



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.30 pm on 20th January 2026 at
Marden Community Centre Hall.

Minutes

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Mr Richard James (Clerk)
Mr Peter Hamblin (Ward Member)
5 x Members of the Public.

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – *There were no Apologies.*

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

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

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 16.12.25.

Resolution – *The draft minutes of the 16.12.25 were adopted and duly signed by the Chair.*

4. Open Session.

(Ward Member)

The Ward Member presented his report, which can be found on the Parish Council Website.

In addition to the report the Ward Member said that only that afternoon

- *The Herefordshire Council had approved that every Carpark owned by the Authority would be FREE for the first 30 minutes.*
- *The Herefordshire Council had approved for the very first time, to give the Ward Members an allowance to be spent within their Ward Area. (The amount was not given.)*
- *The Herefordshire Council had approved for the Lengthsman and the PROW schemes to continue for 2026/27.*

To Note – *The Council note this and free carparking would be very much welcomed by the parishioners. The Clerk was requested to develop an outline plan for potential application of grant funding associated with Prow and Lengthsman costs.*

Q1. - Cllr C Morgan asked a question about the SEND provision within the County following the Government pulling the funding for a new special purpose SEND school.

A1. - The Ward Member said this was a complex question, and could the Councillor put his request in writing.

(Members of public)

Q1. - The Draft budget for capital items shows £581k, will a detailed breakdown be published.

A1. - The new budget has been published in the Winter Newsletter with the vast majority of the proposed budget relating to the new Parish Hall.

Q2. - Will the Parish Hall have to pay the £25 per month service charge that the houses on the site will.

A2. - The Question was asked last February and while there is no written agreement it is believed that the Parish Hall will not be subject to the charge.

Q3. - Is it true the one storage cupboard is going to be used for the housing the services and the other the solar panel equipment and battery storage.

A3. - Yes, the smaller of the two storage rooms in the lobby area will be used as a plant room.

Q4. - Who is going to be installing the solar panels.

A4. - S J Roberts are the main contractor and are responsible for the installation.

Q5. - what is happening about the HGV signage.

A5. - This has been passed to Herefordshire Council Highways, and the Ward Member will chase the matter up.

To Note – *The Council noted the questions.*

5. Finance Matters.

5.1 - Account Summary – December 25

Resolution – *The Council approved the Account Summary.*

5.2 - Bank Accounts – 31.12.25.

5.2a - Unity Main – December 25 - £3,778.05

5.2b - Unity Saver – December 25 - £401,006.98

To Note – *The Council noted the bank statements.*

5.3 - HUB Accounts – December 25

Resolution – *The Council approved the HUB Accounts.*

5.4 - VAT Reclaim – December 25 - £24,150.12

To Note – *The Council noted the VAT reclaim.*

5.5 - Approval of Precept for 2026/27 at £80,000

Resolution – *The Council approved the precept for 2026/27 at £80,000.00.*

5.6 - Approval of budget for 2026/27 at £462,758

Resolution – The Council approved the budget for 2026/27.

6. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
6.1	Clerks Salary – Dec 25	As per Contract		
6.2	PWLB - 1st Payment	22,592.86	0.00	22,592.86
6.3	S J Roberts payment No3	44,796.70	8,959.34	53,756.04
6.4	Hub Electricity	68.50	0.00	68.50
6.5	Signworx – News and Views	252.00	0.00	252.00
6.6	eUKhost	125.18	25.04	150.22
6.7	R James - Planning Fees – New Entrance	219.83	14.17	234.00
6.8	W Architecture Ltd – 1600-257	11,983.33	2,396.66	14,379.99
6.9	W Architecture Ltd – 1600-258	1,710.00	342.00	2,052.00

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 – Jan 25	46.69	9.34	56.03
7.2	S/O	HUB Rent - Jan 25	450.00	0.00	450.00
7.3	S/O	Community Garden - Rent - Jan 25	15.00	0.00	15.00
7.4	DD	Unity Trust - Service Charge	6.00	0.00	6.00

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

8. Planning.

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
8.1	P253465/O	Land adjacent to The Withies Litmarsh Marden Hereford	One self-build dwelling and associated works; and the replacement of aseptic tank with a package treatment plant.

