserve was the remaining sum from a grant received and may need to be paid back.

5.3 Invoices:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:

- 5.3.1** PIP Printing, N&V Feb 23, £280.31 (no VAT)
- 5.3.2** HALC, 23/24 Subscription, £859.81 plus £171.96 VAT

It was RESOLVED: to ratify the emergency payment between meetings of the following invoice:

- 5.3.3** Eukhost, Website hosting, £118.10 plus £23.62 VAT

It was noted that £3807.50 drainage grant has been received from Herefordshire Council.

5.4 Internal Audit:

The Chairman presented a brief report concerning the interim internal audit. The auditor has been engaged and the Chairman will be providing him with the required paperwork later this week.

5.5 Banking:

It was proposed that the Parish Council move their banking from NatWest to Unity Trust Bank to improve security protocols.

It was RESOLVED: to set up a new Current and Reserve Account with Unity Trust and then close the NatWest account.

6. Planning:

6.1 221112: Land adjoining Sutton Lakes House, Sutton St. Nicholas, HR1 3NS.

Retrospective planning application for the change of use of agricultural land and associated development of site 2 Shepherds Huts for holiday accommodation.

It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

- 1) The application is retrospective. A previous objection was submitted on 10th May 2022 and the reasons for that objection are still considered to be valid. The application states that the huts are moveable structures and it is accepted that the decking has been removed. However, significant permanent drainage and facilities have been installed which are not suitable for moveable structures.
- 2) The size of the proposed area for change of use from agricultural use suggests that there will be more development in the future, which does not conform with policies M3 and M10 of Marden's Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 3) There were significant concerns raised about the loss of prime agricultural land for the growth of sustainable crops to supply UK needs at a time when it has been reported that imported fresh produce is to be restricted.

6.2 221524: Drakeley Farm, Marden HR1 3ES.

Erection of up to 13.5 hectares of fixed (ie non-rotating) 'Spanish' polytunnels over soft fruit grown on 'table tops', excavations and ground profiling to form new winter storage reservoir and the erection of an agricultural storage building and 6 no. water storage tanks.

It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

A previous objection was submitted on 26th June 2022 and the reasons for that objection are still considered to be valid. In summary:

- Access
- Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- Reservoirs and effect on drainage and water levels locally
- Ecological and biodiversity issues
- Noise, light and other pollution
- Effect on the landscape
- Heritage issues.

Concerns were also raised about the loss of prime agricultural land for the growth of sustainable crops to supply UK needs at a time when it has been reported that imported fresh produce is to be restricted; and that the infrastructure in and around Marden does not allow for this kind of industry. Tractors and trailers are already damaging hedgerows and verges resulting in blocked drains and subsequent flooding; bridges are being damaged and costing significant sums to repair; and devastating environmental destruction is already taking place.

Cllrs Lesley Hayward and Richard Paske did not take part in the vote in accordance with their declaration of interest. Cllr Rod Lees did not take part in the vote as he has already submitted a personal response to Herefordshire Council.

Ward Cllr Guthrie confirmed that the redirection request is still in place and the application will be referred to Planning Committee should the Planning Officer be minded to approve the application. A site visit has also been requested.

6.3 230133: Agricultural building to the west of Berrington Cottage, Litmarsh, Marden, HR1 3EY.

The erection of a dwelling and associated works including a garage, ground source heat pump, hard and soft landscaping and drainage (in lieu of the extant Class Q permission at the site).

It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to this application. The Parish Council acknowledged that planning permission has already been granted for the development of the barn on this site, and that should this application fail, the applicants will develop in accordance with the existing approved plans. However, the current application is outside of the settlement boundary and does not comply with any criteria of the NDP or RA3, though the environmental features detailed within the new application were commended. Members would like to see them applied to the development of the barn that has already been approved.

6.4 230165: Hopesay House, 7 Brook Orchard, Marden, HR1 3EJ.

Proposed continued use of outbuilding as an annexe (retrospective).

It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT this application, with the following comment:

Whilst the Parish Council resolved to support the application, they would like to refer to comments made by the Parish Council in 2017 in response to a similar application for No. 8 Brook Orchard. A condition was subsequently applied to the planning consent (171960), namely that the ancillary building shall be used solely for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house as such and not for the carrying out of any trade or business and shall at no time be converted to habitable accommodation, and the Parish Council respectfully request that a similar condition is applied to this application should the Planning Officer be minded to approve it.

Cllr Richard Paske did not take part in the vote in accordance with his declaration of interest.

Ward Cllr Guthrie left the meeting at 9.03pm.

7. Licensing Application Marden Post Office:

It was noted that the variation of premises licence has been approved with conditions.

