

PEOPLETON PARISH COUNCIL

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Address: Walcote, Top Street, Charlton WR10 3LE

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7.00pm in Peopleton Village Hall

1. **Introduction:** Cllr Mason opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present
2. **Present:** Cllrs Mason, Bailey, Wall, Harbon, Darby, Povey and nine members of the public.
3. **Apologies-** Cllrs MacCalman, Baxter, Phillips and WCC & WDC Robinson sent their apologies.
4. **The minutes** of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting were approved as true and correct and signed by the Chairman.
5. **Chairman's Report-Tim Mason**

In the last 18 - 20 months we have received record amounts of rainfall. While this has created problems for many people, particularly local farmers, I am pleased to note that there has not been any flooding in the village. We must be grateful, therefore, for the flood alleviation scheme installed by this council under the chairmanship of David Wall. Of course, we have not experienced the huge volume of rain in a short period which we experienced in 2007 and 1998, so we need to continue to be vigilant and ensure that ditches are kept clear. Nor do we need any development in the village which might increase the risk of flooding. This should not exclude any development; at the open meeting in January to consider an application for outline planning permission, several people expressed a desire to see more housing in the village. The Parish Council have taken note of this.

On the subject of flooding, we received a report from Worcestershire CC in November following their flood risk assessment. They concluded that "the village of Peopleton has a standard of protection of around 1 in 100 years. This means that a flood of lower return period than 1 in 100 years should not cause flooding as long as the drainage infrastructure is maintained and operating as designed."

This time last year, I started this report with the problem of crime in the village. During the last year, Peopleton became a "Smart Water Village" as the signage around the village shows. This should help to deter thieves. There have been many fewer incidents of crime in the village in the last 12 months, something which we all welcome. I would encourage everyone who has a smart water pack to make use of it and display the signs around your house.

Most recently, the Beltane Bash caused concern in the village. I was on holiday when the festival occurred but, while it did not pass without incident, I understand that it did not cause any major problems in the village. One of our main concerns was that the first that anybody knew about the event was from the Facebook page of the organiser. The Parish Council, our District Councillor and Stonebow House were not informed or consulted. I know that Linda Robinson has raised the issue and the Parish Council will also do so. I am grateful to David Wall and David Harbon who met with the organiser.

In the last few weeks, we have become aware that the field at the end of Monks Way, known to many as "Lomax's Field" after Bert Lomax, a former owner, is going to be sold. We have been exploring how we might acquire the land for the village with the possibility of creating a community orchard. There are several ancient pear trees in the field. As a council we need to discuss this fully. There is no certainty that we will be able to take over the field, but I am optimistic.

I am pleased to say that the community buses to Worcester on Tuesdays and to Pershore on Fridays are still running and should continue until at least July. Worcestershire County council are still discussing demand-responsive bus services and we are hopeful that these bus services will be included in their plans. (I also wrote this last year!)

During the year we took delivery of 10 tonnes of aggregate to help maintain footpaths around the village. This was just one of many small things which Les Bailey, our footpaths officer, does to help make everyone's lives better.

We also set up a small working party to consider whether it would be feasible to acquire The Crown as a community pub, should the opportunity arise. The group consisting of Grant MacCalman, David Harbon and parishioner Debbie Day, had several useful meetings, including one with Sheldon Inns, who currently hold the

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lease. They are hoping to extend the lease for a further 5 years. They also met with a director of the Queens pub in Elmley Castle.

Since our meeting last year, Richard Povey has joined the council as there was a vacancy after the election of May 2023. We are grateful to Richard for agreeing to join the council. I am grateful to David Wall who became vice chairman a year ago. We all benefit from his wisdom gained from years working in local government as well as having been chairman of this council for 10 years.

I am grateful to all councillors for their efforts during the past year. We would not be able to do our job without the support of our clerk, Lisa Cope. I should like to record my gratitude for her work and support for me over the last year. Steve Pike, our Lengthsman, also does a lot of work to help keep our village in good condition and we are grateful for all of his efforts. Finally, I should like to record the thanks of the whole council to Linda Robinson, our District and County Councillor. She attends all of our meetings and takes our concerns to the relevant people at County Hall or Wychavon District Council. We are lucky to have such good support.

