

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Tom Goodwin, Cllr Ian Wilson, Cllr Giles Steiger & Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield.

In attendance: Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden) & Nikki Nicholson (The Clerk)

1) APOLOGIES

County Councillor Martin Allen, District Councillor Owenson, Cllr Penny Green, Cllr Margaret Herbert & Ann Smith (Advisor to PC).

PUBLIC – none

Malcolm asked regarding the proposed solar farm in the Parish – the Chairman advised that a meeting was being planned with representatives from the other two Parish Councils affected and there would be an update at the January meeting.

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2024 were proposed by Giles, seconded by Charlotte, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

It was noted that both Martin and Jeremy were in attendance at a full Malvern Hills District Council meeting where a new leader was being proposed.

County – Martin’s report had been circulated – it was noted that the Furrows Close had disappointingly been permitted on appeal.

District – No report.

5) HIGHWAYS MATTERS-

None

6) PARISH PATHS

Malcolm advised there were no new issues.

7) TREE SURVEY

The clerk advised the tree works had all be scheduled and all the neighbouring properties had been informed. The work at Marsh Common was due to take place in January, Steve Coole had been notified to remove the felled trees and clear any excess brush.

8) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

It was noted that the new lengthsmen Brian Arrowsmith had attended to meet with the members prior to the meeting.

All equipment and VAS batteries were now in his possession.

Brian had requested an additional VAS battery costing £84.00 plus VAT to enable continuous rotation and charge. He also had requested padlocks at a cost of £10.50 to secure the VAS and prevent any further battery theft. The expenditure was proposed by Tom and seconded by Ian and agreed by all.

9) PLAYING FIELD GRASS CUTTING

Mark suggested this item required feedback from Penny and was moved to January agenda.

It was noted that Jack Marklew who cut the EC Churchyard had stepped in and was cutting at a cost of £40 per cut this included the perimeter strimming. This cost had been added to the draft budget for 2025-2026.

10) DEFIBRILLATOR

Charlotte advised that the checklist is being eaten by bugs and has been removed, she is still completing the weekly checks and keeping a record just not inside the phone box, but is available on request from her.

11) COMMONS

Smithmoor – Tom advised that the work with Steve Coole to reinstate the drainage ditch at the top left right hand side of the Common adjacent to his field, would be scheduled over the coming months when the land was dry enough.

Tom would approach the Gilders regarding further sheep grazing but it was thought to be wet at present. Malcolm suggested that the bottom end of the Common required a good cut back/topping before got too messy – The clerk would talk with Steve Coole.

Dunstall – It was noted some deep furrows and some breakage of the ditch edge was caused during the recent maize harvest. The Clerk has asked Steve Coole to ensure any mess was made good/restored when access gate code was requested. It was decided to wait and see if the farmer made good, with a view to writing to him in March if it hadn't been repaired/restored.

Marsh – nothing to report in addition to tree works discussed under item 7.

12) PLANNING

M/24/00660/HP 3 North Quay, North Quay Lane, two storey side extension. APPROVED

13) FINANCE

New Financial Regulation – The new regulations had been circulated and adoption was proposed by Charlotte, seconded by Giles and agreed by all. The clerk would now put these on the Parish Pages.

Lloyds Bank, bank charges, it was noted that Lloyds Bank was introducing an account fee, this was £4.25per month, £51 PA and was included in the draft budget for 2025-2026.

Online Banking – It was agreed to move to online banking as payments during some month are being paid from the clerk personal bank account due to difficulties arranging to getting signatures on cheques. The first stage is for all the signatories to register for online banking. The clerk would send email instructions to Mark, Penny and Charlotte.

The Bank reconciliation for September & October had been checked and confirmed by Penny & Charlotte via email.

Payments made since the last meeting were noted as follows:

Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- September (S/O)	£289.66
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance September (S/O)	£20.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – October (S/O)	£289.66
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance October (S/O)	£20.00
Mr B Arrowsmith – lengthsman payment – October	£154.00

It was proposed by Charlotte and seconded by Giles and agreed by all to authorize the following payments:

- a) Mrs N Nicholson – reimburse Poppy wreath £20.00

b) Mrs N Nicholson – reimburse grass cutting x2	£80.00
c) Mrs N Nicholson – OPE	£23.53
d) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary – November (S/O)	£289.66
e) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance (S/O)	£20.00
f) Mr B Arrowsmith – Lengthsman payment – November	£TBC
g) Mr B Arrowsmith – reimburse VAS padlocks	£10.50
h) Mr B Arrowsmith – lengthsman payment – December	£TBC

Remittance: National Grid – Wayleave £89.20

MHDC Precept 2 £2475.00

WCC M Allen grant for Commons Tree maintenance £500.00

18. CORRESPONDENCE

None

19. DATES FOR THE NEXT YEARS MEETINGS:

4th Tuesday bi- monthly:

21st January, 25th March, 27th May, 22nd July, 23rd September & 25th November

All to be held at Earls Croome Village Hall, 7.30pm

Meeting closed 8.15pm