Resolution – The Marden Parish Council OBJECTS to this application on the following grounds.

- The development is outside the NDP development boundary.
- The development does not comply with the Marden NDP.
- The development is in the open Countryside.
- The development is near to a listed building.
- The Design is not in keeping with the locality.
- Sustainability within Marden needs to be considered

	Application No	Address	Permission sought
8.2	253389	Land at Norton Court the Vauld Marden Herefordshire HR1 3HA	Hybrid application for three self-build dwellings and associated works comprising: (1) Full planning permission for the site access, shared road, structural landscaping, shared infrastructure, and replacement package treatment plant for Norton Court; and (2) Outline planning permission with all matters bar access reserved for the three plots.

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

- The development is outside the NDP development boundary.
- The development does not comply with the Marden NDP.
- Concerns about flooding.
- Sustainability within Marden needs to be considered

8.3 - Enforcement.

a) Farmer John's Signage.

The Ward member said that the enforcement officer had visited the site but has not written their report.

b) Small Ashes. Both a planning and footpath issue.

The Council said this property had not fully complied with the conditions of its planning permission.

The owner of the property has now blocked off the PROW and there was meant to be a new bridge installed.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council, and the Ward Member was going to pick this matter up and speak with the planning enforcement and the PROW inspector.*

9. New Parish Hall.

9.1- Update.

The Chair updated the Council with the following.

Construction work going very well in spite of a nearly two weeks delay due to inclement weather and has been reflected in the latest Interim Payment No.3, originally estimated to be £116,000 but actual invoice £44,746.70. This brings the total construction spend to date to £229,702 with retention of £11,485.

Physically the groundworks have been completed, the steel frame erected and the roof cladding installed. Over the next month we should see the base installed with the external walls, windows and doors installed.

The target remains to be complete for handover in early July. The project cost remains at £976,460 with a spend to date as at 31st December of £324.234 (36%).

The Design and Build contract remains at £746,425 with a spend of £173,421 (23%) although there are a number of areas where savings might materialise, but these have yet to be confirmed. Examples being Tarmac Surface £23,000 and service connection £15,000.

There are known additions to date relating to the final designs for the Kitchen and Solar panels system totally about £16,000.

Currently, it looks like we will require interim funding from March / April through to October 2026 when we will receive monies from the management lease purchase.

The new planning application for the temporary entrance has been submitted and awaits planning approval in due course. Once the whole site has been completed this entrance must be removed, the disabled parking bays lost (2) reinstated and the main entrance to the Parish Hall opened. This expensive solution is required for health a safety reasons associated with the main build.

The Marden Parish Trust met just before Christmas and the Parish Hall Transition group met on 6th January. Much the same items were discussed in both meetings, given their common interest.

1. Top of the list was the need to finalise the management lease at the earliest opportunity. Significant progress is being made by the Marden Parish Trust and their solicitor, and it is hoped to have an initial draft by the end of January. The Clerk is still looking for an alternative solicitor to act for the Parish Council, but this should be finalised this week.
2. The kitchen design was finalised and endorsed with an added cost of around £7,500 but it does include the white goods.
3. SJ Roberts concluded their study into the best configuration of solar panels to meet the estimated operating hours. The conclusion was that it would be highly beneficial to move from an 8 panel 5kWh battery (as per tender) to a 24 panel 15kWh battery scheme. Both groups supported the proposed upgrade.

