



DORMINGTON AND MORDIFORD GROUP GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 20th November 2024

Present:

Cllr Mike Jones (Chair)
Cllr Mark Parvin
Cllr Mark Rider
Cllr Derek Hughes
Cllr Euan Grant

Apologies:

Cllr Julia Cotton (Vice Chair)
Cllr Marcus Billig

In attendance:

Emma Donovan, Parish Clerk and 6 members of the public.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm.

1. To receive apologies for absence

It was **NOTED** that both Cllr Cotton and Cllr Billig had sent their apologies.

It was **RESOLVED** to check Cllr attendance over the year so far. See Appendix

2. To disclose personal and pecuniary interests and written requests for dispensation.

It was **NOTED** there were no disclosures.

3. To approve as correct the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th October 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the October Minutes.

4. Employment Matters

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the NALC 24/25 pay scale and back date payments to April 2024 as recommended.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had asked for 2 weeks annual leave at Christmas, resulting in her finishing on the 20th December and returning to work W/C 6th January. It was **NOTED** that on returning in January, the Clerk will have used up all her annual leave for 2024/25.

5. To consider a plan to Co-opt a new Councillor

It was **RESOLVED** to ask the Clerk to create an advert to share on the community WhatsApp groups, noticeboards, Facebook, school newsletter and the PC newsletter.

6. To note there will be a burial at Mordiford Burial Ground on the 6th December 2024.

It was **NOTED**.

7. To note any announcements from the clerk regarding risk register activity:

- a. **Draft Budget approval – Consultation** – The draft budget once approved by the Council will be placed on the noticeboards, FB and on the website for comment by the parishioners. Consultation will end on the 6th December 2024.
- b. **Precept Approval** – to be sent in by the 31st December
- c. **VAT** – to be claimed by the Clerk before Christmas.
- d. **½ yearly accounts** – It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the ½ yearly accounts.
- e. **Reserves Policy** – It was **NOTED** it was now ready for adoption.
- f. **Mandate check** - It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had started the process of adding Cllr Parvin to the bank mandate and that Ms Green had been removed.
- g. **Review Risk Assessments** (Allotment, Footpaths Officer, Litter picking, Closed Churchyard, Burial Ground & PC generic activities) – It was **NOTED** that this was on the Clerks to do list.

8. Public Forum

The following issues were raised by the parishioners:

- **The signage for the circus is still up** – Clerk to contact school to see if anyone can remove the signs.
- **Solar farm glare from the panels** – The parishioner who lives in Upper Dormington is having issues with the look of the solar farm and the glare from the panels. As part of the planning application a line of trees will be planted in front of the panels to help visually and with glare. The Clerk had contacted Conrad Energy on the 15th October 2024 and had been told that trees would be planted in the autumn. Clerk to contact Conrad Energy again to see if there is a date in mind as we are moving into the winter months. The Parishioner was advised to contact the Ward Cllr about the issue. Clerk to forward on the Ward Councillors email address.
- **Speeding between Dormington and Mordiford.** A number of parishioners had attended the meeting to discuss this issue. Increased traffic and increased speeds on the road between Dormington and Mordiford have caused more accidents in the last few months. Pedestrian safety is a concern as cars don't slow down when entering Dormington and the latest accident is in the exact same spot as a previous fatality. Cllr Jones announced that the Highways Working group had been formed and that Cllr Cotton was due to meet with Herefordshire Council to discuss the topic. The Parish Council are looking into purchasing 2 Speed Indicator devices (one for Dormington and one for Mordiford) and the Clerk is currently researching all the options for purchase and hire. Cllr Jones asked the parishioners to join the Working Group to help move things forward as the more people involved the better.
- **Water on road on Larport lane junction has now damaged the road surface.** Clerk to contact the locality Steward to see what the plans are.
- **Accidents at the junction with the A438 in Dormington.** It was **NOTED** that this could also be a focus of the Highways Working group and the Parishioners were encouraged to join and help.

9. **To receive a brief report from Ward member – Cllr Biggs** – It was **NOTED** that the Parish Council were disappointed by the lack of attendance or written report from the Ward Councillor.

