



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.00 pm on 17th December 2024 at Marden Community Centre Hall.

Minutes

Present:

Cllr David Bennett (Chair), Cllr Kate Ryan, Cllr Chris Morgan, Cllr Rod Lees, Cllr Richard Paske and Cllr Mike Blake.

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk)
 Cllr Peter Hamblin (Ward Member – Sutton Walls)
 James Fishwick (Balfour Beatty – Head of Design & Project Management)
 Michelle Morgan – (Balfour Beatty – Communications Officer)
 9 x Members of the Public.
 2 x Moreton on Lugg Parish Councillors.

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – Apologies were received from Cllr Paula Barrett & Cllr Lesley Hayward.

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

To Note – There were declarations of interest from Cllr Richard Paske on Planning item 5.1 & 5.4.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 19.11.24 & 03.12.24.

Resolution – *The draft minutes of the 19.11.24 were adopted following a correction of the draft budget figures which did not affect the overall precept figure or the band D amount. The draft EO minutes of the 03.12.24 were also adopted as a true record and both sets were signed by the Chair.*

Item 8 - Moreton Bridge Closure – Update was moved up the agenda.

Cllr Peter Hamblin addressed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, he preceded to say that's lots of work behind the scenes had taken place since the bridge had to be closed due to a vehicle striking it.

James Fishwick, Head of Design & Project Management from Balfour Beatty who was one of the head officers dealing with the bridge repairs, reported the following.

The repair project has 4 stages.

1) Environmental Impact Assessment.

- a) A Habitat Regulations Assessment must be completed by the Herefordshire Council County Ecologist.

- b) A possible Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Permit may be required from Natural England, which may take 30-days to obtain. (An SSSI is an *area of land and water that is considered best represents our natural heritage in terms of their: flora – i.e. plants. fauna – i.e. animals. geology – i.e. rocks.*)
- c) Bat Roost Suitability must be undertaken by the County Ecologist.
- d) Flood Risk Activity Permit may have to be required from the Environment Agency this cannot be expedited and could take 60-days.

2) Listed Building.

- a) List Building Methodology report must be submitted.

3) Scaffolding Design.

- a) Balfour Beatty have commissioned a temporary work scaffold design which will be of a cantilevered design as the scaffolding cannot touch the river and both the Lugg and Wye are protected.

4) Specialist Contractor.

- a) An approved specialist contractor must be appointed to work on a listed bridge.

Where we are so far.

- The Bat Roost Suitability has now been completed and it is all clear.
- Petitioned the County Ecologist that an SSSI assent is not required as work will be done over the water (river) and not in the water. As Natural England have accepted this approach previously. Otherwise, a licence will take 30-days to acquire.
- The Listed Buildings Conservation Team have said they were happy with the Methodology report and listed building consent is not required.
- Balfour Beatty have submitted a Flood Risk Activity Permit to the Environment Agency on the 13th of December, but this could take 60-days to approve.
- A scaffolding design has been submitted for approval.
- A specialist contractor has been appointed and is ready to go, once all the approvals are in place.
- Emergency Work Permit was submitted for consideration, but it did not meet the requirements.

The Chair opened up the meeting to the public for questions.

Q1. Is this bridge repair a priority project.

A1. Yes, 100%. Herefordshire Council and Belfour Beatty have been working on a solution since the day the bridge was hit, as they fully understand the disruption the closure is having.

Q2. Is the bridge unsafe for cars and pedestrians.

A2. Yes unsafe.

Q3. Will the work take as long as we have been told, 4 months.

A3. The work will take about a month, unless we find other faults whilst doing the work. What is going to take the time is all the permissions required. But we are confident the work can be completed within the stated time.

Q4. Will future flooding hold up the works.

A4. No, because the working platform is off the water, the only thing which would stop work for a few days would be workman safety.

Q5. Could a School Bus be put on to help take the children to school.

A5. This could be looked at, but where they did this elsewhere in the County for 3 months, not one child used it.

Q6. Better signage is needed to inform motorists of where and when roads are closed.

A6. Will investigate “business open as usual” signs, but the locality steward was meant to have looked at it.

Q7. Why could we not have a temporary bridge.

A7. Installing a temporary bridge would take longer than repairing the present bridge.

Q8. Why can we not have a reduced speed limit through Marden.

A8. Speed limits, always sound good but are nearly impossible to enforce.

The following questions were asked by the Parish Councillors.

Q1. Cllr Morgan asked who is totally responsible for the bridge.

A1. James Fishwick said he was responsible. But with the full support of the Leader of the Herefordshire Council and the Economy and Environment Director.

Q2. Cllr Bennett asked if the finances were in place for this work.

A2. Yes, 100%.

Q3. Cllr Lees said better signage is need on Haywood Lane as some days it is open other days it is closed.

A3. Will investigate this, when I review the other signs.

After the bridge has been repaired.

- Will look at Traffic Lights
- Speed restrictions.
- Steel Bollards
- Better signage
- Weight Limits
- Basically, everything will be looked at along with Laystone bridge.

The chair said this brings the Moreton Bridge part of the meeting to an end and thanked everyone who attended the meeting.

Cllr Peter Hamblin, James Fishwick & Michelle Morgan and 9 members of the public left the meeting at 8.25pm.

