



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.30 pm on 21st April 2026 at Marden Community Centre Hall.

Minutes

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Mr Richard James (Clerk)
3 x Members of the Public.

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – There were apologies from Cllr Lesley Hayward, Cllr Paula Barrett & Cllr Richard Paske.

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 17.03.26.

Resolution – The draft minutes of the 17.02.26 were adopted and duly signed by the Chair.

4. Open Session.

(Ward Member)

The Ward member was not present but had submitted a report.

(Public Session)

Q1. A resident queried a minute note, which contradicted a minute earlier on in the minutes.

A1. The Chair explained that both statements were correct in the context they were written.

Q2. A resident questioned about RIBI stages 5, 6, 7 had been paid and what do they do for the fees.

A2. The Chair explained the Architect and the Quantity Surveyor both visit site every month and go through all the works, which have been undertaken and compare with the invoiced works.

5. Finance Matters.

5.1 - Account Summary – March 26.

Resolution – The Council approved the Account Summary.

5.2 - Bank Accounts- 31.03.26.

5.2a- Unity Main- March 26- £370.27

5.2b- Unity Saver- March 26- £408,868.84

To Note – The Council noted the bank statements

5.3 - HUB Accounts- March 26

Resolution – The Council approved the HUB Accounts.

5.4 - VAT Reclaim- March 26- £16,059.66

To Note – The Council noted the VAT reclaim.

6. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
6.1	Clerks Salary – April 26	As per Contract		
6.2	S Lewis – HUB Electric	124.18	0.00	124.18
6.3	D C Gardening Services	700.00	140.00	840.00
6.4	SJ Roberts	50,362.36	10,072.47	60,434.83

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- Apr 26	19.50	10.24	29.74
7.2	S/O	HUB Rent- Mar 26	450.00	0.00	450.00
7.3	S/O	Community Garden- Rent- Mar 26	15.00	0.00	15.00
7.4	DD	Unity Trust- Service Charge- Mar 26	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.

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
8.1	252481	Land behind The Farm Marden Herefordshire HR1 3EW	Proposed erection of 9 dwellings and associated landscaping.

Resolution – The Marden Parish Council OBJECTS to this application.

In addition to our original representation in respect of this application, Marden Parish Council wishes to submit the following formal objection.

The Parish Council objects to planning application 252481 on the grounds that the proposal conflicts with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular the requirement to ensure that development is supported by adequate infrastructure (notably paragraphs 8, 11 and 20).

Marden can no longer reasonably be regarded as a sustainable settlement within the meaning of national policy. Local infrastructure is demonstrably under strain and, in several respects, is failing. The local highway network is in a deteriorated condition, with widespread defects

including potholes. Drainage infrastructure is inadequate, contributing to increasingly frequent and severe flooding events. Two principal access routes, both constrained by historic bridges, are especially susceptible to flooding and are therefore unreliable and potentially unsafe, particularly in the context of any increase in traffic generation arising from new development. This raises clear concerns under the safety and access provisions of the NPPF (paragraph 115).

Furthermore, there is insufficient capacity within key community infrastructure. The addition of approximately 90 dwellings at New House Farm would materially exacerbate existing pressures. The parish has experienced a decline in local services, including the loss of public houses and the post office, contrary to the objective of supporting thriving rural communities (NPPF paragraph 83). The local school is already undersized relative to projected demand, and there is uncertainty regarding the capacity of Welsh Water to accommodate new connections, raising concerns under infrastructure delivery requirements (NPPF paragraph 20).

When taken cumulatively, these factors—together with those set out in our original submission—demonstrate that the parish does not currently have the infrastructure, services, or resilience necessary to support further residential development. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be unsustainable and contrary to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and associated planning guidance.

The Parish Council also has major concerns about the lack of the Water Supply to the site and the low water pressure within Marden in general.

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
8.2	260740	Highwood Croft Marden Hereford Herefordshire HR1 3EW	Ancillary annex above the existing garage to provide garage, workshop and storage at ground floor level and ancillary bedroom accommodation at first floor level. PV panels to be mounted on dwelling.

Resolution – *The Marden Parish Council agreed to make no comment on this application.*

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
8.3	252547	Land adjacent to Drakely Cottage Marden Herefordshire HR1 3ES	Outline application with all matters bar access reserved for the erection of a self-build dwelling with garage

Resolution – *The Marden Parish Council Objects to this application as it does not comply with the Marden NDP.*

8.4- Enforcement.

