

KIDDERMINSTER FOREIGN PARISH COUNCIL Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held in Trimpley Village Hall on Wednesday 16th April at 7.30pm		
	Present Councillor Mr. B. Phillips Councillor Mr. C Holford Councillor Mr. S. Leigh Councillor Mr. C. Grainger 3 members of the public were present.	Councillor Mr. R. Roberts Councillor Mrs. S. Thompson Councillor Ms. R. Norton District Councillor J Byng County Councillor I. Hardiman Mrs E Whitehouse (Clerk)
	Police Report: The police were not in attendance, and had little to report in the parish area. Councillor Phillips reiterated that groups of young adults were still frequenting the car parks at the bottom of Eymore Lane, and were likely using drugs. Clerk was asked to request a police presence around 7pm – 8.30pm on occasion. Public Open Forum – Nothing raised.	
1.	Apologies For Absence: Received from District Councillor P. Harrison.	
2.	Declarations of Interest/Dispensations: Interests as previously minuted and declared on the central register. In addition, Cllr. Holford expressed an interest in the item re footpath creation to the North of Low Habberley, and would leave the room during discussion of that item.	
3.	Approval of the Minutes The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting and also the meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held Monday 17 th March 2025 were approved and signed.	
4.	County and District Councillors' Reports - County Councillor Report: <i>"Dear Parish Councillors,</i> <i>This will be my last Report to Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council, a I shall soon be retiring from my County Councillor role representing residents of Cookley, Wolverley, Wribbenhall and Kidderminster Foreign Parish who I have served since 2017.</i> <i>I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting Kidderminster Foreign Parish Council for whom I have always provided a monthly Issues Update Report and have attended most of your Parish Council meetings held over the last eight years:</i> Local Issues: Concrete Grips etc in Verge by property "Jacob's Ladder": Highways Liaison Engineer, Barry Barnes has responded / explained as follows: "The purpose of infilling the spillways and raising the kerbs is to encourage the water to follow the kerb line downhill into our drainage so there won't be any need to remove the concrete to aid drainage in the verge." Crundalls Lane, Requested Signage to Calm Traffic Speeds: I confirm that County Highways have now installed appropriate signage as had been agreed to improve safety for pedestrians and Horse Riders / Horses in the Lane. Bus Service over Trimpley etc.: Unfortunately, despite my frequent chasing for a response on whether smaller buses can be used in preference to the present large models, I still cannot confirm that such a change can be agreed! This subject and any others outstanding are registered on the WCC Members Portal and my successor after 1st May will have access ongoing to the records." A vote of thanks was given to Cllr. I. Hardiman for all his work for the benefit of the parish whilst in office, and was given the Council's best wishes for the future. District Councillors Report: No report tabled.	
5.	PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL: a) New Planning applications: None b) Update on Previous applications: 23/0538/SCR Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion at Trimpley Reservoir, Eymore Green, Trimpley, Bewdley - Pending Decision. 24/0322 & 3/HOU Reconstruct former dovecote with glazed lean-to to create annex accommodation, including link extension to main dwelling at: Hoarstone Farm Trimpley, Bewdley – Pending Decision c) Compliance Issues/Appeals and other planning matters – i) Oak Meadow Farm (Off Honeybrook Lane) - Appeal 24/008 Lodged re Enforcement Notice served – Decision awaited ii) 4 Honeybrook Cottages, Bridgnorth Road, Kidderminster – Appeal Ref APP/R1845/W/25/3359910 against refusal of 24/0767 Change of use of land to form extended domestic curtilage + garage extension iii) Enforcement matters in respect of Northwood Farm – Nothing further to report.	
6.	Progress Reports and other Outstanding Items Highway Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KFPC/District Council Gazebo Purchase + Promotional banners – Cllr. Holford advised that he could obtain correctly sized and printed self-adhesive banner(s) to put onto the Gazebo for WFDC. It was decided that he should go ahead and order these, for reimbursement at the next meeting. Fixing may be by Velcro. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadside Hedges – Habberley Lane – The hedge had still not been cut back. Cllr. Hardiman stated that as it had been established that the hedge was the responsibility of the developer of the field, and that the matter was an issue of Highway Safety, he would contact the Highways engineer, Barry Barnes, to follow up this matter. It was noted that traffic was being forced into the middle of the road to such an extent that it had worn away the central white line. • Concrete Grips – Habberley Lane – as reported <i>“Highways Liaison Engineer, Barry Barnes has responded / explained as follows: “The purpose of infilling the spillways and raising the kerbs is to encourage the water to follow the kerb line downhill into our drainage so there won’t be any need to remove the concrete to aid drainage in the verge”</i> Although this was considered by many councillors