

Llanwarne & District Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Llanwarne Village Hall on

Thursday 21st November 2024 at 19.30hrs

Present: Councillors: Rosey Price (Acting Chairman) Anthony Snell, David Lloyd and David Pursey

Also present were Toni Fagan (Ward Councillor), Mark Hearne (Clerk), and one member of the public.

1. **To receive apologies for absence** – Councillors Jason Pacey, Paula Snow and Fay Bevan.
2. **To receive declarations of interest & written requests for dispensation** – Councillor Price declared a non-DPI against agenda item 9.2 (Planning Consultation 242556).
3. **To consider minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2024** – It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.
4. **To consider the Resolutions agreed at the last meeting.** The Clerk provided an update on each of the open resolutions passed at previous meetings and which are not covered on the agenda for this meeting. There was discussion on the following issues:
 - 4.1. An acknowledgement has been received from Herefordshire Council in response to the application from the Parish Council for a brown tourist sign and whilst a decision seemed imminent no further communication has been received. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk asks for a progress report from Herefordshire Council.
 - 4.2. Despite several requests from the Parish Council there has been no progress in acquiring a new village sign offering direction to Llanwarne from the A466. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk seeks an update from Herefordshire Council.
5. **Open Discussion (limited to 10 minutes)**
 - 5.1. In her report Ward Councillor Fagan covered the following issues:
 - 5.1.1. Herefordshire Council is working on preparing for the budget 2025/26 and it is expected there will be an increase in council tax rates for next year. Parish Councillors were encouraged to complete the on-line survey on the budget for next year which has been launched by Herefordshire Council.
 - 5.1.2. Work is ongoing to clamp down on profiteering in the delivery of children's social care across the county.
 - 5.1.3. Herefordshire Council will benefit from a £3.3m investment in the provision of bus services across the county.
 - 5.1.4. Herefordshire Council has updated the planning portal which is available on their website.

- 5.1.5. Herefordshire Council have launched a consultation on a tree strategy which closes on the 4th December 2024.
- 5.1.6. A history festival will take place in May 2025.
- 5.1.7. The Department of Education have recently undertaken a further review of Children's Services in Herefordshire Council and early indications suggest that the report will show that some improvements have been achieved.
- 5.1.8. Councillor Snell raised the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for works at Harp Field, Harewood End adding that the Parish Council had supported the original planning application. Ward Councillor Fagan agreed to consider the appeal and will forward comments to the Clerk.
- 5.2. To receive views of local residents on parish matters. The following issue was raised:
 - 5.2.1. A resident highlighted an issue with a PROW which traverses his land and asked if there is any prospect of re-routing the footpath to its original position which was in place well over 20 years ago. It was suggested that the resident forwards the details to the Clerk who will establish the process for diverting the PROW. Ward Councillor Fagan also agreed to make enquiries.

6. Lengthsman

- 6.1. The Lengthsman was unable to attend the meeting and had not provided a written report.
- 6.2. Councillors reviewed the Lengthsman log which provides a status report on all reported issues since the last meeting but offered no specific concerns.
- 6.3. Councillors were content with the proposed works schedule circulated by the Lengthsman which will need to be adapted to meet the specific requirements of each of the settlements in the parish. It was RESOLVED to defer this matter until the next meeting, but it was further RESOLVED that any suggested amendments should be communicated to the Clerk in the meantime.

7. Footpaths:

- 7.1. Councillors noted that the Lengthsman has started work on the PROW network using the additional funding made available by Herefordshire Council.
- 7.2. No progress has been achieved in identifying a new Footpaths Officer. Councillors considered the proposals circulated by Councillor Snow for dealing with footpath issues and considered that this offered a practical way forward. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk liaises with Councillor Snow to consider how best to progress this initiative.
- 7.3. It was RESOLVED to defer discussion on the proposed map of the footpaths in the parish until the January 2025 meeting. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk explores the acquisition and publication of a map of the PROW network across the parish using the comparable information held on the Much Birch Parish Council website as an example of good practice.

8. Finance

- 8.1. To note the current bank balance which is £14,540.59.
- 8.2. The following payments were approved.
 - 8.2.1. Clerk's salary (October and November 2024) in accordance with his employment contract.
 - 8.2.2. PAYE (October and November 2024) - £437.60
 - 8.2.3. Clerk's travel expenses - £9.90

- 8.2.4. Signage - £69.92 (inclusive of VAT)
- 8.2.5. Autela Payroll Services - £81.86 (inclusive of VAT)
- 8.2.6. Lengthsman - £1,040.00 – Councillors considered that there should be greater control of Lengthsman costs, and it was RESOLVED that approval should be sought from the Parish Council if any proposed work is expected to exceed his monthly contractual rate i.e. £280.00. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk writes to the Lengthsman accordingly.
- 8.2.7. Footpaths - £ 280.00
- 8.2.8. HALC(Hosting and Domain names) - £133.20 (inclusive of VAT)
- 8.2.9. Village Hall Hire - £295.00
- 8.3. To approve the precept and budget for 2025/26. Councillors discussed and approved the draft budget circulated by the Clerk and agreed to increase the precept to £12k. Details of the budget will be appended to the minutes, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk writes to Herefordshire Council confirming the precept for 2025/26.
- 8.4. Financial Monitoring and Bank Reconciliation 2024/25 – The Clerk reported that based on spend to date and current budgetary projections it is estimated that reserves at the end of 2024/25 will be in the region of £8,500. The Clerk also presented a bank reconciliation which shows there is an uncashed cheque to the value of £165 which would reduce the bank balance to £14,285.39; the bank reconciliation form was duly signed by the Chairman.
- 8.4 Councillors voted to approve the closure of the savings account held by Barclays Bank and transfer funds to the Unity Trust Bank.