4. Open Session. (Public)

Q1. Why were the draft minutes changed on the website.

A1. There was a correction needed on the draft budget figures which did not affect the overall precept figure or the band D amount.

Q2. In the budget you still have £13½k in for £300k loan and added an amount for a £500k loan.

A2. There is only one Public Works Loan of £500k required to fund the project, as indicated in the Newsletter. Everything will be discussed at the public meeting on the 23.01.25 when the full costings will be fully explained.

Q3. When will the MVT new lease be sorted.

A3. The question should be put to the Trustees of the MVT but the project plan is based on the Trust receiving the lease clawback no later than April 2026.

Q4. Is it correct the present MVT lease has not be relinquished.

A4. Yes, correct but your questions should be directed to the MVT.

Q5. What is the Parish Council going to do to reduce the precept.

A5. Once the new Parish Hall is built the Community HUB will move saving some of the current cost, the Lengthsman costs will be looked at along with all the services.

Q6. Why are the Ward Members reports not included in the minutes and seem to be a secret.

A6. They are not a secret and are now published on the Parish Council website.

Q7. Why is the newsletter not on the website.

A7. It is and there are links on both the Parish Council and Marden Links Community websites.

Q8. At the public meeting about the new Parish Hall, will people have the right to vote.

A8. There will be NO vote, but the Parish Council wants to hear all the views of the residents.

Q9. Why were there no public meetings months and months ago.

A9. Because there was nothing to report.

Q10. The Academy needs to explain why things have not been handed over yet.

A10. It is not the Academy's responsibility. It is up to the MVT to develop a plan and agree a timeline for handing over the current facilities. All parties are working to enable a new classroom to be available by September 2025.

5. Planning

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
5.1	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.

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to **OBJECT** to this application on the following grounds.

1. Not on the original footprint.
2. It is outside our NDP settlement boundary, thus being in the open countryside.
3. Would not meet the core strategy
4. Marden already have many large houses, and smaller dwellings would be more appropriate.
5. The new design would not fit into the current landscape.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
5.2	241849	Hope Lodge The Vault Marden HR1 3HA	Application for the change of use of land to residential curtilage in association with the dwelling known as Hope Lodge and the retention of a buildings for use ancillary to the dwelling known as Hope Lodge.

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to **OBJECT** to this current application, but would support this application, if it is for a strict 3-year period only.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
5.3	242827	Agricultural Building Fromington Cottages Sutton St Nicholas	Proposed change of use of agricultural building to residential dwelling with associated residential curtilage access and parking.

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to **SUPPORT** this application.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
5.4	242563	Marden PO and Store Marden Hereford HR1 3EW	New Single Storey rear extension to provide staff facilities and enlarged kitchen area with storage.

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to **OBJECTS** to this application, on the following grounds.

1. Over development of the site.
2. Impact on neighbouring properties.
3. Limited parking on site is already causing a major problem and any expansion will exacerbate as many cars have to park on a rural road.

6. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
6.1	Clerks Salary – November & December 24	As per Contract		
6.2	D C Gardening Services - 2087	3,395.00	679.00	4,074.00
6.3	Sara Lewis – HUB – Electric November	78.75	0.00	78.75
6.4	Radbourne’s – Sandbags	136.79	27.36	164.15
6.5	Woodcock – 3082	54.00	0.00	54.00
6.6	Woodcock - 3083	63.00	0.00	63.00

Resolution – Council agreed to pay all the invoices.

7. Payment made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – September 24	32.37	6.47	38.84
7.2	BACS	Adzor Ltd – Xmas Tree	270.00	0.00	270.00
7.3	BACS	Signworx – Xmas Newsletter	176.40	0.00	176.40
7.4	S/O	HUB Rent – December 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
7.5	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – December 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.

8. Moreton Bridge Closure - Update.

To Note – Been dealt with previously on the agenda.

9. New Parish Hall – Update.

The Chair reported the following.

- Citizen Housing has now appointed a Contractor.
- Citizen is meeting with contractor to discuss the project including issues which will affect the Parish Council.
- It is anticipated that the Contractor will start the 90 houses in April 2025.
- The Marden Village Trust will pay for the solicitor fee for the new lease.
- A new Marden Parish Trust has been set up and is a CIO approved by the Charities Commission.
- We now need to do a detailed land survey for our contractor to fix their price the Council had previously agree to go with Ivy House at a cost of £4870 +VAT. The Council also agreed to W. Architecture carrying out the liaison with Citizen Housing/Contractor at an agreed cost of £1995 + VAT

Resolution – Council agreed to commission Ivy House to do the land survey and for W. Architecture to carry out the liaison with Citizen Housing.

10. West Mercia Police Community Charter.

- a) 3 policing priorities.

Resolution – Marden Parish Council agreed to invite the police to a meeting to discuss the Police Charter and the benefits.

11. Sutton Walls Conservation Group.

Resolution – *Marden Parish Council agreed to support in principle but would invite them to a future Parish council meeting to explain how they are going to implement the scheme.*

*Date of next Council Meeting **21st January 2025** at 7.30pm in the Marden Community Centre.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Signed:
Chair of the Council

Date: 21st January 2025