to be an unwise solution, it was accepted that the County highways would not be doing anything to change the current status quo. Minute closed. • Bus Service (297) through Trimpley – (size of buses) – no progress made. • Backing Boards for noticeboards – Cllr. Roberts has acquired metal backing for the noticeboard at Trimpley Crossroads and this is working well. It was queried whether the metal would “sweat” in hot weather, but it was thought not. Cllr. Roberts advised that the cost to provide metal backing boards for all the noticeboards would be less than £180. It was RESOLVED that he should proceed to source these boards, with reimbursement for cost at the next meeting. <p>Keys for Noticeboards – a short discussion took place concerning having uniform locks on all the parish noticeboards with a key to fit all. This was left for further discussion in the future although thought to be expensive.</p>
7.	<p>Severn Trent Works in Trimpley – Road edge – Councillors discussed various reinstatements required following the extensive works undertaken in the parish. One was the damaged road edges (and photographic evidence was produced) to Trimpley Lane, Shatterford, which had only been resurfaced last year. The edges had been badly destroyed, and this had been drawn to the attention of the County Highways dept. Questions were also asked about when hedgerows would be reinstated, and concern was expressed about new accesses formed onto the highway. Clerk to make these matters known to Paul Hughes at Severn Trent.</p>
8.	<p>Unitary Authority Implications: Meeting held 25th March - Five Councillors had attended the training/information meeting with Chris Wayman, although the acoustics in the room were not the best, and therefore some aspects may have been missed. With the demise of the District Authority, who owned Habberley Valley in this parish, it was important that the future management of this was considered. Clerk was instructed to make enquiries, with possible future negotiations. The importance of increasing Parish precepts before Unitary Authority came in to being was also emphasized. Another aspect discussed was local Community Emergency Planning, which had lapsed without revision since it had been set up by the District Council over 10 years ago.</p>
9..	<p><u>Lengthsman and Footpath Clearance Matters</u></p> <p>a) Lengthsman – Contract for 2025/26 – Clerk had received the County Council's contract for the Parish Council, and had signed this off so that the Lengthsman could commence work. She had also prepared the Parish Council's contract for the Lengthsman for the year, at a rate of £17 per hour. This was duly signed and Clerk would send it to the Lengthsman for countersigning. She would also ask for a copy of the Lengthsman's current insurance.</p> <p>With the summer months approaching, a discussion took place concerning a wood preservative being put on the bus shelters and noticeboards. Cllr. Grainger stated that the Crundalls Lane noticeboard did not need this. However, Clerk was to ask Ade Williams who built the bus shelters to give advice on the best preservative to put on to these and also the wooden Parish noticeboards. Although the Lengthsman had stated that he would be willing to undertake doing this, Clerk advised that it would fall outside of criteria allowed on the Lengthsman's contract, and as such, even if done by the lengthsman, would have to be paid for from Parish funds. A discussion then took place as to whether Councillors could raise this to a volunteer Local Community project to be done by local people.</p> <p>b) Rights of Way –</p> <p>Flooded footpath near to Easthams. - Now the weather had dried this out, Chris Bunn had taken a look at the work required, and had advised that it needed mechanically digging, and was too big a job for him. Cllr. Roberts would report to the Countryside Service.</p> <p>Seasonal Growth Clearance – Since the demise of the P3 Grant for this, the clearance had been undertaken by the Countryside Service – either using their own staff/contractors or volunteers. However the timing of this had previously not been good, with clearance being left to very late in the season to the extent that some paths can become impassable due to growth. Clerk was instructed to ask Phil Coulson in the Countryside Service which paths were earmarked for clearance, and what the timetable would be for this to be done by them.</p> <p>Creation of Several New Footpaths to the rear of Ferndale and houses in Low Habberley Cllr. Chris Holford left the room.</p> <p>Clerk had only received the consultation letter of Tuesday 15th April with a requirement to comment by 15th May. Clerk distributed copies of the map to each councillor for their information which showed the proposed creation of several new footpaths around field hedges behind the Ferndale estate.</p> <p>Clerk was asked to find out various facts before an official comment could be made. General thoughts were that the number of paths was excessive, but it was where people were walking anyway, and not sticking to the definitive route. Clerk was to ascertain who had requested the creation of these paths, and why. Was it to protect the land from being a possible building plot. And with these paths, was privacy being compromised for the gardens at Ferndale which backed onto the field.</p> <p>Clerk was requested to ask questions of the Countryside Service so that a meaningful comment could be drawn</p>

