



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19th November 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 Lesley Hayward.

In Attendance:

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

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – Apologies were received from Cllr Paula Barrett, Cllr Richard Paske and Cllr Mike 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 15.10.24

Resolution – The minutes of the 15.10.24 were adopted as a true record which were then all signed by the Chair.

4. Open Session.

(Ward Member)

The ward member was not present but had submitted the following written report.

The last month has been very much ‘business as usual’ following the summer recess.

The additional 8 million pounds the Council put into the roads programme is starting to pay dividends. The programme is ongoing. With this and the anticipated re-designed ‘Public Realm’ contract, we will not let things slip again. Maintenance will be properly scheduled and regular – so, as usual, please continue to report defects promptly on the Council website, see links below.

Report problems on the road:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road

Check on progress of a defect:

herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map

Your black bin collections are taken to the EnviRecover Energy from Waste facility in Worcestershire which processes 210,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year. The waste is then processed to produce energy that is sold back to the National Grid. Recently the plant hit production of one million megawatts of energy from waste which is enough to power 40,000 homes per year since opening.

The high rainfall of recent months continued in October with a huge local deluge of rain on 16th on a saturated surface. The result was excess run off water on our highways and in our water, courses causing flooding of highways and also properties. Once again, the local parishes were affected.

There was a recent debate about the flooding at Council, about maintenance and prevention of flooding, and HC has held two open seminars with councillors about the recent flooding issues. One of the outcomes is that we can identify the hotspots and must ensure the drains are kept clear by our contractor Balfour Beatty, and with local landowners ensure drains, ditches and gulleys are as clear as possible. Recognising that at times of high-water levels drains will be overrun but if they are free as the water subsides it will return to its normal channels more quickly.

Second Parish Council Summit

Nearly a hundred Parish Councillors and Clerks attended the second Parish Summit at the Plough Lane Headquarters of Herefordshire Council. Topics included an update on Children`s services, and the 382 children in the care of the authority.

The director of Adult Health care talked about a more preventative approach to supporting vulnerable older people to ensure they live well. The County has 54 businesses providing care support in the home and 86 care residential homes.

A presentation on Public Rights of Way covering 2,000 miles of PROW with 1,873 footpaths, 257 bridleways and 20 Byways open to Traffic. This year the council placed more funding in both the revenue and capital budgets and allocated 250K for grants to Parish Councils.

The Library and Learning centre project in the Shire Hall has reached another milestone. Plans for the facility have been drawn up and it is out for tender. It is hoped to award the contract in time for work to commence early next year. In the meantime, the library is temporarily located in the Town Hall on the other side of the road; this temporary arrangement is now fully operational.

In a similar vein, the new transport hub by Hereford Station is also out for tender. It is the intention to get this work under way early next year as well.

To Note – *This report was noted by the Council.*

(members of public)

There were no questions from the members of the public.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council.*

5. Footpaths Officer Report & to consider actions.

Sally Postlethwaite presented her written report.

Landowners are cutting hedges, stabilising their stiles and fences are being made stock proof. For which we are very grateful. There have been reports of damage to wire fences. A reminder was put in the News and views to inform the offenders that it is a criminal offence.

It would be helpful if people kick off the fallen leaves and moss on the bridges to prevent the wooden planks rotting prematurely.

Concerns are still being raised about the circular walk around Sutton Walls. A meeting was held and the work will be done when possible. A narrow path has been forged all the way round. People are urged to take care of their dogs as the barbed wired fence has collapsed in places and could cause damage.

MR8 from Urdimarsh Road to MR12 - Four kissing gates to be installed - The Footpath Officer has liaised with: - The Landowner who is happy to install all four kissing gates if the Council agree.

Locality Steward has passed on the contact details of the person who could order the kissing gates. The gates could be delivered free of charge to the landowner`s address.

The lengthsman has already measured up but is fully booked for months.