10. Planning:

a. To comment on new planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council

Ref Number	Location	Description	Comments
222728	Lower Eggleton, Ledbury HR8 2UE	Anaerobic Digestion Plant traffic and pollution	As the Parish is not consulted on this because of its location, it was RESOLVED to comment that the PC had concerns about the increase of farm traffic on the roads and the pollution from the tractors.
242580	The Beeches, Checkley. HR1 4ND	Proposed refurb of the existing house, including a gabled extension on the northeast elevation, a veranda on the southwest elevation, and a porch on the northwest side	It was RESOLVED to support the application after discussions regarding the number of extensions the property already had.

b. To note planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council –

Ref Number	Location	Description	Outcome
241860	Bell House Mordiford	Trees in a conservation area – Ash tree	Proceed
241948	Old Rectory, Mordiford	Trees in a conservation area – multiple trees	Proceed
242113	Old Rectory,	Trees in a conservation area – Multiple	Proceed

	Mordiford	trees	
242158	Holy Rood Church, Mordiford	Trees in a conservation area – Yew overhanging	Proceed

- c. **To receive an update from the NDP Steering Group.** – It was **NOTED** that the NDP Steering Group are now waiting for Herefordshire Council for feedback after waiting a while for the maps. It was also **NOTED** that planning applications are now coming in that might be treated differently if the NDP was in place. The delay is having an impact on decisions.
- d. **To receive an update on the School Community Hall and S106 money from the Summit meeting.** It was **NOTED** that unfortunately nobody was able to attend the meeting this month.
- e. **To consider the application to change the status of Tower Hill Bridle way to a Byway open to all traffic.** It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had contacted Herefordshire Council Planning office to find out what the process is for this kind of application. It was **RESOLVED** to move the item to January's meeting.

11. Finance:

- a. **To note the bank balances and sign the Bank Reconciliation**
The Bank balances were read out and it was **RESOLVED** to sign off the financials. Please see Appendix.
- b. **To consider the Budget Tracker**
The Budget Tracker was **NOTED** and signed off.
- c. **To receive an update on bank signatories**
It was **NOTED** that the Clerk was in the process of adding Cllr Parvin to the bank mandate now Ms Green had left.
- d. **To consider the adoption of the Reserves Policy**
It was **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the Reserves Policy
- e. **To consider and approve the budget for 25/26 and the precept figure.**
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the 25/26 budget (See appendix) with the precept figure agreed at £23,568.00. An increase of 5% from last year.
It was **RESOLVED** to put the draft budget out for consultation until the 6th December giving the parishioners time to comment. **Clerk to put the draft budget on the noticeboards, the website and on Facebook.**
- f. **To receive an update on the purchase of a noticeboard for Mordiford Green**
It was **NOTED** that 3 proper quotes had not been collected yet. Clerk to gather information together to be able to approve the purchase in January.
- g. **To consider the following invoices for payment:**

Payee	Description	Amount (inc VAT)
Clerk	Clerks Salary	As per contract
HMRC	PAYE tax	As per contract
Clerk	Clerks Expenses (mileage + ½ mobile phone bill, Malware Bytes, MS Office 365, light bulb for defib)	£110.93
Fownhope Parish Council	Contribution towards bus service 458 & 455	£252.00
DC Gardening	INV SI-2059	£222.00
Autela	INV 14851 – late arrival of invoice	£75.05
	Total excluding Clerk Salary and PAYE	£577.44

It was **RESOLVED** to pay all the invoices listed above including the Autela invoice as this had arrived after the agenda was published, and the Parish Council are not meeting again until January.

f. To note any payments made between meetings:

Payee	Description	Amount
Unity	Bank Charges	£5.40
Defib Warehouse	INV DW-158444 Adult Defib Pads for Mordiford Defib	£81.54

It was **NOTED** that the defib pads had been requested by the Defib monitor and the clerk had

requested authorisation from the Parish Council to purchase between meetings. Due to the importance of the defib machines, permission to purchase was given.

g. To note any receipts:

Sender	Description	Amount
Natwest – Transfer to Unity	21/10/24 – Chq to clear balance	£1219.44

It was **NOTED** that the balance in the Natwest accounts had been transferred by cheque to the Unity account leaving 10p in the Natwest account to transfer electronically. The Natwest accounts will then be closed.