up, agreed, and submitted within the deadline, which would be before the next meeting.

Cllr. Chris Holford returned to the room.

Footpath sign, Valley Close, Low Habberley – It was again reported that the sign had been broken off, and was on the floor under a conifer hedge. Cllr. Richard Roberts stated that he would report this.

10. **Financial Reports –**

- a) **Ratification of payments to be made – a) Payments confirmed** – Worcs CALC – Annual Subs + NALC fee – £718.14; **Councillor to authorise:** Cllr. R. Roberts.

b) **Approval and signing of Financial End of Year and AGAR documents** (already shared with councillors)
The following were approved and signed:: (Clerk would then send all records and accounts for Internal Audit)

- i) Revised Asset Register and Risk Management
- ii) End of Year Account Ledgers and Balances
- iii) AGAR Certificate of Exemption for small parishes (clerk would submit this to the External Auditors)
- iv) Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 24/25
- v) Section 2 Accounting Statements

c) **Electronic Banking** – No further progress. Cllr. Holford urged councillors who had not managed to organise access to do so without further delay.

d) **Insurance** – Clerk had received the Policy Schedule for the Council's Insurance Renewal for 1st June 25 to 31st May 26. This was £420.76 (as opposed to £412.87 last year). The Clerk had done a little research, but felt that this was good value for money, and covered what was required. Clerk would present the invoice for payment at the next meeting after checking all details in the policy.

11. **Worcestershire CALC Reports & County and District & other Correspondence –**

a) **Digital and Data Compliance** – The requirement for AGAR 2025/26 to have (preferably) a .gov.uk domain or a .org.uk domain was discussed, including the report previous compiled and circulated by the Clerk. Clerk to make further investigation into this, and get a quote for the required conversions.

b) **Community Governance Review (CGR)** – It was noted by parish councillors who lived in the parish, and who had elected for postal votes, that although they had received ballot papers for the County elections, no voting slip had been received for the CGR opinion ballot. Clerk would contact Ian Miller, Chief Executive to query this.

c) **Report from Cllr. Holford from CALC Area Meeting – 18th March** – Cllr. Holford tabled the following report: (Notes are in the opinion of Cllr. Holford E&OE)

"Arriving at 6.20p.m. I took my seat and noted that numbers were diminished with Cllr. Robin Drew and Clerk Bev Drew missing along with others. I had not received a pack for the evening with printed Material, which others had, but was quickly furnished with papers from Clerk Angela Preece. I did have agenda and Chair report on my phone, but I find paper so much easier (probably an age thing!).

