Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting at 7.30 pm on 15th October 2026 at Marden Parish Hall.

Minutes

Present:

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

In Attendance:

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

1. To receive Apologies.
   Apologies were received from Cllr Rod Lees and Cllr Paula Barrett.

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

2. To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.
   Cllr's D Bennett & K Ryan declared an interest in item 15. Cllr D Bennett written request for dispensation for item 15 remains in force.

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

3. To approve the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 15.09.26.

Resolution *- The draft minutes of the 15.09.26 were adopted and duly signed by the Chair.*

4. Open Session.
   Ward Member.
   The Ward member gave an overview of 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. Hass the HUB now officially been handed over to the MPT.
A1. Yes.
Q2. Does anyone now use the old HUB building.
A2. Yes, the Repair Café until the November session when it will move to the new hall.
Q3. Does the MPT now pay the rent on the HUB.
A3. No, this is still the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Q4. The highway surface is particularly bad near to the Volunteer Pub and Woodbine.
A4. The Ward Member said that he would pick it up and speak with the Herefordshire Council highways team.
Q5. Where is the Water Main work going from and to.
A5. The work is meant to be going from Morton on Lugg turning to just outside the new Parish Hall.
Q6. What is happening to the sewage from the new development.
A6. The development will have its own sewage plant.
Q7. Has the money been released from the Herefordshire Council to the Marden Village Trust.
A7. The Chair said that he believes so.
Q8. Has the lease document been signed and will it be available for the public to see.
A8. The lease will be signed hopefully by the end of October, and both parties will have to agree on whether the document will be released to the public.

To Note - These questions were noted by the Council.

5. Footpaths Officer.
The Clerk reported that there was no footpaths officer report this month but has met with the footpaths officer to go through matters within the Parish.

To Note - This was noted by the Council, and councillors look forward to an update at the November Parish Council meeting.

6. Finance Matters.
6.1 - Account Summary - September 26.

Resolution - The Council approved the Account Summary.

6.2 - Bank Accounts - 30.09.26.
6.2a - Unity Main - September 26 - £50,489.54
6.2b - Unity Saver - September 26 - £85,777.62

To Note - The Council noted the bank statements.

6.3 - VAT Reclaim - September 26 - £2662.28

To Note - The Council noted the VAT reclaim.

6.4 - AGAR Section 3 - External Auditor.

To Note - The Council noted the comment made by the External Auditor.

6.5 - Draft Budget 2027/28.

Resolution - The Marden Parish Council Approved the Draft Budget for 2027/28.

7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary - Oct 26	As per Contract		
7.2	Signworx - 11645	262.00	0.00	262.00
7.3	Clerks Expenses - Remembrance Wreath	35.00	0.00	35.00
7.4	PKF Littlejohn - External Auditor	1680.00	336.00	2013.00

7.5	Mrs L F Hayward	32.48	0.00	32.48

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

8. Payment made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	D/D	BT - Broadband & Phone - September 26.	49.91	9.98	59.89
8.2	S/O	HUB Rent - September 26.	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.3	S/O	Community Garden - Rent - September 26.	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.4	DD	Unity Trust - Service Charge - September 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)

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

	Application No	*Address*	*Permission sought*
9.1	262644 13/10/2026	Marden Post Office and Stores Marden Herefordshire HR1 3EW	Advertisement Consent Retrospective consent to display advertisement board

Resolution - *The Marden Parish Council strongly OBJECTS to this retrospective application for the following reasons.*

1. Size and siting of the roof sign.
The application describes this as a display advertisement board, but it is in fact a large sign of approximately 4m x 1.6m fixed to the roof of the shop. Because of its size and its raised position, it is prominent and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area. (Photographs attached.)

2. Two further signs not included in the application.
There are two further large advertising signs, to the left and right of the site entrance, which are not mentioned in the application. The Council asks that these are included and assessed, as they add to the overall visual impact of the site. (Photograph attached.)

3. Colour.
All three signs are bright red, which is unsympathetic to the rural village setting.

4. Illumination.
The roof sign and the two entrance signs appear to be getting ready for future illumination, yet the application makes no mention of this. Lit signs of this size would have a greater impact on the area, particularly after dark, and the Council asks that this is clarified and properly assessed.

5. Road safety.
The Council is concerned that these large, brightly coloured signs could distract drivers passing the site, and that this risk would be greater if they are illuminated, especially in the dark or in poor weather. The two signs beside the site entrance are of particular concern, as drivers need to concentrate on vehicles turning in and out at that point.

For these reasons, the Council considers the signage harmful to both the visual amenity

of the village and road safety and asks that the application is refused.