8. Working Group Reports:

8.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group:

Nothing to report - draft housing targets still awaited from Herefordshire Council.

8.2 New Community Facilities Working Group:

Herefordshire Council now have all the required information and will be deciding on the planning application for the Community Centre in the near future.

8.3 Marden Links Working Group:

Feedback has been positive. There have been eight sessions of the hub since the last PC meeting with 52 attendees, some regular and some new.

Herefordshire Council have asked the group to become a Social Prescribing Hub. BT has been considered for broadband connectivity, but the decision has been made to proceed with Gigaclear.

The hub will be used as the Polling Station for the May elections, which will enable the school to open as usual.

An offer of good quality kitchen units has been received.

Volunteers are still needed for the Community Café, open Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

A lease has been signed for 1/3 acre of land at the rear of the hub. Plans are to develop this into a community gardens. Volunteers would be welcomed.

Expenditure for the first six months is due to come in on or slightly less than the budget of £4500.00. Electricity costs also on target and anticipated to reduce as we move into Spring.

There is a small surplus from the grant received to set up the virtual hub and enquiries are ongoing to clarify if this can be used for the actual hub.

The Herefordshire Community Foundation grant is ongoing – the group have been asked to reapply for electricity costs only.

A grant request has been submitted to Herefordshire Council to set up a repair café. The Chairman wished to note for the minutes that this is an approval in principle, and should the grant request be positive, the proposal to set up a repair café will be presented to the Parish Council for decision.

The group will consider setting up a separate bank account at some point in the future, or holding a separate account within the umbrella of the Parish Council accounts with Unity Trust.

The six-month review of the project is due in April and it was proposed that this is considered at the next meeting.

Overall, the project is considered a great success and thanks were offered to Cllr Ryan and all of the volunteers for their hard work.

8.4 Environmental and Sustainability Working Group:

Cllr Lees attended a meeting concerning cycle routes connecting rural settlements to Hereford City via safe routes. The current plan is to look at existing bridleways. The group organised a presentation by Craig Cornish of Herefordshire Council's Waste Team discussing the future of the waste collections service, due to change in 2024. Concerns were raised about some behaviour at the presentation and the group will consider carefully any future talks.

It was reported that S&A have removed approximately 100m hedgerow for drainage improvements. Whilst it has been confirmed that the hedgerow will be replanted, concerns were raised about the environmental impact of the loss of established hedgerow. Cllr Lees has requested a meeting with the Operational Director to raise concerns about this, mud on the road, and to request the reinstatement of six monthly meetings. It was agreed that Cllr Lees would attend the meeting representing the Parish Council.

It was RESOLVED: to extend the meeting for as long as necessary to conclude matters on the agenda.

8.5 Events and Fundraising Working Group:

Members received a report concerning a recent successful quiz night, and forthcoming plans for the Coronation weekend and Marden Community Fete (together with the PCC) on 9th July. It was agreed to consider a full proposal of costs for the Coronation celebrations at the next meeting.

8.6 Transport Working Group:

It was agreed to defer agreeing a meeting date at this time. Police speed checks are still going ahead but no feedback has been received. It was agreed that the Acting Clerk will contact the Community Policing Team for an update report.

9. To consider Parish Reports and Ongoing Matters:

9.1 Litter Pick:

It was agreed to meet for a litter pick at 10am on Saturday 18th March 2023.

9.2 Parish Footpath Officer:

Members were informed that the main report is in the Clerk Information Sheet, attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

The PFO has been liaising with HC concerning stile repairs and anticipates these will be carried out before Spring.

Outstanding problems on MR17a are being progressed; BBLP are being pushed to resolve drainage issues first.

The PFO will be looking at the fingerposts and waymarker signs.

It was agreed to ask the Lengthsman to install three gates (already purchased and in storage) before the end of the current financial year.

9.3 Lengthsman and General Maintenance:

9.3.1 Members considered the Lengthsman's revised rates for 2023/2024, as reported in the Clerk Information Sheet.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the rates for 2023/2024

9.3.2 Members were informed that the Locality Steward has reviewed the condition of the roads in the parish and made a list of potential work. No potholes were deemed to be deep enough to be addressed and the list has been forwarded to a higher level at BBLP.

9.3.3 Members considered concerns about water run off from fields at Sutton Walls. It was agreed that the Chairman will contact the Locality Steward for his assessment and request the reinstatement of monthly drive-rounds.

9.3.4 Members considered the new Lengthsman Grant Funding available from Herefordshire Council. It was reported that the sum of £94.15 is payable per km of C and U roads within the parish.

It was RESOLVED: to approve joining the 5-year funded Lengthsman scheme. The Chairman will sign the contract and return it to BBLP. Members will consider possible work for completion by 31st March 2023.