For names of those present, please read minutes when published.

Chair Derek Killingworth's report is published, and I would ask you to read it.

Some Councillors thought this meeting a duplicate of a recent meeting which was on Zoom, and perhaps this gave rise to non-attendance? It was frustrating as I had specifically wanted to speak on the agenda regarding "engagement"!

Those of us who attended Worcestershire CALC Face to Face Councillors gathering on Tuesday March 25th at Bewdley Town Hall will have heard CALC Executive Officer Chris Wayman speak in depth on a variety of issues. Chris Wayman was not in attendance at this meeting. Item 7 arrived and the title had been somewhat changed on the agenda! I asked that it be changed back to ... "CALC Membership – Engagement of Parish Councils".

I spoke to a room that was polite and positive – far better than my visit to Shatterford for the previous CALC Wyre Forest Area Meeting.

Positivity, encouraging the promotion of CALC and the support it offers. I said not to under-estimate the help it can give. A fellow councillor from Chaddesley likened membership to a trade body, which I thought said it all. I always mention that Parish Councillors are community volunteers, and as such we need CALC. 140 plus Worcestershire Councils are in membership which represents 94%. It is crucial that we see CALC as a trusted support to our voluntary community works.

I spoke of the need to also respectfully rejuvenate CALC meetings with new language and to encourage a culture of support amongst Parish and Town Councils. I offered to give time to promote CALC within Wyre Forest is required.

A good meeting, with a positive thread running through discussions – this is better – let's build on this."

d) **Letter from Chris Wayman, Worcs. CALC**

Clerk read out this letter for councillors:

Dear Clerk and Councillors.

We are living in interesting times. While a lot will not change in the next 12 months, the foundations have been laid for groundbreaking changes in the future. In 3 years' time, we will no longer have the District, City, Borough or even the County Councils we currently have.

There will be a new Unitary Council running the functions above Town and Parish Councils.

We are writing to you at a time of evolving responsibilities, changing regulations, and increasing expectations placed upon local councils. As your association focused on advice and training, we want to ensure you feel fully supported through the changes ahead.

Whether it's adapting to new legislation, strengthening governance, or upskilling councillors and staff, we understand the unique challenges Town and Parish Councils face. CALC specialises in providing tailored guidance, expert training sessions, and practical resources to help councils like yours operate confidently and effectively.

Over the coming months, we anticipate key developments that may impact how councils plan, manage, and deliver services. We are here to help you navigate these changes with:

- **Up-to-date advice** on compliance, procedures, and governance best practices
- **Training programmes** for clerks, councillors - delivered online or in person
- **One-to-one support** for councils facing specific or complex challenges and new clerks coming into the sector

We believe local councils are at the heart of resilient communities, and we're committed to helping you thrive in your role. As part of this we will be sending out a membership survey to assess what and how you access support services in the future.


Please don't hesitate to get in touch to discuss how we can support your council's needs.

We look forward to working with you over the next year"

e) **Confirmation of Resignation – Cllr. R. Norton**

Chair expressed sadness that Cllr. Rebecca Norton had decided to resign her seat as a Parish Councillor and wished her well for the future. She was presented with flowers and a card.

Clerk was instructed that, the Chair having reluctantly accepted this resignation, she should inform the returning officer who would declare a Casual Vacancy.

12.	Road Accident Record – Cllr. Grainger reported a small traffic collision (no injuries) at the junction of Crundalls and Grey Green lanes, which happened at the end of March.
13.	<p>Other Matters</p> <p>Newsletter - had been produced and hard copies put in the corridor at the Village Hall, and a supply was to be given to the Church.</p> <p>Dangerous Tree – reported to the rear of the houses at Low Habberley (behind former Council houses) had been cut down, and a Scots Pine had been planted as a replacement.</p> <p>Next Meeting Confirmed – Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Monday 19th May 2025</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.25p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Chairman </p>