Some of the main benefits being:

- a. CO2 savings increased from 1546 kg/yr to 4637 kg/yr
- b. Total annual cost savings in 1st 20 years £735 £/yr vs £1497 £/yr
- c. Payback in years 10 vs 9

Moving from 8 to 24 panels adds an additional cost of about £8,800. SJ Roberts were given the go-ahead last Friday and were quick off the mark placing the order over the weekend as they wish to add the panels to the roof while they still had the scaffolding erected.

SJ Roberts have confirmed that approval from the Distribution Network officer is not required as the incoming electric is 3 phase and under G98 you are allowed 11kw Additionally, Herefordshire Council Planning has confirmed that the increase is within permitted development.

4. Template plans are being developed from the floor plan to demonstrate to potential users how best the space can be used for specific events. This led to a number of design questions to be raised at this month's site meeting with SJ Roberts.

The January Site meeting took place on 15th January and while there was the usual update on progress and costs the main focus was on the proposed mechanical and electrical design. Deadlines are coming thick and fast. SJR need to know the position with Tarmac by the end of February while the Lottery applications for lighting, solar panels and entrance canopy require review. There might be an issue as the applications are possible incorrect plus we may not know if we have approval for up to 12 weeks which could be too late. Specific items discussed at the site meeting and awaiting a response along with any cost impact:

1. Can internal doors be changed from painted 4 panel doors to flat faced doors.

2. Could the ceramic floor tiles in the toilets and kitchen areas be changed to vinyl roll flooring similar to what is going in the lobby and community rooms.
3. Could the toilet cubicles be upgraded from Melamine Faced Chipboard to High Pressure Laminate for greater durability.
4. Can the 2 16-amp external sockets be upgraded to 32 amp.
5. A change in door opening into community room 1.

The proposed electrical design was presented and SJR would like a response by the end of the month. The layout and item directory has been circulated to the Transition Group for initial comment.

The external lighting scheme and lux levels are to be provided at the next site meeting. The issue is that lamppost solar lighting was excluded from the tender due to Dark Sky concerns. While the proposed external lighting attached to the building might be good it might not be good enough. Stud lighting and low-level bollard lighting may be options.

The next site meeting will be on the 12th of February.

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

9.2 - Upgrade the solar to 24 panels at a cost of £8831.25+vat.

Solar Panels – the contract included 8 x 465w PV panels, 1 x 3.68kW 3 phase inverter and a 5kWh battery giving a power output of 3344 kWh. The cost of this configuration being £7200 (included in the contract).

The approved updated system consists of 24 x 465w PV panels with an 11kW 3 phase inverter and a 15kWh battery giving a power output of 10033 kWh. The cost of this revised configuration has been agreed at £16031.25.

Resolution – *Council approved the upgrade of the solar panels at a cost of £8831.25+vat.*

9.3 - Upgrade to Kitchen at a cost of £2.5k to £3.5k.

Kitchen – The contract included £4000 for the installation of kitchen units only with no detailed specification. There was an understanding from the beginning that the Parish Council would design the kitchen and include appropriate white goods and that the cost may require an increase in the construction contract.

The Transition group worked with Howdens during December and January to establish what has become the approved design. The cost, based on SJ Roberts rates with Howdens was only finalised just before the Parish Council meeting.

The total cost being around £11,500 (the fitting cost has still to be finalised as SJ Roberts will sub-contract that work)

Resolution – *Council approved the additional cost for the kitchen.*

9.4 – Newsletter No 11.

The Chair explained that the publication of the newsletter related to costs to the end of the previous month. The newsletter also includes additional construction activity up to the week before the Parish Council meeting.

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

10. Working Group Reports.

10.1 - Marden Links

- a) Hub activity update
- b) Repair Café Update
- c) Community Garden

Cllr K Ryan said the Marden Links committee did not meet in January as there was nothing to discuss, hence why there were no formal minutes. The next meeting will be in February.

- The HUB ticking over very nicely with its regular clients, they will still be offering soup, and a bread roll up until the end of February.
- The Repair Café is still attracting large numbers of repairs and have now recently purchased a new mini welder.
- Work on the Community Garden has been quiet, mainly due to it being winter. However, they did manage to lay and level the last bag of stone on the pathways. Things will start to ramp up again in the spring, where another volunteer day will be organised.