12. Footpaths/Commons/Rivers/Open spaces:

a. To receive a PROW update

It was **NOTED** that there would be no more regular maintenance now until April 2025. Until then there would only be reactive maintenance over the winter months. A quote had been sought for footpath steps on MF10 as part of the PROW funding plan.

b. To receive an update on the management of Checkley Common and the restoration of the pond

It was **RESOLVED** to bring this item back in March/April

c. To receive an update on the cutting of Checkley Common

It was **NOTED** that there was no update

d. To note an empty plot became available at the allotment and now has a new tenant. There is currently only one person on the waiting list.

It was **NOTED**.

e. To consider the cutting of the hedge at the allotment and tidying up of an empty plot.

It was **RESOLVED** to ask DC Gardening to quote to cut back the allotment hedge and to see if they would consider quoting for the fence repairs etc as well. **Clerk to contact DC Gardening for a quote and also Ms Green with an update.**

f. To consider any advice given to the Clerk from the Federation of Burials and Cremations Authorities.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had had some initial training with the FBCA to ensure the burial in December would be lawful following the correct procedure. The Clerk will write up the process in the form of an up-to-date Burials Policy. **Clerk to meet the grave digger and also attend the funeral.**

13. Highways/Rural Roads/Bridges:

a. To receive an update on the Drainage fund

It was **NOTED** that the Drainage fund figure had been approved at £3550. **Clerk to contact the Lengthsman to see when work can begin.**

b. To receive an update from the Highways working group – See Public Forum (8)

c. To receive an update from the Mordiford Bridge steering group with Herefordshire Council

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Jones had met with Ed Bradford on 14th Nov. The previous Bridge survey was discussed and the fact that the Parish Council can't afford to pay for the changes on its own. It was **NOTED** that HC might part fund the changes but this would need to be investigated Any work should occur when the bridge is next set to close for repairs.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Jones informed the Parish Council that there was no weight limit on the bridge and the weight limit quoted on signs is to control the size of the vehicles to ensure they can get round the tight bend after the bridge.

d. To receive an update on speeding in Dormington - a new TRO and SID installation – See Public Forum (8)

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had already put a report together to present to the parish Council to make a decision on the SIDS. She is just waiting for information from Herefordshire council regarding installation costs.

e. To receive an update from the B4224 Strategy Group Meeting

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Hughes had attended the meeting and reported that the group is hoping to get up and running again.

f. To receive an update on the renewal of the white road markings in Mordiford

It was **NOTED** that the fading white lines had been reported by Cllr Cotton.

14. Health/Safety and the Environment:

a. To receive an update on the Larport Solar Farm – Tree planting

See Public Forum (8)

b. To consider blasting at Perton Quarry and the methods by which warning is given.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had been emailed to warn of blasting the day before the blasting, but because the Clerk only works part time she had not seen the email. It was **NOTED** that the Clerk who lives in Perton did not receive anything by post either. **Cllr Grant to go and speak to the Quarry and see if they can make sure they letter drop everyone in Perton, but especially the clerk so she can pass the message on to the community whatsapp groups.**

c. To receive an update from Wyescapes attended by Cllr Cotton.

It was **RESOLVED** to move this item to January 2025 as Cllr Cotton was not present at the Parish Council Meeting.

d. To consider Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy and consider commenting.

It was **RESOLVED** to let the Councillors respond individually to the Strategy consultation.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Grant had applied for funding for trees and hedges for the new School Footpath in Mordiford. We wait to hear the outcome.

15. Communications/newsletters/social media/Community engagement

a. To consider the content for a Christmas Newsletter to be circulated electronically.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had constructed a Winter Newsletter and was in the final stages of adding content. She hopes to have it completed shortly for the Cllrs approval before posting online.

b. To receive an update on the Sheep in Upper Dormington.

It was **NOTED** that there had been an ongoing issue with sheep in Upper Dormington getting stuck in the brambles in the hedges around the field. The issue had been reported a number of times to the landowner and the farmer, resulting in the sheep being moved and plans made to cut back the hedges. The Parish Council would like to thank all the members of the public that got involved to free the sheep but advises that the RSPCA should be called if anything happened like that again.

