



Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.30 pm on 18th August 2026 at Marden Community HUB.

Minutes

Present:

Cllr David Bennett (Chair), Cllr Kate Ryan, Cllr Richard Paske, 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 Apologies from Cllr Chris Morgan, Cllr Rod Lees, Cllr Paula Barrett,

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

To Note - There was a written request for dispensation by Cllr Bennett in relation to item 16 on the agenda, approved by the Clerk and noted by the Council

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 21.07.26.

Resolution - The draft minutes of the 21.07.26 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 Asset register is still not completely downloadable.

A1. The New Asset register is now on the website, and no download issues were found.

Q2. What is the £4.5k audio equipment for.

A2. This is for the new Parish Hall

Q3. What was the purchase of the audio equipment discussed and approved.

A3. It was discussed in the Transition group and at the Finance & Admin working group and is within budget.

Q4. Who will look after this equipment.

A4. The Parish Council will own the equipment, along with the table & chairs and it will be used by the users of the Parish Hall but will be insured by the Marden Parish Trust.

Q5. Why is the Parish Council looking for more storage.

A5. Looking for additional storage at the Parish Hall as there is limited storage, but this is only in the very early stages.

Q6. What is going to happen to all the old Parish Council papers.

A6. The Clerk is going to sort them and shred that which we don't legally have to keep, and the rest will be stored, until there is room in the County Archive.

Q7. Is there a problem with the new Parish Hall Lease.

A7. No, but it is taking longer than expected, but will be signed on time.

Q8. Who approved and paid for the signs and banners for the New Parish Hall.

A8. The cost of the Parish Hall signs was £335 and £144 for banners, both within the respective approved budgets.

5. Footpaths Officer.

The footpaths was not present at this meeting.

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

6. Finance Matters.

6.1 – Account Summary – July 26.

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

6.2 – Bank Accounts – 31.07.26.

6.2a – Unity Main – July 26.- £47,030.37

6.2b – Unity Saver – July 26.- £162,936.07

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

6.3 – HUB Accounts – July 26.

***Resolution** – The Council approved the HUB accounts.*

6.4 – VAT Reclaim – July 26 - £20,691.88

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

6.5 – Draft Budget 27/28.

The Draft Budget was discussed

6.6 – MPC Asset Register.

6.6a – MPT Asset Register Transfer.

***To Note** – The Council noted this transfer*

6.7 – Parish Hall (Building) Insurance.

***Resolution** – The Council approved the building insurance for the Parish Hall at a cost of £1,706.77.*

.Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – Augs 26	As per Contract		
7.2	SJ Roberts	110,500.43	22,100.09	132,600.52
7.3	Signworx - 11246	479.00	95.80	574.80
7.4	S Lewis - HUB Electric	17.24	0.00	17.24
7.5	C A Skyrme	45.00	0.00	45.00

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

7a. New Hall Equipment Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7a.1	Audio Equipment	1748.42	349.68	2098.10
7a.2	Blu Ray Player	433.20	86.64	519.84
7a.3	Laser Projector	1636.38	327..28	1972.54

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

Payment made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	D/D	BT - Broadband & Phone - July 26.	50.04	10.01	60.05
8.2	S/O	HUB Rent - July 26.	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.3	S/O	Community Garden - Rent - July 26.	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.4	DD	Unity Trust - Service Charge - July 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.*

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

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.1	262063 24.08.26	Land adjacent Berrington Bower Marden Herefordshire HR1 3EY	Hybrid application for the erection of two self-build dwellings and associated works comprising: 1) Full planning permission for the proposed use of land, access, shared road, drainage infrastructure, structural landscaping and the replacement of the existing septic tank serving Berrington Bower; and 2) Outline planning permission

Resolution – *The Marden Parish Council strongly OBJECTS too this application for the following reasons. We respectfully request that planning permission be refused.*

1. Inappropriate Location in the Open Countryside and Unsustainable Growth

The proposed development is located, outside any clearly defined settlement boundary in the Marden Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy.