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

10.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan update

- a) Comments on NPPF Consultation document – consultation ends 10th March

The Chair said that the whole council needs to meet to go through the NPPF Consultation document. It was agreed that the Councillors would read the document so it can be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

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

10.3 - Finance & Administration Working Group.

The Chair said that this working group ideally needs to meet just to keep an eye on the Parish Council finances.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council, but no date was set.*

10.4 - Events Group

The Events Group will meet in early February to develop a programme of Parish Events for the upcoming year.

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

10.5 – Transport Working group

- a) Agree an initial meeting of councillors to establish terms of reference and plan for 2026.
- b) Review “How to Make 20mph work” – document distributed by Cllr Hayward

Resolution – *Council agreed that the Transport Working Group will meet on Tuesday 24th February at 7pm in the Community Centre. The 20mph would be included in this meeting.*

11. Community.

11.1 - Bus Shelter

The Clerk said he had found companies which would supply, narrow slim bus shelters. The Chair said there was some concern about the possible number of services in the location of the proposed bus shelter and further investigation was required.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council, and the Clerk would contact the Locality Steward.*

11.2 – Replacement Post Box

The Clerk said ideally, he needs the What3Words location for the missing Post Box. A member of the public said it used to be on the corner of the Vault and Littmarsh Road.

To Note – *This was noted by the Council, and the Clerk would investigate further.*

11.3 – Flooding at Rosa Villas

The Clerk reported that he had received a complaint about flooding in this area. The Chair was unaware this area suffered from flooding issues. The new Transport working group will look into this as flooding is part of their remit.

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

11.4 – Replacement Defib Pads. Both adult and child.

The Clerk reported that he had found replacement defib pads but had received an email from the person who looks after the defib that that the company were going to stop making these pads in the future and stop supporting this type of defib.

The Clerk was also asked to look at the renewal costs and the cost of a new Defib for the new Parish Hall.

Note – *This was noted by the Council, and the Clerk was authorised to purchase replacement defib pads.*

11.5 - Potholes within the Parish.

The Chair asked the Clerk if he had received many complaints about potholes in the Parish, the Clerk said only the ones now along the road where the new development was taking place. The Chair said the Transport working group will be looking at potholes in general within the Parish.

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

12. Policies.

12.1 - Standing Orders

The Clerk said that the Standing Orders had now been updated to reflect new laws and he had highlighted the new wording and put a line through the wording which was to be deleted. The Council went through the document.

Resolution – *The Council approved and adopted the New Standing Orders.*

- 13.** Play Area Capital Investment Programme – Update appears to indicate that programme only applies to current play areas run by Herefordshire Council.

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

- 14.** Marden Consolidated Charities – Proposal for the Parish Council to take over responsibility if no parishioner comes forward.

The Chair explained that this was an old charity within the Parish and the current secretary

had moved away and it was no longer practical for the person to remain as the secretary. The Parish Council had previously advertised for a new secretary but to no avail. The Chair proposed the Parish Council took on this role, and the Clerk would undertake the work of secretary and treasurer.

Resolution – *This was approved by the Council.*

15. Action List.

The Chair reported that most of the items on the action list had now been completed and he would update it for the next meeting.

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

16. Future Agenda Items.

- Bus Shelter
- Dog Fouling
- Police
- NPPF Document
- HGV Signage

To exclude the members of the public & the press from this part of the meeting to discuss items of a confidential nature.

17. Project Funding.

A brief meeting took place to discuss the current position of the finances of the New Parish Hall build.

Resolution – *Council agreed for the Clerk to lead with this and report back to Council.*

Date of next Council Meeting 17th February 2026 at 7.30pm in the Marden Community Centre.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.40pm.



Signed:
Chair of the Council
17th February 2026