16. To put forward items for next agenda

- Instead of inviting DC Gardening to the next Parish Council meeting it was suggested that the Clerk and Cllr Jones meet with him and report back.
- VE day celebrations planning in January 2025
- Improvement to the Green Hut on Mordiford Green

17. To note the date and time of the next Parish Council meeting – January 15th 2025 at 7pm in Mordiford School.

The meeting closed at 20:10.

Budget Tracker 2024/25

[illegible]

Draft Budget for 2025/26:

DRAFT BUDGET			
		Financial Year:	
		2024/25	2025/26
INCOME	Precept (Annual)	£22,445.00	£23,568.00
	Interest received	£749.25	£250.00
	VAT Refund	£12,977.20	£0.00
	Allotment fees	£650.00	£650.00
	Burial Ground Fees	£140.00	£0.00
	National Grid (Wayleave)	£29.79	£29.79
	Participatory Budget from Reserves	£0.00	£22,000.00
	TOTAL INCOME	£36,991.24	£46,497.79
		2024/25	2025/26
EXPENSES	Admin Expenses	£800.00	£500.00
	Allotments - mowing & maintenance	£500.00	£500.00
	Audit Fees	£500.00	£600.00
	Bank Charges (new)		£250.00
	Churchyard & Burial ground - mowing & maintenance	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
	Clerks Salary	£6,300.00	£9,000.00
	Community events (inc D-Day Celebration)	£1,000.00	£1,400.00
	Defibs - maintenance/part replacement (new)		£300.00
	Donations & Grants	£2,000.00	£1,000.00
	Elections	£0.00	£0.00
	Green spaces - mowing & maintenance	£1,700.00	£2,000.00
	Highways & PROW (removed)	£8,000.00	
	Insurance	£650.00	£900.00
	Lengthsman - Highways (new)		£2,000.00
	Lengthsman - Drainage (new)		£2,000.00
	Maintenance of Assets	£400.00	£2,500.00
	Meeting room hire	£300.00	£300.00
	NDP - covered by grants	£3,000.00	£0.00
	Parish Projects (removed)	£2,000.00	
	Payroll Services (new)		£300.00
	Projects - Traffic control (SIDS/TRO) (new)		£10,000.00
	Projects - Checkley Management Plan and Pond restoration survey (new)		£500.00
	Projects - Other (new)		£500.00
	PROW - Parish Footpaths (new)		£6,000.00
	Ross on Wye Bus Subsidy	£300.00	£300.00
	Subscriptions	£600.00	£700.00
	Training (Clerk, Cllrs)	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
	Website and IT Support inc software subscriptions	£800.00	£800.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		£32,850.00	£46,350.00
TOTAL INCOME		£36,991.24	£46,497.79
Difference		£4,141.24	£147.79
Key			
	New or removed budget headings		
	Money from PC reserves		

The Finance Working Group met to discuss the budget and come up with some recommendations for the Parish Council. It has become clear, over the last few months, that Herefordshire councils funding, like that of so many other councils, is likely to be reduced next year. Some of the Parish Council's work is

funded via grants from Herefordshire Council, which we have to apply for annually. This includes the drainage, PROW and the Lengthsman grant.

However, should we be unlucky and not receive any grants from Herefordshire council, or a reduced sum, we may not be able to carry out the work on our roads, drains or PROW.

We do also receive funding in the form of the precept. A small sum of money, set by the Parish Council and levied on our residents via Herefordshire Council's community rates.

With the increased rainfall, more damage is being done to the roads, drains and public rights of way, and the plants are growing more vigorously and need cutting more often. Fuel and NI costs are increasing, so it is likely that the cost of running the services will increase as well.

We have had to allow for this and recommend the Precept is raised; and in addition, that a proportion of the reserves is set aside accordingly.

It is proposed that the precept is nominally increased by £1123 (5%) to allow for increased costs, noting that the precept has not been increased for the last eight years. Using last year's Band D equivalent property figures (whilst we are waiting for the release of the 25/26 figures from Herefordshire Council), the precept will increase from £69.43 to £72.90, which is an increase of £3.47 per Band D property per year.

The budget will have a consultation period that will end on the 6th December 2024. Parishioners are encouraged to make comment on the draft budget, before the Parish Council submit its precept request.

Please send all comments to the clerk.

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