9. Planning: To comment on applications for determination by Herefordshire Council.

- 9.1. Planning Consultation 242241 – Hazelcroft Cottage, Llanwarne. Erection of a new outbuilding and extension to existing dwelling. Following discussions, Councillors voted to support the application, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk notifies the LPA accordingly.
- 9.2. Planning Consultation 242556 Proposed works to T03: Crown lift the one small branch to 3m for pedestrian clearance. T05: Removal of dead branch over footpath. T05: Removal of dead branch over footpath. T08: Fell tree, due to Ash die-back and the trees proximity. T17: Remove hanging branch. T24: A light reduction of the branches growing towards the village hall, a reduction of 1.5 - 2 metres to maintain trees natural shape & form. Crown lift to 3m for pedestrian access. Following discussions, Councillors voted to support the application, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk notifies the LPA accordingly.

10. Environment – There were no developments to report since the last meeting.

11. NALC Local Council Awards – Councillors noted that an application for the Foundation Level of the Local Council award has been submitted to HALC for accreditation.

12. Village Hall – There were no developments to report since the last meeting.

13. Road/Speed Signs - Councillors agreed to deploy the road safety signs purchased by the Clerk at suitable locations in the parish. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk circulates the email from the Traffic Management team which provided guidance on where and how to deploy the signs. Councillors also noted that it may be several weeks before the results of the recent traffic survey undertaken in Llanwarne are made available.

14. Lyston Pillar – Councillors discussed a long-standing issue with the Lyston Pillar noting that it has deteriorated further in recent times, and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to the residents responsible for maintaining the pillar asking that remedial action is undertaken as quickly as practicable given the safety risk of not doing so. It was further RESOLVED that Councillor Price will provide the contact details of the residents concerned.

15. Sentry Box – Councillors discussed the quote from the Lengthsman for removing the hedge and replacing it with post and rail fence but agreed that the cost was prohibitive. Councillor Lloyd added that Llanwarne Parochial Church Council (PCC) may be willing to consider allowing a library in the church which would mean that the purpose of the sentry box would become redundant. It was RESOLVED to defer any further discussion on the sentry box until a decision has been reached by the PCC on the proposed library. Councillor Price commented that notwithstanding any final decision regarding the sentry box it will still be necessary to maintain the hedge in the Llanwarne car park in the future.

16. Parish Council Wish List – Councillors noted that the proposed wish list should be populated with strategic proposals with a bus shelter being quoted as an example but considered that guidance on the requirement should be made clearer. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk discusses this issue with the Chairman, and it was further RESOLVED to include this issue on the agenda for the meeting in January 2025.

17. Clerk Correspondence – The Clerk reported that two pieces of correspondence had been received in which the following issues were raised.

- 17.1. A resident offered some thoughts on future arrangements for gathering of information on defects on the PROW network in the parish which was discussed earlier in the meeting.
- 17.2. Correspondence was received from a resident concerning drainage problems affecting her property which has been referred to the Locality Steward who confirmed that the issue has been raised with the drainage team at Balfour Beatty. Ward Councillor Fagan added that as the current Locality Steward is due to leave Balfour Beatty it will be important for the Parish Council to maintain a watching brief on the issue and if there is no movement in remedying the problem she will raise the issue with Balfour Beatty. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk updates the correspondent accordingly. Councillors also highlighted the problem over the lack of transparency over the proposed timescale for resolving issues raised with Herefordshire Council.

18. Items for next meeting (no discussion)

- Footpath Map
- Parish Council wish list
- Lengthsman work schedule.
- Sentry Box

19. Note date of next meeting: Thursday 16th January 2025

The Chairman moved a motion to exclude the members of the public from the following confidential items.

20. Employment Issues

- 20.1. Councillors voted to approve an increase in the Clerk's salary to be backdated to the 1st April 2024 following the recent announcement of the LGA pay award.
- 20.2. Councillors voted to confirm the Clerk in post following the successful completion of his probation period.

Dates of future meetings:

20th March 2025

15th May 2025

17th July 2025

Meeting closed at
21.00 hrs

Signed

Date

BUDGET/PRECEPT 25/26

Income

Budget Category £	Budget 25/26 £
Precept	12,000
VAT Recovery	105
Bank Interest	0
Total	12,105

Expenditure

Budget Category £	Budget 25/26 £
Clerk's Salary/PAYE	7,000
Clerk's expenses	150
Postage	10
Stationery	30
ICO Fee	35
Internal Audit	250
HALC	575
Payroll	282
Lengthsman	4,000
Footpaths	500
Hall Hire	60
Training	50
Insurance	150
Defibrillator	100
Poppy Wreath	25
Donations	200
Microsoft	50
Website Maintenance	100
VAT	105
Bank Charges	65
Contingency	200
Total	13,880