	Application No	*Address*	*Permission sought*
9.2	262460 01/11/2026 260104	Ashgrove Farm Marden Herefordshire HR1 3EY	Change of use of private swimming pool building to holiday letting unit, with internal alterations and installation of log-burner and flue

Resolution *- The Marden Parish Council Supports this application.*

9.3 - Planning Authority Determinations. - (See Website)

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

9.4 - Enforcement.

a) Small Ashes. Both a planning and footpath issue.
The Ward Member said that the Planning enforcement were still looking in the planning breach.
With regards to the PROW concerns, the Ward Member did not realise that there was another issue with the PROW which crosses the main road. The Chair said that where the footpath exits onto the mail road, there is meant to be a stile and a bridge over the ditch.

To Note *- This was noted by the Ward Member who will investigate this and chase up the outstanding planning breaches.*

10. Parish Council Objectives for 2027/28. - To discuss and agree the objectives funded by the proposed draft budget
    a) Neighbourhood Development Plan
    b) Drainage Issues
    c) Footpaths & Bridleways
    d) Parish Maintenance - Lengthsman
    e) Transport Issues
    f) Planning Process
    g) S106 - Current Spend
    h) Future S106 Priority List

The Chair explained that the Council needs to now look at current and future concerns within the Parish.
The future development of the parish remains a concern to the Parish Council, especially as the parish infrastructure is very poor with many areas of roads, drainage and sewerage requiring replacement or extensive repairs. With the Government pushing for more homes, Marden and its outline hamlets could be in the firing line. Currently the Parish suffers from flooding, very poor bus service, no doctors or dentists and not even a community pub. The highway infrastructure is not adequate for the current traffic levels, let alone more ever larger traffic numbers.

The Parish Council must be mindful of small development, which doesn't have any community benefits with S106 attached.

The Parish Council does recognise that importance of the PROW network which is used by many of the residents.

The Parish Council would very much welcome more residents to become Councillors, as

having new views with a wider demographic can only make the Parish a better place to live.

To Note - The Parish Council notes all the comments made by the Councillors and will discuss the recruitment of new Councillors at the next Parish Council meeting.

11. AGAR Audit Fee's next year.

The Chair explained that the External Auditors fees are so high this year as they are based on the turnover of the accounts which includes the capital cost of the new parish hall. They will also be higher than normal for the accounting period 2026/27 for the same reason.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12. Working Group Reports.

12.1 - Neighbourhood Development Plan update.

a) NALC NDP - Online Session.

Resolution - The Marden Parish Council

12.2 - Finance & Administration Working Group.

The Finance & Administration Working Group has not met this month.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

12.3 - Transport Working group.

The Transport Working Group has not met yet, but is planning a meeting for early in the new year

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

13. Community.

13.1 - Remembrance Day & Wreath Laying.

The Chair said that he would lay the Remembrance Day Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 8th November, Cllr Chris Morgan said he would give the reading on behalf of the Parish Council.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

13.2 - Summit Update.

The Chair updated the Council on the last summit meeting, with the following bullet points.

- The Herefordshire Council seems to have a £20million black hole in their finances.
- The New Public Realms Contract seems to be working well, and jobs being completed within a good timescale.
- S106 for each parish is on the Herefordshire Council website but they are behind in the delivering of the projects.
- Drainage / PROW and Lengthsman funding for 2027/28 may be reduced of cancelled completely to help reduce the financial deficit.
- Herefordshire Council has contact emails and would like all problems summited via the email system.

To Note - This was noted by the Council.

13.3 - Free Climate Resilient Trees for Communities.

Following the dry summer this year Herefordshire Council is offering free trees which don't require much water to grow.

Sadly, the Parish Council does not have any land where these trees could be planted, but the Chair has contacted the Marden Recreation Ground Trust to see whether they have possible sites.

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

13.4 - Winter Newsletter - N & V.

The Chair said that in the November edition of the News & Views will carry 4 pages from the Parish Council with the two centre pages focusing on the draft budget for 2027/28 and the other two pages on the Footpaths Officer and his duties, with the other page on the new Parish Hall.

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

14. Parish Meeting update.

The chair said the Parish Meeting about the possible development of the Volunteer pub and nearby land was well attended with many questions being asked by the residents. The Parish Council website has details of the questions raised

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

15. Parish Hall Management Lease.

The new Parish Hall Lease has still to be signed, which hopefully will be completed by the end of the month.

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

16. Action Log.

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

17. Future Agenda Items.

- IT Policy
- Policy Register.
- Sandbag Stock.
- Grit Bin Condition

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.35pm.

Signed:
Cllr David Bennett
Chair of the Council
17th November 2026