6. County & District Councillor's Report- Linda Robinson

I am so sorry not to be with you in person this evening but I am away in Lincolnshire this week helping to conduct a Local Government Association Peer Review at Boston Borough Council. I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Parish Cllrs who work tirelessly and with great enthusiasm on your behalf as does their clerk Lisa who helps keep me updated and informed between meetings.

Much of my time across our Upton Snodsbury Division is spent on Highways' issues and Peopleton is no exception.

The abnormally high rainfall experienced this winter totalled 720mm over the last six months alone which would normally have equated to an average years' worth. This is off the scale compared to decade averages since 1980 and exceeds anything going back to 1960 in reference to data from our local weather station at Wychavon Civic Centre. Surface water levels have been abnormally high and the gulleys and ditches at the side of the roads are struggling to cope but efforts are made to keep them clear where possible.

Please report any Highways issues you spot direct to Highways on <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways/tell-us-about-road-highway-or-travel-route-issue/report>. with a precise location. Alternatively, e mail me on robinson2@worcestershire.gov.uk and I will report it to my Highways liaison officer. This also applies to any fly tipping you spot at the side of the road. The increase in littering along our country lanes is a big concern and much of it is just thrown from car windows when passing. WCC has a duty to litter pick the 'A' roads regularly and it is sad to see the amount their operatives find to put in their blue sacks ready for collection

As many of you may be aware County Hall remains partially closed in its upper storeys due to the presence of defective cement known as RAAP. Surveys and quotes are being undertaken to assess repair costs. Obviously, we cannot afford the risk of re opening with any danger of collapse. Some NHS buildings are evidently also affected.

Council & Planning meetings are being held at District Council offices with many having been at Wychavon which is convenient.

Some difficult decisions had to be made in the 2024/2025 budget

The recent rise in the County Council tax precept by 4.99% included a 2% Adult social care precept in order to contribute to existing cost pressures due to Worcestershire's ageing population.

Voluntary redundancies have also been offered to Management & Staff with quite a good uptake and it is anticipated that these Budget proposals will significantly reduce our current overspend.

In last year's report I mentioned a proposal to build a new Secondary School between the hospital and Newtown Road. This is currently on hold due to spiralling costs with the opening date delayed until at least September '28.

I have not made my report too long this evening as I am aware that there are other speakers to follow. However, my regular report from each Parish Council meeting is published in their minutes if you are interested.

Finally, if I may, a date to note for your Diaries in September. On Saturday 7th WCC will be hosting one of their roadshows with me in attendance at Peopleton's popular Flower & Fruit festival. You are all very welcome to come along and find out more about your County Council whilst enjoying a great day out. I hope to see many of you there.

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Wychavon is celebrating its 50th Anniversary so please find below some interesting facts on its formation and history. Wychavon was formed out of the Local Government Act 1972.

The council, and the district, was created out of five existing councils:

- Evesham Borough Council
- Evesham Rural District Council
- Droitwich Borough Council
- Droitwich Rural District Council
- Pershore Rural District Council

Originally called District No.9, the name Wychavon was chosen to reflect all parts of the district with Wych being the Anglo-Saxon name for Droitwich Spa and the Avon being the main river that runs through the district.

A shadow council was elected and met in Pershore for the first time in summer 1973, with Wychavon's first constitution being approved at The Raven Hotel in Droitwich Spa.

On 31 March 1974, Wychavon's founding councillors and officers visited Pershore Abbey where they pledged themselves to service. At midnight on 1 April, 1974 Wychavon - both the council and the place - came into being.