- *The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy directs new residential development to settlements defined as appropriate for housing growth and within settlement boundaries.*
- *Marden is without key services, facilities or public transport required to support any new housing sustainably. Residents will be overwhelmingly dependent on private vehicles for basic needs, contrary to the NPPF's objective of sustainable development (para. 8).*
- *Marden Parish, while identified in the Core Strategy as a settlement with scope for proportionate housing growth, was intended to accommodate this through appropriately allocated and planned sites within the village and defined settlements, not spread sporadically across the wider countryside.*
*Given the proximity to no local facilities and limited transport options, the cumulative impact of additional homes would promote an unsustainable pattern of development contrary to the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy **and the sustainability objectives of the NPPF 2026.***

2. Conflict with the Marden Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Marden Neighbourhood Development Plan (made October 2016) forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Herefordshire and must be given appropriate weight in decision-making.

- *This site is not allocated for new residential development in the NDP.*
- *The plan sets out a clear framework for where and how housing growth should be accommodated, reflecting locally agreed settlement patterns and community aspirations.*
Allowing speculative housing outside the defined settlements and not supported by the NDP would undermine local plan-led development and neighbourhood planning, as encouraged under the NPPF.

3. Flood Risk and Climate Adaptation Considerations

While this site is not formally designated within high flood zones on strategic maps, local evidence indicates that much of Marden suffers from surface water and groundwater flooding issues, particularly along minor lanes and lower-lying fields.

- *The NPPF requires that new development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding and that proposals should incorporate sustainable drainage and climate resilience measures.*
- *No robust Flood Risk Assessment (sequential test and detailed site-specific assessment) has been submitted to demonstrate that these proposals will not increase flood risk to existing homes or elsewhere. Applications should be refused until these key climate adaptation requirements are satisfactorily evidenced.*
Given climate change projections and the need to avoid increasing flood risks to neighbouring properties and infrastructure, the current submission is inadequate in this regard.

4. Highway Safety and Traffic Impacts

The narrow rural lanes serving Marden are not designed for increased traffic volumes.

- *There is no regular pedestrian infrastructure or safe passing places for existing traffic, cyclists or pedestrians.*
- *Additional vehicle movements from X new homes would materially increase traffic flows on substandard rural lanes, affecting road safety for residents, farm vehicles, walkers and cyclists.*
The submitted proposals do not contain sufficient highway evidence to demonstrate that these impacts can be safely mitigated, raising concerns under NPPF paragraphs regarding safe access and transport sustainability.

5. Impact on Rural Character and Local Services

The scattered development of housing unrelated to a defined settlement boundary will erode the rural character of this part of the parish.

- The NPPF and Core Strategy both recognise the importance of protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of rural areas.
- Incremental development such as this, outside planned allocations, risks creating a more diffuse pattern of settlement with adverse visual and environmental impacts. Concomitantly, local services in Marden and surrounding villages (school, medical facilities, shops) are already stretched; and this application does not demonstrate how these existing service constraints would be addressed.

Conclusion and Request

For the reasons set out above, we consider that planning permission should be refused for application 262063, because the proposals:

1. Represent unsustainable growth in a countryside location without adequate services or transport links.
2. Is contrary to the settlement hierarchy and place-specific framework of the Core Strategy and Marden NDP.
3. Fail to demonstrate that flood risk and climate adaptation issues have been satisfactorily dealt with.
4. Does not show that highway safety concerns can be adequately mitigated.
5. Would materially harm rural character and place-specific planning objectives.

We urge the Council to determine these applications in accordance with the development plan and the NPPF and to refuse planning permission on the grounds outlined.

	<i>Application No</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.2	261400 11.08.26	Brook Farm Marden Hereford Herefordshire HR1 3ET	Removal of condition 2 and variation of condition 3 of planning permission 184613 - To remove the temporary time limit imposed by Condition 2 and to vary Condition 3 to allow flexibility in the type of accommodation units provided, including the continued use of demountable pods.

Resolution- Marden Parish Council Supported this application.

	<i>Application No</i> <i>FS - 861061989</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Permission sought</i>
9.3	262084 14.08.26	Amberley Gate Sutton St Nicholas Hereford HR1 3BX	Demolition of two-story extension. Proposed replacement two extension forming garage and dining room

Resolution- Marden Parish Council Supported this application.

9.4 - Planning Authority Determinations. - (See Website)

9.5 - 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, and it has now been several months without a reply.

Resolution - Marden Parish Council instructs the Clerk to contact Planning enforcement to see whether enforcement can come and physically remove the sign.

