



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.00 pm on 18th February 2025 at Marden Community Centre Hall.

Minutes

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk)
2 x Members of the Public.

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – Apologies were received from Cllr Paula Barrett.

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

To Note – There were declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations from Cllr Rod Lees on item 17.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 21.01.25.

Resolution – The draft minutes of the 21.01.25 were adopted following the addition approval of the W Architecture invoice of £1000.00+vat.

4. West Mercia Police.

Adam Westlake and (Police Community Support Officers)

They thanked the Parish Council for the invitation and explained that there had been some recent in dwelling burglaries in the Parish. A person from away had been arrested and some of the stolen items had been recovered.

They gave the following advice to help prevent burglaries

- Purchase a TV flicking machine
- Security Lighting
- Ask a neighbour to open and close curtains
- Don't advertise you are going on holiday or going away.

To Note – The Council noted the report and advice and thanked the officers for attending and their handling of the incidents.

The Police left the meeting at 7.55pm

5. Open Session.
(Ward Member)

To Note - The ward member was not present, neither was a written report submitted.

(Members of Public)

Q1. A resident said they could not find the approved budget on the website.

A1. The Chair said it would be added.

Q2. A resident said they could not find the Asset Register on the website under Accounts.

A2. The Chair said it is on the website under the meeting documentation. The final approved asset register will be incorporated with the year-end accounts once the audit has been completed.

Q3. A resident said why were there PIP invoice on the agenda from August and December still to be paid.

A3. The Clerk said they had not been received, but they are correct and there have been no overpayments of any sort. It was noted that some of the invoice numbering in prior minute approvals was incorrect.

Q4. A resident said he did not think the Public Works Loan calculation figures were correct and should be significantly lower.

A4. The Chair said the figures were correct at the interest rates at the time, the calculations were taken from the government website for Public Works Loans.

Q5. A resident noticed that the investigation holes on the new Parish Hall site had now been dug and was the report available.

A5. The Chair said that the report has not yet been received. The Chair thanked the resident for raising the alarm as the contractor on the first visit was digging holes in the wrong place.

6. Footpaths Officer Report & to Consider actions.

- a) Materials Ordered – 8 x Stiles – 9 x Kissing Gates – 7 x Finger Posts – 2 x Bridleway Posts.
- b) Authority for Lengthsman to pick up from Hereford.

The footpaths officer was not present on this occasion.

7. Finance Matters.

7.1 - Financial Report

Resolution – The Council approved the financial report.

7.2 - Bank Accounts – 31.01.25

7.2a - Unity Main – January - £2,320.38

7.2b - Unity Reserve – January - £94,920.79

To Note – The Council noted the bank statements.

7.3 - Asset Register.

Resolution – The Council approved the asset register.

7.4 - To appoint an Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

Resolution – The Council approved the re-appoint Town & Parish Auditors.

8 Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	Clerks Salary – February 25	As per Contract		
8.2	PIP – 78145 – January 25	314.23	0.00	314.23
8.3	PIP – 77109 – June 24	303.31	0.00	303.31
8.4	PIP – 77900 – November 24	303.31	0.00	303.31
8.5	D C Gardening – SI-2111	195.00	39.00	234.00
8.6	Clerk Expenses	566.53	92.80	659.33
8.7	Herefordshire Tree Wardens Network – Subs	30.00	0.00	30.00

Resolution – Council agreed to pay all the invoices.

9 Payment made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
9.1	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – February 25	32.11	6.42	38.53
9.2	S/O	HUB Rent – February 25	450.00	0.00	450.00
9.3	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – February 25	15.00	0.00	15.00
9.4	BACS	S Lewis – January Electric	77.04	0.00	77.04
9.5	BACS	W Architecture Ltd – 1600-241 – Site Inspection	5270.00	1054.00	6324.00
9.6	BACS	W Architecture Ltd – 1600-242 – Liaison up to August 24	1000.00	200.00	1200.00
9.7	BACS	W Architecture Ltd – 1600-243 – Liaison to start on site	1950.00	399.00	2349.00

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

10 Planning.

Council discussed both the planning applications in some detail, some councillors had received verbal comments from some residents about the applications. The Councillors knew both sites and a site visit weren't needed, also the application information on the Herefordshire Council website was very informative.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
10.1	P243136/FH	House on the Hill Urdimarsh Road Marden Herefordshire HR1 3HB	Proposed storage building

Resolution – Council agreed to **OBJECT** to this application on the following grounds. Council have concerns on the size and the overall height of this building especially as it is located in a prominent location.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
10.2	P243112/PP	Marden Court Farm Church Lane Marden Herefordshire	Extension to existing livestock building by covering over of existing open concrete yard to building.

Resolution – Council agreed to make a *GENERAL COMMENT* on the size of the extension and its visibility from Sutton Walls and its position to a Historic Church.

10.3 – S&A – Drakeley Farm, implementation of conditions.

Cllr Lees said he had been looking into the conditions but this was a bigger job than first thought. Cllr Lees would report back at the next Parish Council meeting.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

11 Moreton Bridge Closure – Update.

The Chair reported that workman had been seen on site, and hoped things were now about to progress.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

12 New Parish Hall – Update.

a) Authority to make daily decisions.

