



Marden Parish Council

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

Minutes

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Mr Richard James (Clerk)
Cllr 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 – Cllr P Barrett declared an in item 10.4 & 7.11.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 16.06.26.

Resolution - The draft minutes of the 16.06.26 were adopted and duly signed by the Chair.

4. Open Session.

Ward Member.

The Ward member presented his report.

To Note - This report was noted by the Council and can be found on the Parish Council website.

Public Session.

A resident asked the following questions.

Q1. The Footpath next to the hairdressers still has the roots of a tree growing through the tarmac surface.

A1. The Ward member will pick this issue up, as the Clerk had asked the Parish Lengthsman, who said the job was too large for them.

Q2. What was the additional invoice for, from the Council Architect.

A1. This was for fees associated with contract additions made during the Parish Hall build.

Q3. Why has there been 3 planning applications for the new hall build.

A3. These refer to 2 applications for a temporary access (one rejected by Herefordshire Council highways) and the other for minor changes made in the design while the new hall was being built – external lighting.

Q4. Why will the Parish Council not publish the amount of public loans.

A4. Assurances were given to the loaner that this matter would remain Confidential.

Q5. What is happening with the Long-Term Management Plan.

A5. This has been published, but the Parish Council haven't had chance to go through it.

Q6. I tried to view the Parish Council Asset Register on the website, but not all the pages were viewable (last four pages).

A6. The Council will look into this as there appears to be a formatting issue.

Q7. I could not see the 4 garden benches or the Shipping Container on the Asset Register.

A7. The shipping container is under General Parish Assets, and the benches are under the Community Garden.

5. Footpaths Officer.

5.1 - Job Description.

The Clerk outlined the new Footpaths officer job description, which HALC feel should only work in progress, as some of the duties are unacceptable.

5.2 - Footpath Officer Training - Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford.

The Clerk explained that the Herefordshire Council are currently running training courses on the rights and responsibilities of the Footpaths officer and landowners.

***To Note** - The Council noted both these matters.*

6. Finance Matters.

6.1 - Account Summary – June 26.

***Resolution** - The Council approved the Account Summary*

6.2 - Bank Accounts - 31.06.26.

6.2a - Unity Main - June 26.- £14,991.63

6.2b - Unity Saver - June 26.- £464,936.07

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

6.3 - HUB Accounts - June 26.

***To Note** - The Council noted the HUB accounts.*

6.4 - VAT Reclaim - June 26- £17,042.63

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

6.5- Internal Audit report on 2025/26 Accounts

Two recommendations were made.

a. Increase general reserve by £2000.

b. Improve the current Parish Council Website

***Resolution** – The Council noted the Internal Auditors recommendation following the review of 2025/26 accounts and would review the general reserve as part of next year's budget. A review of the Parish Council website was already underway, and it is proposed to include the*

audit recommendations. The Council agreed to a budget of £1400 for this work.

7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary - July 26	As per Contract		
7.2	SJ Roberts	85,676.92	17,135.38	102,812.30
7.3	D C Gardening Services - 2533	1105.00	221.00	1326.00
7.4	Signworx - 0857	262.00	0.00	262.00
7.5	PWLB - 2 nd	22,372.14	0.00	22,372.14
7.6	Alpha - Furniture	3110.38	622.07	3732.45
7.7	Paul Russell (Trading as Parish and Town Auditing Services)	195.00	0.00	195.00
7.8	S Lewis - HUB Electric	19.76	0.00	19.76
7.9	Marden Village Trust	30.00	0.00	30.00
7.10	S J Roberts - 16998	13,517.10	2,703.42	16,220.52
7.11	Marden pre-school – 1 st aid training	50.00	0.00	50.00

Resolution- *Council agreed to pay all the invoices.*

8. Payment made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	BACS	HMRC - VAT Over Payment repayment	144,000.00	0.00	144,000.00
8.2	D/D	BT - Broadband & Phone – June 26.	49.22	10.02	60.10
8.3	S/O	HUB Rent - June 26.	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.4	S/O	Community Garden - Rent - June 26.	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.5	DD	Unity Trust - Service Charge - June 26.	7.00	0.00	7.00

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

9. Planning. (All Planning Applications and Determination are on the PC website)

	<i>Application No</i> FS-855655299	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.1	Listed 261602 08.07.26	Church House Church Lane Marden Herefordshire HR1 3EN	Replacement of 5 Velux rooflights and retrospective permission for a stainless steel flues.

Resolution - The Marden Parish Council SUPPORTS this application.

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.2	261780 21.07.26	Land at Green Acre House Litmarsh Street Marden HR1 3EZ	Outline application for the erection of a bungalow, with all matters save access reserved.

Resolution - Marden Parish Council strongly OBJECTS to this application as it is outside of the

settlement boundary, the size of the development and the risk of potential Flood.