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

The Ward Member Cllr Peter Hamblin said that planning element of the enforcement with regards of the swimming pool was built without planning permission as it was outside the permitted development area.

Footpath issues still remain to be completed

To Note- Marden Parish Council noted this information and will continue to watch this breach of conditions with interest.

10. New Parish Hall

10. 1- Update.

Cllr D Bennett reported

Project Summary

The day has finally arrived! The construction work has been completed, all bar an agreed snagging list. The project was officially handed over to the Parish Council on the 13th of August with restricted access until the 28th in order to allow snagging work to continue.

Our Open Day will be held on 30th August from 11:30am as advertised. The Hall will then be available for community activity from 1st September.

Construction started in October last year and has been completed with a one-month delay due to adverse weather conditions during the winter period. A remarkable achievement.

The Parish Council wishes to thank S J Roberts, our Architect and Quantity Surveyor for delivering a superb asset and on budget.

Remaining Work

- **Snagging items:** The list has been agreed but no doubt additional items come to light as the hall begins to be used. As S J Roberts will be on site for some time the minor issues that arise will be resolved very quickly. A number of trees will be planted around the car park in October.
- **Car Park** The car park currently has a temporary entrance, surface and markings. When S J Roberts has finished with the site compound, they will carry out the following:
 - Remove the temporary entrance
 - Open the planned entrance and install retractable bollards
 - Resurface the whole carpark
 - White line the spaces and the disabled spaces as originally planned
 - Install the low-level wooden fencing and hedging around the perimeter of the car park
- **Village Green:** This will be completed to plan once the Cherry Orchard site compound is no longer required. It is likely this will not happen for around 18 months. When complete the village green will be fully landscaped, surrounded by trees and hedging and a resin path and solar lighting installed through to the Academy grounds.

- **Transition Planning:** The group which consists of Marden Parish Trust Trustees and Parish Councillors will continue to prepare for a memorable open day event on the 30th of August and a seamless transition to operating the Hall from September 1st.

FINAL PROJECT COST POSITION

All costs are net of VAT

PROJECT COSTS (All costs exclude VAT)	2025/26 Budget	Total Project Costs
Architect Fees RIBA stages 1 to 4 - Analysis design	116914	116914
RIBA stages 5 to 7 - Tender & Project management	35906	35950
Fees for retendering contract		12100
Fees for negotiation with Citizen	3130	9388
Fees associated with planning re temp entrance		16551
Fees associated with contract additions		6000
Design & Build Contract – S J Roberts	750000	770218
Land survey fee	4870	5270
Solicitors Fees Land transfer and Licence for S J Roberts to occupy	2000	4484
Solicitors' fees associated with management lease		2000
Estimated interest payments for parishioner loans		6375
PC purchase of initial set of tables and chairs		12442
Audio Visual Equipment		3818
Corporate signage		335
Citizen Housing contribution		-5930
Marden Village Trust Donation towards Kitchen		-6000
National Lottery Grant for external solar lighting		-17870
Contingency	63640	4415
TOTAL	976460	976460

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. 2.5% retention payable 1 year from completion - August 2027. | £19,255 |
| 2. Held back until October 2026 until final items completed | £20,000 |

There are no anticipated additional costs as the total cost above is inclusive of the work required to create the village green, remove the temporary access, and open up the main entrance to the hall.

Contingency Rundown			
Approved budget contingency			63640
-	Additional land survey cost prior to tender	-400	
-	Re-tender costs	-12100	
-	Net Design & Build Contract value changes	-20218	
-	Minor increase in RIBA stage 5 to 7 fees	-44	
-	Increased solicitor fees for licence to use	-2484	
-	Additional fees for Citizen liaison	-6258	
-	Temporary entrance fees and 2 x planning applications (first application rejected)	-16551	
-	Additional Architects fees on contract additions 12% estimate	-6000	
-	Estimated Interest Payments on Parishioner loans	-6375	
-	Solicitor review of draft lease	-2000	
-	PC purchase of initial set of tables and chairs	-12442	
	PC purchase of Audio Visual Equipment	-3818	
	Corporate Signage	-335	-89025
-	Citizen contribution to temporary entrance	5930	
-	Marden Village Trust donation	6000	
-	National Lottery Grant – solar lighting	17870	29800
Contingency Remaining			4415