Resolution – Council agreed for the Clerk to look at purchasing 4 new kissing gates, after enquiring if the Herefordshire Council had a prefer supplier and design.

6. Finance Matters.

a) - Financial Report

Resolution – The Council approved the financial report.

b) - Bank Accounts – 31.10.24

6.2a - Unity Main – October - £9,518.66

6.2b - Unity Reserve – October - £98,943.56

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

c) - Budget 2025 -26

Cllr D Bennett presented the draft budget for 2025/26 and said there were additional pressures this coming year with the Lengthsman pricing being 30% more than last year. In addition, the estimated loan repayments for the Public Works Loan to build the new Parish Hall have been included.

SUMMARY		Original 2024-25 Budget	Estimated actual spend 2024-25	2025-26 Draft Budget
Payments	Detail			
STAFF & CLLRS	Clerk's salary & expenses and training	£10,900	£9,900	£10,974
ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	Insurance, subscriptions, room hire, website, stationery, postage, audit fee and elections	£3,870	£4,820	£3,788
MAINTENANCE & PROW	Lengthsman, PROW, volunteer & parish enhancement	£10,000	£9,500	£9,500
PARISH SERVICES	News & Views & Other Printing	£3,091	£3,700	£4,300
GRANTS	Small grants, and support for maintenance of Old Churchyard	£1,450	£1450	£1,450
PROJECTS & WORKING GROUPS	Hub, Repair Cafe & Garden, Fundraising & Events and Neighbourhood Development plan	£19,700	£13,270	£13,720
Capital Related	Parish Hall & Parish Enhancement	£16,445	£28,070	£31,668
OTHER	VAT & Contingency	£13,008	£8,555	£24,625
	TOTAL PAYMENTS (Expenditure)	£78,464	£79,265	£100,025
Funded By	Precept	£55,500	£55,500	£80,000
	Solar Farm	£2,910	£3,638	£2,910
	News & Views advertising	£1,500	£1,500	£1,560
	Donations to Parish Hall, Hub & Repair Cafe	£2,500	£4,400	£6,800
	Grants NDP, Drainage & Lengthsman	£4,000	£6,300	
	Bank Interest	£3,500	£1,500	£200
	VAT Reclaim	£8,554	£14,065	£8,555
	TOTAL FUNDS (Income)	£78,464	£86,903	£100,025

Resolution – The Council approved the draft budget and for it to sent out to the parishioners for consultation.

7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – October 24	As per Contract		

7.2	D C Gardening Services – SI-2063	220.00	44.00	264.00
7.3	PIP Printing - 77736 - News & Views	303.31	0.00	303.31
7.4	Sara Lewis – HUB – Electric October	52.75	0.00	52.75
7.5	PKF Littlejohn	420.00	84.00	504.00
7.6	Easyspace Invoice	1537.65	307.53	1845.18
7.7	Clerks Expenses	419.22	8.90	428.12

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 – October24	32.41	6.48	38.89
8.2	S/O	HUB Rent – October 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.3	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – October 24	15.00	0.00	15.00

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

9. Planning.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
9.1	242635	Parkstone Marden Herefordshire HR1 3DW	Proposed alterations and extensions to existing dwelling, including photovoltaic panels

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to neither support nor object to this application but would make a general comment on the following aspects:

- The increase in the size of the proposed application.
- The proposed size increase compared to neighbouring properties.

9.2 - Planning Enforcement – Update

There had been no formal correspondence from the Herefordshire Council Planning Authority.

To Note – The Council noted that one of the sites has now been tidied up and is looking much better. Small Ashes was still a concern, especially in its general appearance.

10. Marden Parish Hall Working Group

a) – Update on Progress

The working group has meet with 2 possible contractors, with positive responses from both and we are waiting for the final QS report. Citizen Housing is presently out to tender for a company to build the 90 homes. The outcome of this process is critical to the Parish Hall project, and it is hoped that the position will be clear by early December.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

11. Working Group Reports.

11 - Marden Links

a) Hub activity update

Cllr Ryan reported that the HUB was still being well supported. The winter “soup and roll” sessions will begin again on Wednesdays between 13:00 and 15:00. It is planned to run these in December, January and February.