This along with the fact Marden can no longer be considered a sustainable parish due to deteriorating infrastructure and community decline.

Our roads are riddled with potholes, drainage systems are broken, and flooding issues are worsening year on year. Two key roads, both featuring ancient bridges, are particularly prone to flooding, making them unreliable and unsafe for increased traffic.

The current addition of 90 houses at New House Farm will only exacerbate these problems. The parish has lost both its pubs and the post office in recent years, and the school is currently undersized for anticipated future needs. Welsh water currently appears unable to connect new developments to the water supply.

These factors collectively, along with those stated in the original response to this application demonstrate that Marden is no longer equipped to support further development.

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.3	Listed 261807 22.07.26	Church House Church Lane Marden Hereford HR1 3EN	Proposed repair works to end gable of cider barn, including replacement of the existing tie-beam, two replacement windows and new wattle and daub infill panels above and below the new tie-beam

Resolution - The Marden Parish Council Support this application.

	<i>Application No</i> <i>Not Taking</i> <i>Comments</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.4	261967 23.07.26	Land adjacent to New House Farm Marden Herefordshire	Non-material amendment to planning permission 201008 (Proposed Reserved Matters application following outline approval 150989 (Proposed residential development of up to 90 dwellings, with provision of a site for a community building and associated open public space) for the erection of the community building and associated works. (The remainder of the housing development is subject to a separate Reserved Matters application 190182)) - a reduction in the height of selected windows and the installation of external solar bollard lighting serving the community building and adjoining open space,

To Note - The Council note the Herefordshire Council planning department are not taking comments.

	<i>Application No</i> <i>Not Taking</i> <i>Comments</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.5	261899 Certificate of Lawfulness	Land to East of Dolmeadow Cottage Marden Hereford HR1 3EU	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed permanent structure (shed) for the storage of animal feed and machinery

To Note - The Council note the Herefordshire Council planning department are not taking comments.

9.6 - Planning Authority Determinations. - (Can be seen on the Parish Council Website)

To Note - The Council noted the Planning Determinations.

9.7 - Enforcement.

a) Farmer John's Signage.

The Ward Member Cllr Peter Hamblin said that the enforcement had written to the owner of the Farmer John's Stores to explain the following.

- The 2 smaller signs were ok.
- The Larger sign on the shop front either had to be
 - 1) Removed.
 - 2) Made smaller to comply.
 - 3) Removed and positioned below the roof line.

To Note - The Council noted these comments but expressed concerns this matter has been ongoing for a while and would like to know when to expect a response and action to be taken.

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

The Ward Member Cllr Peter Hamblin said that planning element of the enforcement concerns were now closed, and no further action would be taken.

To Note - The Council were unhappy that the planning with regards to Small Ashes had been closed. With regards to the PROW matters, there should be a replacement bridge included.

c) Small Ashes Dogs.

The Ward Member Cllr Peter Hamblin said that in respect to dangerous dogs for walkers. The Herefordshire Council could not find any case to answer or concerns.

To Note - The Council noted this.

10. New Parish Hall.

10.6 - Update.

Cllr D Bennett reported that the project will soon be complete. All but a snagging list will be complete by 5th August with access being allowed to move from the existing facilities. Both the current Community Centre and Marden Links Hub will move in time for the opening event.

The final project cost remains on target however the Design and Build has increased slightly to £769,918. To date, including approved at this meeting, we have been invoiced £639,416

(83%) and includes a retention at 5% of £31,970.

A full breakdown of the contract changes (both reductions and additions approved) plus a contingency rundown report has been produced. These have been included in this month's Newsletter for transparency.

With regard to the opening event on the 30th of August, it has been decided that the opening ceremony will start at 11:30 am and the hall will remain open for viewing throughout the day. The lunch and evening events remain as advertised.

Parish Hall Booking and website will soon be live. A dedicated Facebook page already in operation with plans in place to develop a one-off newsletter relating to the Hall opening event to be delivered to all households by volunteers.

To Note - The Council noted this.

10.7 - Newsletter No 17.

Parishioners can find the full Newsletter on the Parish Council website.

10.8 - Long Term Landscape Management Plan.

Cllr R Lees asked the following questions.

- How much will this cost.
- The Parish Council should review the plan and only do what is needed.
- Who will be doing the initial planting of the shrubs.

Resolution -The Clerk was requested to contact the Lengthsman for a quote and then the council would review.

10.9 - Marden Links activity move to the Marden Parish Trust.

Cllr D Bennett presented a proposal, supported by a detailed document, that once the New Parish Hall has been built, it would make sense to move all the Marden Links activities which comprise of the HUB, Repair Café and Community Garden and Events Group to the newly formed Marden Parish Trust.