9.4 Scout Hut Land:

Members received an update concerning the scout hut land at Hawkersland. The PC were not able to negotiate the land at a reasonable cost; it is understood the seller has received a substantial offer to purchase the land from a land agent.

9.5 Enforcement Status:

Members were informed that responses are awaited on three matters of planning enforcement.

9.6 S106 Parish Gains:

Members considered a draft S106 wishlist for parish gain.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the list and submit to Herefordshire Council.

9.7 Noticeboard Relocations:

Members were informed that BBLP haven't yet provided an update concerning two new noticeboard locations. It was agreed that the acting clerk would contact BBLP to follow up.

9.8 Land at rear 9/10 Walkers Green:

Members noted that the lease has been signed for a 5-year period, with a 1-year notice period.

10. Correspondence:

Members noted the Clerk Information Sheet, attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

11. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 21st March 2023, 7.30pm, Marden Community Centre.

Agenda Items:

- 11.1 Consider News and Views Costs and Revenue and agree action as required
- 11.2 Receive report concerning S&A Liaison Meeting and agree action as required
- 11.3 Consider proposal for permanent Christmas Tree and agree action as required
- 11.4 Consider and approve Lengthsman Contract 2023/24
- 11.5 Consider application for Volunteer Tree Warden role
- 11.6 Consider Coronation Celebrations and agree action as required
- 11.7 Receive report from West Mercia Police on speed enforcement area
- 11.8 Consider policy on Transparency and agree action as required
- 11.9 Review Outstanding Policies:
 - 11.9.1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
 - 11.9.2 Equal Opportunities Procedure
 - 11.9.3 Health and Safety Policy
 - 11.9.4 Lone Worker Policy
 - 11.9.5 Sickness and Absence Policy
 - 11.9.6 Staff Appraisal Policy
 - 11.9.7 Privacy Policy
 - 11.9.8 Personal Data Management Policy
 - 11.9.9 Subject Access Policy
 - 11.9.10 Publication Scheme
 - 11.9.11 Reserves Strategy for Y/E 31.3.23

A resolution was passed to exclude members of the public from the following confidential matter:

12. Employment and Recruitment Status:

12.1 Employment:

Members received a report concerning the conclusion of the outgoing Clerk's duties.

It was RESOLVED: to pay a final sum for January and February.

12.2 Recruitment:

Members were reminded that HALC Recruitment Service has been engaged;

Cllrs David Bennett and Kate Ryan will attend interviews with HALC;

The role will be advertised for 7 hours per week, with a review after 6 months with additional hours expected once NDP process begins;

Salary scale point will depend on level of experience and qualification.

A member of the Council wished to thank the Chairman for taking over the role of Clerk in the interim.

Meeting closed 10.24pm

SIGNED  DATE ... 21st March 2023


APPENDIX A:

CLERK'S INFORMATION SHEET FOR

THE MEETING OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL ON 21st February 2023

- 3.1. West Mercia Police Safer Neighbourhood Team – PS Darren Ball; PCSO Adam Westlake, 07773 052580; PCSO Christina Howard, 07773 052529.

Get in touch

 **101** to talk to your local SNT/report a crime

 herefordrn.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

 www.westmercia.police.uk

 /  @HerefordCops

Only call 999 in an emergency, when a crime is in progress or life is in danger. If you would prefer to report a crime anonymously, please contact West Mercia CRIMESTOPPERS 0800 555 111. For all non emergency reports please call 101. For all other enquiries please email herefordrn.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Crimes in parish reported:

Reporting crime anonymously Crimestoppers UK, call 0800 555 111 or fill in the online form <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>

Reporting an incident of bad/dangerous driving, you can report it online **at the time or soon after** and upload a photo or video that includes the number plate details to <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/police-forces/west-mercia-police/areas/west-mercia/campaigns/campaigns/2019/operation-snap/>

If a road is blocked by such an incident, **you need to report it at the time to 101.**

New service launched by police – Through Neighbourhood Matters you can sign up for local police alerts; receive information about crime in your area, find out about drop-in sessions, answer surveys, and more. You can choose exactly what type of alert you want to receive and how you receive them, whether it be via text, email or phone call. Sign up now <https://neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/>

Useful numbers

- Victim Advice Line - 0800 952 3000
- West Mercia Women's Aid Helpline (available to help all victims) - 0800 980 3331
- Men's Advice Line - 0808 801 0327
- The Mix (for under 25s) - 0808 808 4994
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0800 999 5428
- Samaritans - 116 123