- a) Farmer John's Signage.
- b) Small Ashes. Both a planning and footpath issue.

The Clerk reported that that he has not received any update from the Ward Member or the Herefordshire Council.

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

9. New Parish Hall.

9.1- Update.

The Chair gave the following report.

Over the last four weeks the external wall cladding has been finished, and most internal blockwork has been completed. Externally the car park and temporary entrance groundwork has been prepared. The target for the next month is to complete the blockwork, install doors and windows along with 1st fix M&E.

Sadly, some construction days have been lost due to high winds and rain over the last month. This brings the total to 29 days lost since the build started last October. They are planning to allow earlier access for the Transition Group to prepare for the opening day event on the 30th August.

The project cost remains at £976,460 with a spend to date as of the 31st March is £550,513 (56%).

The Design and Build contract remain at £746,425 with a spend of £337,998 (48%). Retention at 5% of spend is now £17,789.

Areas of cost reduction are still being calculated and agreed by our QS and SJR. Examples being Tarmac Surface £22K- £27K but we need approval from the Tarmac director for the Southwest and Wales this week, service connection to site £10k, lower sub-structure costs £5k and reduced sub-base thickness £2k. These potential savings will be offset by an improved kitchen design £7.4k, additional solar panel costs £8.8k and an entrance canopy £17k.

Interim funding from April through to October 2026 has been secure via parishioner loans. Many thanks to those who are participating.

The lottery grant application for external solar lighting has been approved for £17,800.

The Parish Hall Transition group met on 7th April. Some of the topics covered were:

1. Again, top of the list was the need to finalise the management lease at the earliest opportunity. The Parish Council and MPT are encouraging their respective solicitors to finalise the draft. The first draft is anticipated this week.
2. Colour schemes for walls, floors, doors, chairs etc. have been finalised and passed to SJR.
3. Both the MVT Trustees and the Marden Links Hub will have completed detailed inventory lists and gaps identified at the next meeting. An analysis of available funders was made but due to funder requirements, grants prior to startup are unlikely.
4. The overall kitchen design remains a thorny issue due to the need to meet current disability requirements and building regulations for community buildings, but we are near to the final design.

An entrance canopy has now been approved which is a metal frame structure in anthracite grey with a glass roof (5 meters x 2.5 meters)

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

9.2- Newsletter No 14.

The Chair presented the New Parish Hall Newsletter No 14.

To Note – The Council noted the latest newsletter which can be found on the Parish Council website.

10. Working Group Reports.

10.1- Marden Links

a) Hub activity update

Cllr K Ryan reported that the HUB is still very much supported and new faces were always welcome.

b) Repair Café Update

Cllr K Ryan reported that the Repair Café will be meeting on the Saturday even though it is over the Bank Holiday weekend.

c) Community Garden

Cllr K Ryan reported that the working group had been busy tidying the Garden getting it ready for the summer months. There is still some work to be done, and any help would be very appreciated.

To Note – These reports were noted by the Council.

10.2- Neighbourhood Development Plan update.

This continues to be on hold, until the draft Core Strategy has been received from the Herefordshire Council.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

10.3- Finance & Administration Working Group

The Finance & Administration Working Group were going to meet on the 23rd April to go through the end of year accounts.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

10.4- Events Group

There is going to be a tabletop sale to help raise funds for the new Parish Hall on the 9th May between 10 at 12.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

10.5- Transport Working group

The meeting had to be cancelled as it was not possible to get the whole group together.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11. Community.

11.1 - S & A Drakeley – Councillor Tour.

The Chair reported that if there were any Councillors who wanted a tour around S & A Drakeley then to contact the Clerk, so it could be arranged.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.2 - Opening of Cherry Orchard Show Home & Sales Office.

The Chair reported that he had been invited to cut the ribbon on the show home on the new

development. This is going to take place on the Saturday 25th April at 10am, it would be nice to see some Councillors at this event.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.3 - Dog Mess

The is still an issue within the parish especially now weather has improved.

Resolution – Council agreed for the Clerk to purchase Pink Spray.

11.4 - HGV Signage – update

The Clerk reported that he had been in touch with the Ward Member with no reply.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

12. Action Log.

The Clerk said he will actively work through the action log.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

13. Future Agenda Items.

The Clerk ask the Councillors to contact him, if they had future agenda items.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

Signed:
Chair of the Council
21st May 2026