The Chair explained that things were now moving fast with the project and decision would need to be made quickly. There would not be time to come back to council for decisions to be made, as this could be in anything between 5 days to a month.

Resolution – Council agreed to give the Chair and the Clerk the authority to make decisions within budget and on matters not budgeted for or not within budget it would be the Finance Working Group. A monthly report on the project progress against budget to be given.

b) Solicitor – Land Transfer – Draft long-term lease – Attend meeting with developer.

The Clerk reported that a Parish Council Solicitor had been retained for the land transfer and any other works related to the New Parish Hall site. The name of the Solicitor is “Lanyon Bowdler” a quotation for the works has been received at £2000.00 + vat, however if the works, becomes more difficult than this fee may rise, to reflect this, a contract of £2000.00 +vat had been signed.

The Chair said that there were funds budgeted for a solicitor, and this was within budget.

Resolution – Council approved any payments to the solicitor as long as they were within budget.

c) Community Spaces Capital Grant.

The Chair reported that an Expression of Interest would be submitted for an additional room 6m x 3m along with other enhancements like a canopy, semi commercial kitchen (Stainless Steel) IT facility at a total cost of £193,500.00 which includes the professional fees.

To Note – This was noted by Council and thanked the Chair and the Vice Chair for their hard work submitting this Expression of Interest.

13 Working Group Reports.

13.1 - Marden Links

a) To approve extension to the Lease for 9 Walkers Green.

Cllr Ryan reported that they would like approval to extend the current lease on the Community HUB for an additional 2-years on the same conditions.

Resolution – Council agreed to extend the lease for an additional 2-year period.

b) Hub

Cllr Ryan reported the HUB was ticking over, with regular clients, the winter special of Soup and a bread roll will stop at the end of the month. But tea and cake will be the order of the day again. The HUB had £100.00 in donations to be banked by the Clerk.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

c) Repair Café.

Cllr Ryan reported the repair café is still very well supported and the new equipment is very much needed. It would be nice to sign up one or two more professional fixers, to help, mainly with electrics and electronics. The Repair Café had £200.00 in donations to be banked by the Clerk.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

d) Community Garden.

Cllr Ryan reported that the proposed garden weekend had to be cancelled due to the bad weather. This is going to be rescheduled for a date in the near future.

The Chair reported that a resident had offered a 7'5" x 5'5" greenhouse, but it had to be moved from theirs to the community garden.

To Note – This was noted by Council, and the Clerk was asked to contact a local farmer to see if they could help with the moving of the greenhouse.

13.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group

The Clerk reported this was on hold in the short term and any possible funding will not be known until April 25.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

13.3 - Finance & Administration Working Group

The Clerk reported the working group had met and had decided to have quarterly meetings. Cllr Paske (with initial support from Cllr Lees) would carry out the quarterly account reconciliation. A revised summary monthly financial report will be developed. The 2026/27 budget process starts now with the requirement to be completed and ready for distribution with the December 2025 News & Views. The next meeting will be on the 27.03.25.

To Note – This was noted by Council.

14 Parish Matters

14.1 – Dog Mess

Councillors & parishioners noticed that the dog mess was getting worse around the Parish, which was a great shame, as nobody wants dog mess on the shoes or pram wheels. It is a shame there are inconsiderate dog owners. There were still cans of pink spray if any Councillor or parishioner wanted to highlight the dog mess.

Resolution – Council agreed to put an article in the next edition of News & Views, Cllr Ryan agreed to do this.

14.2 – Litter Picking

A group of local volunteers have agreed to do a litter pick around the Parish on the 11.04.25 and if anyone wants to help, please contact the Clerk.

Resolution – *Council agreed this was a great idea and would advertise it in the News & Views, Cllr Ryan agreed to do this.*

14.3 - Consolidated Charities

Cllr Ryan reported that the current secretary of the charity had moved away from the area and has relinquished their position. This is a small grant giving charity which only meets a few times a year and the job would not be overly complicated. It would be a shame if a new secretary could not be found, as this may close the charity.

Resolution – *Council agreed to it would advertise for a secretary in the News & Views, Cllr Ryan agreed to do this.*

15 Future Agenda Items or Clerk action under delegated authority.

- a) Co-Option
- b) Meeting with S & A
- c) Herefordshire Children Services – Update

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

16 Lengthsman Contract.

The lengthsman's contract comes to an end at the end of 31.03.25. A new quotation had been received and there was a cost-of-living increase.

Council said they were happy with the work which was currently being undertaken.

Resolution – *Council agreed to grant D C Gardening Services the Lengthsman contract for an additional 12 month until the 31.03.26.*

17 To consider quote for Council printing.

Council had now received a quotation from its current printer, but sadly it had increased and was not competitive against the other quotation received. The Clerk pointed out that Council didn't have to accept the cheapest quotations but needed to demonstrate they were getting value for money.

Resolution – *Council agreed to go with Signworx. The Clerk was asked to send a thank you to our current printer and inform Signworx they had been successful with their quotation.*

Date of next Council Meeting 18th March 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