Currently Marden Links is part of the Parish Council. If this transfer is agreed then the Parish Council would then, step back for the day to day running and support the activities via a annual grant.

Cllr D Bennett proposed that Marden Links, including all their assets and shipping container to be transfers to the Marden Parish Trust. With the following caveat that if the Marden Parish Trust folds for any reason the asset are returned to the Parish Council.

Cllr L Hayward seconded the motion.

The following vote was taken.

For: 7

Against: 0

Abstention: 1

Resolution -The Marden Parish Council agreed this transfer and caveat. The Financial transfer would take place as soon as the MPT has a bank account and it was agreed that operationally Marden Links would be under the MPT from 1st September 2026

11. Working Group Reports.

11.1 - Marden Links

- a) HUB activity update.
- b) Repair Café Update.

c) Community Garden

Cllr K Ryan reported that the Hub has had to write a “Hot Weather Policy” as the temperature in the HUB room was unbearable and dangerous to health.

Everything with the Repair Café is going well and ticks over.

The Community Garden is suffering from the hot weather and many of the plants are struggling. Discussion has to be had about the future location of the shipping container.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.2 – Neighbourhood Development Plan update.

a) Planning Policy & Neighbourhood Planning.

Cllr D Bennett said the question and answers document available on Herefordshire Council’s website was informative but did not help the current Parish position. The Parish continues to be open to speculative development which appears likely for a number of years. Our line of defence is centred around sustainability and any response to applicable planning applications should take this into account.

To Note - This was noted by the Council. The Clerk was requested to obtain the current indicative housing numbers for Marden on the clear understanding that these could change in either direction as the Local Plan progresses.

11.3 - Finance & Administration Working Group.

The Finance & Administration Working Group has not met but will meet before the next Parish Council meeting and develop a draft Budget for 2027/28.

To Note - This was noted by the Council, and the Clerk was instructed to arrange for a meeting before the next Parish Council meeting.

11.4 - Events Group.

The Events Group were busy sorting out the Opening of the New Parish Hall on the 30th August 2026.

A date for your diary is the 19.09.26 for the Race Night.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.5 – Transport Working group.

Cllr D Bennett said that a meeting, in the near future, needs to be arranged to discuss the S106 funding.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12. Community.

12.6 - Code of Conduct Complaints.

The Herefordshire Council solicitor has contacted all the parish Councils enquiring on whether the Parish Council would like to undertake the lower-level Code of Conduct complaints inhouse.

Resolution - The Council agreed that the current arrangement works well using the Herefordshire Council’s Monitoring Officer as they are a legally qualified in these matters.

12.7 - Clerk's & Councillor’s mileage expenses increase.

The Clerk reported that the HMRC has agreed to backdate to 1st April 2026 an increase in mileage from 45p per mile to 55p per mile.

Resolution - The Council agreed this mileage increase and it being back dated to the 1st April 2026.

12.8 - Summit Update

Cllr D Bennett reported the following points.

- Some Ward Boundaries will change slightly but there will still be 53 Councillors.
- The Herefordshire Council may have to cancel some services next year to balance the budget.
- The Change over from Belfour Beatty has gone better than expected.
- The Planning process will change, where once the Parish Council has made a comment, they will not be able to comment again. This means that any future comments will have to be more robust in nature.
- The Charter a year on – There was a mixed reception on this, and whether it was just a Herefordshire Council PR exercise rather than a document of substance.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12.9 - Biodiversity Plan.

Cllr D Bennett reported that this needs to be updated.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12.10 - Trees at War Memorial.

Cllr M Blake said the trees at the War Memorial were overgrown and the area looking unkempt. But this has now been addressed by a local resident.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12.11 - Amberley Arms Visit Update.

Cllr D Bennett & Cllr K Ryan visited the site with the owners and their planning adviser. Sadly, this was an exercise to try and get the Parish Council to support the knocking down of the old pub and the building of up to 9 dwellings.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

13. Action Log.

The following will be added to the action log.

- Insurance for Footpaths Officer.
- New Hall Insurance.
- Chase up the new Parish Hall lease.
- Chase up the Solar Farm payment.
- Send out the New Hall Opening invitations.
- The Ward Members Grant of £330.00

14. Future Agenda Items.

Review the Herefordshire Council Charter and respond with Parish Council comments – Agenda item for October meeting.

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

15. Employment Matters.

***Resolution** - The Council agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.*

16. Parish Hall Draft Lease.

***Resolution** - The Council agreed for the Clerk to chase this lease as there were clauses which potentially needed amending, but it was important to have the Parish Council Solicitors review and advice.*

*Parish Council Meeting on the **18th August 2026** at 7.30pm in the Marden HUB.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.54pm.

Signed:
Cllr David Bennett
Chair of the Council
18th August 2026