



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 7.30pm
at the Marden Community Centre.

Minutes

Present:

Cllr David Bennett (Chair), Cllr Kate Ryan, Cllr Chris Morgan, Cllr Rod Lees, Cllr Paula Barrett, Cllr Richard Paske & Cllr Lesley Hayward.

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk)
Sally Postlethwaite (Footpaths Officer)
6 x Members of the Public.

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – Apologies were received from Cllr Michael Blake.

2. To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

To Note – There were no declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 16.07.27 – 23.07.24 & 01.08.24.

Resolution – *The Minutes of the 16.07.24 were adopted as a true record subject to adding Cllr Hayward comments of “I pointed out that it was unnecessary to have drink being consumed at breakfast time - i.e. from 8.30 am!”. The minutes of the 23.07.24 were adopted as a true record along with the minutes of the 08.08.24 which were then all signed by the Chair.*

4. Open Session.

(Ward Member)

The Clerk reported that the Cllr Peter Hamblin the Ward member had given his apologies but had submitted a lengthy report covering several pages and pictures.

To Note – *The Council asked the Clerk if he could thank the ward member for his report and ask if the future reports could be more concise and less political so they can be added to the minutes.*

(Public Session)

Q1. – In what month did the Parish Council discuss and approve the grant for the Repair Café.

A1. – The Chair explained that this question had be answered meeting after meeting, the answer is in the March 2023 minutes.

Q2. – Back in December 2023 the Parish Council paid a RIBA stage 4 payment of £41k but there was now an extra £19k payment.

A2. – The Chair reported that this would be discussed late in the agenda.

Q3. – When did the Parish Council find out about the extra payments for the new Parish Hall

A3. - The Chair reported that this would be discussed late in the agenda.

Q4. – RIBA Stage 4 was meant to all be paid up in full.

A4. - The Chair reported that this would be discussed late in the agenda.

Q5. – Why is a lay member on the New Parish Hall working group.

A5. – the lay member has been part of the working group from day one, the lay member brings valuable expertise with regards to planning, architectural matters and negotiation skills.

Q6. – Why did the community garden project run out of materials in May.

A6. – It was never reported that the community garden project run out of materials, it was time that ran out in order to meet the open gardens day.

Q7. – The Parish Council have always said the new Parish Hall will be completed by September 2025.

A7. – Yes, this is the aim, and nothing has changed.

Q8. – How long is the Parish going to rent the Community Garden for.

A8. – The Parish Council intend to retain the lease on the Community Garden for as long as the landowner allows, even after the new Parish Hall has been built. **The current lease costs the parish is £180 per year**

Q9. – Why is the Parish Council spending more money on the Community Garden, the purchase of benches.

A9. – The 4 new benches have always been part of the project and have been included in the 2024/25 budget, these benches are made from recycled materials and if needs be could be relocated, if the Community Garden closed.

Q10. – Why was a planning application discussed informally at the end of the last parish Council meeting.

A10. – It was discussed under the Clerk's emergency powers, as it was too late to make the agenda. Plus, if any resident had any concerns they can contact the planning department directly.

Q11. – Parishioners are concerned about the money being spent on the Community Garden.

A11. – Do not believe this is correct, you are the only person to moan about the Parish Council spending money on the project. In fact, Councillors receive only positive comments on the Community Garden.

Q12. – Why has the Parish Council been spending money on an extra webpage, which has nothing upon it.

A12. – The new webpage is to keep the parishioners informed on the New Parish Hall project, the plans and other information will be live in the next few days.

5. Footpaths Officer Report & to consider actions.

The footpaths officer presented the following report.

Thank you to the Parish Clerk for submitting requests for funding for the work needed on Marden's Footpaths to ensure they are safe and robust for the future. Waiting to hear which applications have been approved. (Please look at August's detailed report if you are interested) Concerns raised by Marden's residents this month have been about the overgrown paths around Sutton Walls and the amount of dog waste left in fields and enclosed walkways. Discussions have been taking place about Sutton Walls and the hope is that a plan is being formulated and will be implemented. Reminders, from landowners, about the disposal of dog waste have been included in the Footpath Officer's report in the News and Views.

The nettles have grown ferociously over the stiles this year but thanks to my volunteer team and some anonymous clippers the stiles and kissing gates have been usable. All the crops will be harvested soon making the routes easier to see and navigate.

No further progress with MR17A.

S&A are still maintaining the footpaths and Bridleways running across their land. It is much

appreciated.

To Note – The Council noted the footpaths officer report.