Contract Cost Variations			
Approved Contract			746425
-	Omit hearing loop	-1969	
-	Omit Service connections – provided to site by Citizen	-11319	
-	Omit change in floor covering specification	-322	
-	Omit unforeseen works in substructure	-5000	
-	Omit substructure subbase thickness	-3500	
-	Omit Tarmac provides surface material for car park	-2850	
-	Omit corporate signage	-1000	
-	Omit diverting existing services	-2000	
-	Omit S278 entrance works- not as costly	-6000	
-	Omit lower cost of entrance to mezzanine	-176	
-	Omit entrance security gates – raise bollards instead	-1500	-35636
-	Add additional cost of proposed kitchen	9731	
-	Add additional solar panels and larger battery	8831	
-	Add temporary access cost	5052	

cubicles	- Add additional panel upgrade to toilet	781	
	- Add Canopy + bases + OH&P	16917	
	- Add external solar lighting	13517	*
	- Add Canopy LED lighting	1300	*
	- Add contribution to fire protection plan	2000	
site completion	- Add cost of final tarmac finish post total	1300	59429
Revised Contract Value			770218

*** Will be funded by National Lottery Grant**

To Note – This report was noted by the Council.

10.2- Newsletter No 18.

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

10.3 - Events Group - Hall Opening Event

The Events group have been working hard with the New Parish Hall opening event.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11. - Working Group Reports.

11.1 - Marden Links

a) Hub activity update.

Cllr K Ryan reported that the Hub will be moving to the New Parish Hall and will be meeting in the lobby area.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

b) Repair Café Update.

Cllr K Ryan reported that the Repair Café will meet this month in its current location, as there are some logistic issues to overcome before they can move to the New Parish Hall straightaway.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

c) Community Garden

Cllr K Ryan reported that the Community Garden has suffered from the extremely hot weather.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

d) BT Telephone

The Clerk said the BT Telephone number now need to be disconnected as activities are going to move to the New Parish Hall.

Resolution- Marden Parish Council agreed that the BT Telephone is no longer required and needs to be disconnected.

11.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan update.

There hasn't been any meeting as there is nothing major to discuss.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.3 - Finance & Administration Working Group.

The Finance & Administration Working Group had met, and everything has been already covered in the agenda.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

11.4 - Transport Working group.

The Council is looking to be hold the first Transport Working Group in the first week of September.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

12. Community.

12.1– Winter Newsletter.

Cllr K Ryan explained that the Winter Newsletter has to be finalised for the October Parish Council meeting.

To Note – This was noted by the Council.

12.2- Drainage Grant Update.

The Clerk reported that the drainage grant which had been submitted of £4,680.00 had been approved by the Herefordshire Council, however they will only grant £3,048.64 towards the total figure.

The Chair said that he had not seen the submitted grant application and want to know if this drainage works were really required.

Resolution - The Clerk was asked to add this to the next agenda.

12.3- Purchase Paper Shredder.

The Clerk reported that he would require a shredder for when he has to clear on the Council Office in the HUB. Certain papers must be kept by law which is clearly set out by the Herefordshire Council any other unwanted papers have to be shredded.

Resolution – The Council Approved the Clerk to purchase a heavy-duty shredder at the cost of £146.00.

13. Action Log.

The following items are to be added to the Action Log.

- Cancel BT contract.
- Contact Planning enforcement about Farmer John's large roof sign.

14. Future Agenda Items.

- Footpaths.
- Drainage Grant.
- Draft Budget.
- Lease update.
- Parishioner Loan Repayments.

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

15. HUB Lease.

The Chair explained that the Parish Council could not surrender the HUB lease before its end date of April 2027.

However, following discussion with the landlord, they are willing to offer the building up for re-rental and if there are any takers then they would be willing to allow the Parish Council to surrender the lease.

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

16. Hall Agreement.

***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.*

17. Employment Matters.

The Chair asked if the Payroll Provider would re-enroll in the workplace pension scheme at the agreed rate. This should be completed by the end of September

***Resolution** - The Council agreed a pension rate for the Clerk and requested the Clerk to organise the re-enrolment via the Payroll Provider.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.25pm.

Signed:
Cllr David Bennett
Chair of the Council
15th September 2026