Download the [pdf Wychavon 50 years of making a difference booklet \(5.36 MB\)](#)

[\(opens in a new window\)](#) to learn more about our story.' This is I feel well worth a read. '

Finally, I would like to thank Peopleton residents for their tolerance during the recent festival known as the Beltane Bash which was as you know was held very close to the village. I know there was much concern about it and annoyance that local residents had not been consulted in advance. For what it is worth nor was I as your local representative. I am challenging the process taken by Licensing at Wychavon with our Legal Team as I feel there should have been greater transparency and more warning.

In that final week I spoke to a lot of services involved including the police. The key request was that a log was kept of any issues as a result of this event ideally with dates and times and any action taken. I know there was a lot of nervousness in the village and I came in on the Saturday and Sunday and spoke to some residents. The general response was not too negative although some were affected more than others particularly with regards to noise. Time will tell what else comes to light as comments are sent to myself or the Parish Council.

I would like to congratulate many of you for your tolerance throughout. However, the reason for a major debrief in due time is that previously the organisers have wished to hold the event in the same location annually. It is therefore important that all the verified facts are collated should this prove to be the case and permission is sought again next year.

My thanks also go out to our local police force who at my request showed their presence throughout which I am sure was a reassurance to residents and a deterrent to those attending to any anti-social behaviour. I met with some of our local policing team last week at Drakes Broughton and thanked them I person for their diligence and being on alert if needed.

7. Reports from Village organisations:

Village Trust- Steve Smith Chairman

The Trust consists of a group of trustees and there are some vacancies if anyone would like to get involved please do make contact, the AGM of the Village Trust takes place on 5th June 2024.

Income for the Trust is predominantly through Village Hall bookings and that income is then injected back into the Village Hall, this year by form of new acoustic boards and all of the doors and windows were replaced to make the Hall more energy efficient. This project was 70% funded through Wychavon with thanks for their support.

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There was a large drainage issue this year which cost £4k to remedy, thanks to Parish Lands who helped to cover this unexpected cost.

Other grants have been explored for solar panels however as they would need to face the cricket pitch this may be problematic but another grant for new internal doors is also a possibility.

Fundraising events are still key like the Pony and Dog show and there will be more to come throughout the year, the Village Trust are also looking for fresh ideas so please do get in contact with any ideas.

Village Shop- Cllr Mason

A profit was made in the Shop last year and the AGM takes place on 30th May 2024.

Flood Group-Cllr Wall

Despite significant rainfall this year Peopleton has not had any flooding issues which shows that the Flood Alleviation Scheme is working well. A meeting with the Enforcement Officer for the drainage department during the winter months highlighted how the majority of ditches are clear and not obstructing flow, however one landowner has been contacted with regards clearing their ditch in the village.

8. West Mercia Police-PCSO Claire Doughty

PCSO Claire Doughty attended the meeting to address any residents concerns, one resident was frustrated as they had emailed the local policing team for contact details of the Duty Officer during the weekend of the Beltane Bash and had received no response. PCSO Claire Doughty sincerely apologised for this.

9. Open Session

Parishioners were predominantly present to discuss the Beltane Bash Festival held at Stone Arrow Farm in Peopleton 3rd- 5th May 2024. Cllr Mason commented that the Parish Council, Cllr Robinson or Stonebow House were not notified of the event before they also saw it advertised on social media.

One parishioner asked why a village meeting was not held before the event took place, Cllr Mason replied that due to available dates and Cllr commitments it was not possible to fit a meeting in during the short time allowed before the weekend of the event, instead Cllrs Harbon and Wall met with event organiser who were assured that the event has been long standing for over 15 years and village will be affected very little by the event taking place.

The Parish Council were not notified as the event took place under a 'Temporary Event Notice' where no consultation is required. This licence allows up to 500 people at the event,

The Police were visible during the weekend with regular patrols in the village and on the actual event site both day and evening.

Cllr Harbon is currently collating all feedback on the event from village residents- please email the Parish Clerk with any to pass this on. Some feedback so far had been that the amount of anti-social behaviour as a consequence of the event had been very small and noise not as loud as anticipated. Revenue at the Village Shop and Pub had increased over the weekend and Church numbers were up also.

10. The date for the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 14th May 2025

Signed (Chairman).....

Date