6. Finance Matters.

a) - Financial Report

Resolution – The Council approved the financial report.

b) – Bank Accounts – 31.07.24 & 31.08.24.

6.2a - Unity Main – July - £10,042.91 & August - £6,954.76

6.2b - Unity Marden Links – Has been Closed funds of £876.96 transfer to Reserve.

6.2c - Unity Reserve – July - £76,646.74 & August - £77,523.70

To Note – The Council noted the position of the bank accounts.

c) - Reduction in Interest rates on Reserve Account from 2.75% to 2.60%.

To Note – The Council noted this reduction.

d) - Financial Advisory Working Group

To Note – The Council said the working group must meet in the very near future to set the draft budget for 2025/26 to bring back to Council in October.

e) - To Adopt the new NALC Financial Regulations.

The financial working group reviewed the new Financial Regulations were submitting their amend regulations to the Council for comment. The chair said that he would be happier if the following could be changed to 4.3 & 4.7 a one year forecast rather than the indicated three-year forecast. To 10. for the sentence beginning “When these donations reach” I suggest replacing with “Cash books are held for both the Hub and Repair Cafe with donations and minor expenditure items recorded as they occur and balanced on a monthly basis. Cash in excess of £100 in each case is given to the RFO to bank in the respective account and shown in the Council monthly and end of year accounts”

Resolution – Council agreed the proposed changes.

f) - Policies Review Plan

To Note – The Council noted the policies plan but also recognised this was a live document which was subject to changes.

7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – September 24	As per Contract		
7.2	D C Gardening Services - 1985	605.00	121.00	726.00
7.3	D C Gardening Services - 1952	560.00	112.00	672.00
7.4	PIP Printing - 77425 - News & Views	303.31	0.00	303.31
7.5	Clerks Expenses	397.32	18.57	415.89
7.6	Herefordshire Tree Wardens Network	30.00	0.00	30.00
7.7	Woodcock Web Services – Invoice No 3072	36.00	0.00	36.00
7.8	Woodcock Web Services – Invoice No 3070	69.82	0.00	69.82
7.9	Sara Lewis – HUB – Electric August	17.51	0.00	17.51
7.10	C A Skyrme – HUB - water	40.00	0.00	40.00

Resolution – Council agreed to pay all the invoices.

8. Payments made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – July 24	32.71	6.54	39.25
8.2	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – August 24	32.11	6.42	38.53
8.3	S/O	HUB Rent – July 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.4	S/O	HUB Rent – August 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.5	S/O	Community Garden – July 24	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.6	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – August 24	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.7		PCC of Marden – Church Wardens - Grant	1150.00	0.00	1150.00
8.8		Clerks Salary – July 24	As per Contract		

To Note – The Council noted the payments made under emergency policy were Approved and the Direct Debit and Standing Order.

9. Planning

	Application No	Address	Permission Sought
9.1	241655	Land at Drakeley Farm, Marden, Herefordshire	Demolition and clearance of two existing dwellings and agricultural buildings and the erection of two new detached replacement dwellings.

Comments: The Marden Parish Council supports this application however it has the following concerns.

1. It is outside our NDP settlement boundaries, thus being in open countryside.
2. It would have to meet specific rules as per the core strategy
3. It should be built on the exact footprint of the existing farmhouse – which the current plans show it does not.
4. The other building being considered is not a dwelling, this is a concern.
5. A different design fitting the Core Strategy, provide several agricultural worker dwellings to rent to agricultural workforce.
6. Marden already has a number of large houses and smaller dwelling would be more appropriate in Marden.

Resolution – The Marden Parish Council resolved that the Clerk should contact the planning department and explain they did not mean to “support” this application just make a comment.

	Application No	Address	Permission Sought
9.2	P242208/PA7	Kingsfield Farm Cottages Marden Hereford HR1 3EU	Prior notification for proposed open fronted steel portal frame storage building, required for general purpose storage of machinery and straw/hay

Resolution – The Marden Parish Council resolved not to make a comment.

	Application No	Address	Permission Sought
9.3	241957	Pikestye Barn Marden HR1 3ES	Conversion and change of use of existing barn into residential annexe (retrospective) and internal relocation of existing flue, replacement of 6No velux roof windows and conservation lights, insertion of 2No

			new windows and provision of dark brown wood stain to existing windows and doors.
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Resolution – The Marden Parish Council resolved to make the following comments, they are happy with the conversion works. However, Marden Parish Council were not happy that this is a retrospective planning application.

9.4 - Planning Enforcement – Update

To Note – The Council noted there was no update.