Other Useful Information

Power cut: Call 105 <https://www.powercut105.com/>

BT phone line outages: www.bt.com/help/report-and-track-your-bt-problem

Gas leak: 0800 111 999 <https://www.wvutilities.co.uk/services/smell-gas/>

Welsh Water: [0800 052 0130](tel:08000520130) (Water emergencies) or [0800 085 3968](tel:08000853968) (Sewer emergencies) <https://contact.dwrcymru.com/>

Severn Trent water: [0800 783 4444](tel:08007834444) <https://www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/check-my-area/>

Report a tree down, flooded road or highway obstruction- BBLP : 01432 261800

Flood alerts: Floodline 0345 988 1188. Sign up to get [Flood Warnings from gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/flood-warnings) by phone, email or text message. If you live by a river or stream, keep a watch on current and expected water levels. You can see the [actual water levels at different locations in the county](#)

More information and advice can be found here: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/storm

9.3 Parish Footpaths Officer:

Outstanding issues:

- a. MR45 Laystone Bridge to Brook Farm. Stile still needs replacing. Landowner given a reminder by phone.
- b. MR7A to Norton Court. Still awaiting replacement of one stile by landowner.
- c. MR 17A Still awaiting new 3 plank bridge, hand rails and three kissing gates. Will be completed when finances allow and drainage problems solved.
- d. MR22 S&A require new Bridleway sign
- e. MR18B Awaiting construction of new step. Landowner reminded by phone.
- f. MR18A Awaiting new stile to be replaced by Landowner. Need to report PROW again as have no ref. Number as three plank bridge is rotting.
- g. MR36 ? 3 kissing gates bought, being stored at Lengthman's. Will be installed in April?

Completed work:

- a. New stile installed on MR45 between Marden Church and Laystone Bridge and is a great improvement. Pathway between kissing gates by the river has been tidied up beautifully. Both Landowners have been thanked.
- b. MR12 to Venn's Green. S&A cleared branches from a ditch. Landowners have kindly installed signs to dissuade delivery drivers using the Bridleway as 3 vans had to be rescued.
- c. MR5 (South) Landowner has installed both gates which has made a huge difference.
- d. MR8 Landowner has replaced stile which is a great improvement.

9.4 Lengthsman:

- a. Analysis of contract rate changes 2022/23 vs 2023/24 (all rates net of VAT)

| <u>Work Description</u> | <u>22/23 Rate</u> | <u>23/24 Rate</u> | <u>Comment</u> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Mowing designated areas based on spec provided per cut | £95.00 | £100.00 | |
| Additional price for annual Area 4 cut | £25.00 | £30.00 | Final visit in October |
| MR24 per cut | £80.00 | £90.00 | |
| MR21 per cut | £45.00 | £50.00 | |
| MR45 per cut | £40.00 | £45.00 | |
| Cutting/strimming either side of Laystone Bridge per visit | £70.00 | £70.00 | |

| | | | |
|--|---------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Cutting back overhanging trees/bushes per visit | £160.00 | £170.00 | Likely early Autumn |
| Cutting around visual displays and road signs per visit | £165.00 | £175.00 | Throughout parish |
| Checking drain tops and grips per visit | £180.00 | £195.00 | |
| Strimming around grit bins and rubbish removal per visit | £90.00 | £90.00 | Does not include salt removal |
| Cutting grips with digger throughout parish | £480.00 | £761.50 | Requires traffic management |
| Scraping kerbs throughout village per scrape | £850.00 | £850.00 | Skip hire required |
| Hire of Skip – to be placed on MRGT car park | £280.00 | £340.00 | |

The estimated current schedule of works would cost £7253 (includes £1295 for PROW cuts)

Prior year estimated cost for schedule £6400 (includes £990 for PROW cuts)

None of the above covers the cost & installation of kissing gates

b. Note that it has been agreed that the 3 kissing gates recently purchased will be stored by the Lengthsman until April/May

9.6 No update provided this month – Clerk to follow up on outstanding issues.

9.8 No further update this month – Clerk to follow-up with BB regarding as suitable site along Wyatt Road and the corner opposite Kitten Gate.

10. Correspondence – significant items received as follows:

From parishioners –

- Emails - Query regarding budget 23/24 quoted on documents
- Email – State of roads within Parish.
- Email – Request for Parish Council to discuss the mud run-off from fields below Sutton

From other sources –

- Email – from HC regarding grant available through to 31st March – work to be carried out by Lengthsman
- Balfour Beatty – weekly updates from locality steward
- Gov.uk re Vehicle Operator Licenses.

Email: parish.clerk@mardenherefordshire-pc.gov.uk

Marden Parish Clerk takes no responsibility for the accuracy of reports submitted for inclusion in this briefing sheet