To Note – *This was noted by Council.*

b) Repair Café Update

Cllr Ryan reported that the Repair Café still attracted a steady flow of customer, keeping all the repair volunteers busy. The November Repair Café session received donations of £84.00.

To Note – *This was noted by Council.*

c) Community Garden

Cllr Ryan reported that the community garden was coming along well, and a huge thanks must be given to S & A Produce as they have offered to install the pathways, landscaping concrete the base for both the green house and BBQ area.

There are plans for security lighting and CCTV cameras to be installed once agreed with the owner of the Hairdressers.

To Note – *This was noted by Council.*

11.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group.

a) Funding.

The Clerk reported that the funding for this year had now finished, and it is currently unclear what funding will be available in the future. An update of the current NDP remains a critical task for the Parish Council and will begin immediately Herefordshire Council update Parish Councils on the updated rural housing allocations.

To Note – *This was noted by Council.*

11.3 - Finance & Administration Working Group

a) Minimum entry value in the asset register.

The Clerk reported that the Finance and Administration working group have suggested that the Council no longer record assets below £100 replacement value in the asset register.

Resolution – *Marden Parish Council approved this recommendation.*

b) AGAR

The Chair reported that some of the AGAR forms were late in being put on the website.

To Note – *This was noted by Council.*

12. Community.

12.1 – Telephone Box

Sally Postlethwaite said the telephone box needs some tender loving care as it is looking sad and suggested looking for additional uses of the space.

To Note – *This was noted by Council and Cllr Ryan offered to give it a clean and the Marden Links working group would develop ideas for future usage.*

12.2 – Alleyway & Bus stop Area

The Clerk reported that there had been a misunderstanding with the instructions given to the Lengthsman regarding the clearing of all the weeds from the alleyway and bus stop area. The Lengthsman thought it was just to cut back over hanging branches.

13. Lengthsman – PROW & Drainage Grant.

The reservations regarding responsibilities and administration of the new grant schemes remain. The Clerk said he had email Ed Bradford about these concerns and was waiting for a reply.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

14. Risk Register

To Note – This item was deferred until the January meeting.

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

- Risk Register update
- Asset Register update
- Moreton Bridge repairs
- Response to Parish Charter proposal
- S&A Communications meeting
- Post Office update

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

16. New Parish Hall.

16.1 - Phase 2 Site Investigation – Quotes

Both of the possible contractors had asked for a detail site inspection before they would start any works. Council had obtained 3 quotations through W Architecture, Council decided to go with Ivy House at a cost of £4,870.00 + vat which includes W Architecture fee.

W Architecture asked if the Council still wanted them to liaise with citizen housing.

Resolution – Council agreed to go with Ivy House and for W Architecture to continue to liaise with Citizen Housing for the sake of continuity. Council also agreed that these two next steps should not commence before Citizen Housing had confirmed that they had engaged a contractor to build the 90 houses and assurances had been given that the land for the new Parish Hall would be transferred to the Parish Council.

The Chair asked Council for approval to extend the meeting time, which was granted.

17. Clerks Statutory Pay Award.

The Local Government Pay Award for 2024-25 had been agreed.

Resolution – Council agreed that the agreed award would be applied and backdated to 1st April 2024.

18. Payroll Provider.

The Clerk reported that our current payroll provider is retiring at the end of this financial year, and Council needs to agree a new provider. Our current provider charged £95 per year for the services they provide. The Clerk had obtained 3 quotes, which were reviewed by Council.

Resolution – Council agreed to appoint Kendall Wadley as the new payroll provider at £180 Plus VAT per year.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10.05pm.



Signed:
Chair of the Council

Date: 21st January 2025