10. Marden Parish Hall Working Group

a) – Update on Progress

- The tender process is close to being finalised, two local contractors have been shortlisted and the next stage is to have face to face meetings with both.
- The group who will be meeting face to face are Cllr David Bennett (Parish Council) – Mr David Tidball (Marden Village Trust) – Ms Angela Sasso (Lay Member) and the Clerk to the Council.
- The Quantity Surveyor had to ask both contractors for additional information, which took longer than first thought.
- The Parish Council had to pay an additional invoice to cover the higher tender price, which was part of the contract.
- Timescale is to look at starting in the first quarter of 2025 with a completion date of September 2025.

To Note – The Council noted this update.

11. Working Group Reports.

11 - Marden Links

a) Hub activity update

- The HUB remains well supported with between 8 – 12 residents every session.
- The HUB would like to open an extra day, but this is subject to more volunteers.
- The HUB is looking at sending out a community questionnaire.
- The HUB received donations of £70 in July & £50 in August.

b) Repair Café Update

- The Repair Café is well supported repairing 19 items at the last Repair session.
- The Repair Café received donations of £110 in August & £111 in September.
- The Repair Café is looking to expanding by opening a Tool Library.

Now the Parish Council have purchased a secure container, shelves are required to house equipment and tools.

It is therefore requested to purchase 4 x Container shelf brackets at £62+vat each and 9x2 Timber Planks for shelving.

c) Community Garden

- c) The working group request approval for the purchase of 4 x Garden Benches £349 each.

Resolution – The Marden Parish Council resolved to purchase 4 garden benches and 4 container shelf brackets.

11.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group.

To Note – Council noted that the NDP working group will need to meet as and when Herefordshire Council updates its Local Plan.

12. Community.

- a) - Parish Council Summit – 8th October 2024 – Refreshment at 5.30pm meeting 7pm

Resolution – Council agreed that Cllr Barrett & Morgan will attend.

- b) – Hedge opposite village PO
The Clerk reported this to the Locality Steward who will contact the landowner.

To Note – Council noted this.

- c) - Request for a List of Councillors & Contacts in (News & Views)
Some discussion took place with the majority of the Councillors supporting this idea, but thought the News and Views was not the right choice. The December newsletter may be the best place to add this information.

To Note – Council noted this and it will be considered when the Newsletter is being collated.

- d) - Newsletter
The Clerk reported that Council needed to decide on whether Council wanted to do a newsletter again this year.

Resolution – Council agreed this would be a good idea.

- e) - Annual Council Programme
The Clerk presented a Council programme.

To Note – Council noted the annual programme, it is a live document so will change over time.

- f) - Lengthsman PROW Grant Update
The Clerk reported the Council had been successful in being granted a portion of the funding which amounted to the materials only. The Chair was concern about the way the fund is to be administered and the responsibility of the Parish Council. It could put the Parish Council in a difficult position with potential longer-term responsibilities and vat. Essentially this is not a grant but a provision of services to Herefordshire Council.

To Note – Council noted this and the Clerk was asked to get clarity on both these concerns.

- g) – Drainage Grant
The Clerk reported that the Herefordshire Council were now offering a drainage grant to the Parish Councils. The Chair said there were several areas which could benefit from drainage work.
- Litmarsh
 - Small Ashes
 - Franklands Corner
 - Old School House

To Note – Council noted this, but additional information was needed, the same as for the PROW Grant.

- h) - HALC Conference and AGM – 26.10.24 9.30 till 15.00 at Hampton Bishop VH.

Resolution – Council chose not to send anyone on this occasion.

13. Future Agenda Items or Clerk action under delegated authority.

- a) – Village Post Office
Cllr Lees reported that he had been told the village Post Office was going to close on the 22.10.24. this was because the PO Counters ltd were looking at reducing the Post Office hours from 25 to 11.

This would be disastrous for the whole Parish

Council requested that the Clerk write to the Ward Member, the Local MP and the owner of the village stores. The Parish Council would also look at possible new locations for the Post Office. Once the information is gathered proposals can be put forward to the council for consideration

To exclude the members Public and Press from this part of the meeting to discuss items of a confidential nature.

Resolution – Council agreed to extend the meeting beyond the standard two hours in order to complete the agenda.

14. New Parish Hall.

The Chair gave an enthusiastic and up-to-date report on the position of the new Parish Hall, things were now starting to move forward, with not only the tender process but with Citizen Housing. The target completion date is still September 2025.

An additional invoice had been presented for past unapproved works which was discussed.

Resolution – Council agreed not to pay this invoice.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10.05pm.



Signed:
Chair of the Council

Date: 15th October 2024