

# EASTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting

held on Tuesday 28 May 2024 at 7.30pm in Eastham Memorial Hall

### In attendance

Cllr Paul Arnold (Chairman), Cllr Adams, Cllr Matravers; Cllr Ward;  
Clerk to Eastham Parish Council, District Councillor A Willmott and 1 Member of the Public

1. **Welcome** – Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. **Apologies** – Cllr Wordsley, Chair of Eastham Memorial Hall M Palfrey, County Councillor D Chambers, District Councillor L Bruton
3. **Adoption of Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 May 2023** - Minutes were read and all agreed for them to be signed by Chairman.
4. **Police Report** – none received.
5. **County Councillors and District Councillors Reports** – Apologies as above. Reports given and are noted at the end of these minutes
6. **Chairman's Report 2023-2024** – given at meeting and is below.
7. **Welfare Trust Report** – no report received
8. **Memorial Hall Report** – Report was made available at the meeting and noted that the Hall, monetarily is in a healthy position.
9. **Raised Matters not discussed above** –  
light on front porch of the hall, flashes on and off frequently disturbing residents.  
Bridge damage, CCTV on the bridge for this purpose was mentioned
10. **Meeting Closed at 7.45pm** - Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

Date

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Chairman of Eastham Parish Council

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### Item 5. County Councillors Report for Eastham Annual Parish Council Meeting May 2024

1. On Thursday 9 May I was appointed to the Cabinet with Responsibility for Education. Responsibilities include schools, early years learning, children with special education needs and home to school transport. This County wide role is a very exciting opportunity which I am very much looking forward.
2. Following my previous reports identifying budget overspends within the County Council's budget, large savings have been made due to efficiencies and changes in procedures, which have reduced budget concerns considerably. It should also be noted that the County Council enjoys healthy reserves, which have increased in recent years and which now stand at £100million. This may seem a reasonably large reserve but not when annual expenditure within the Council is approximately £430 million.
3. A few recent Worcestershire statistics which may be of interest:
  - a. Worcestershire County Council's Council Tax is in the lowest 25% in the UK.
  - b. Worcestershire's economy is £2 billion bigger than in 2015 with 34,000 extra jobs and 17,360 more homes.
  - c. Over £100 million has been invested in road and pavement improvements.
  - d. Greener Worcestershire with 150,000 new trees planted.
  - e. Schools are performing above the national average for results. In July 2023, 84% of Worcestershire Schools were judged good or outstanding. No maintained schools were judged to be inadequate.
  - f. Worcestershire has seen its first new train station for over 100 years which is performing ahead of plans.
  - g. More homes and businesses are now protected from flooding with more defences being planned – not least in Tenbury!
4. Worcestershire County Council's Environment Improvement Plan is now live and aims to deliver:
  - a. A greener future.
  - b. Our commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

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- c. A resilient transport network.
- d. Reducing our waste.

There are eight key priorities:

- a. Natural Environment
- b. Energy
- c. Resources & Waste
- d. Transport
- e. Net Zero Council
- f. The Green Economy
- g. The Green Economy
- h. Reducing the impact of Climate change (flooding)
- i. Communities and Wellbeing

David Chambers, County Councillor, Tenbury Division.

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### Item 5. District Councillors Report for Eastham Annual Parish Council Meeting May 2024

#### **District Councillor A Willmott, Tenbury Ward**

**Flood Defences, Tenbury Wells** "The flood defences have been designed to a 1 in 100 year standard of protection, plus an additional 60% allowance for climate change." What does this actually mean? At the Teme measuring station, the proposed flood defence barrier will be 0.23 metres, 9 inches in old money, above the 2007 flood level. Constricted by the flood barrier, a 2007 flood would be a little higher. Groundwater intrusion is a recognised factor in the Town flooding. The Flood Relief Scheme does not address this. It will be for the Highways Authority to address groundwater flooding of the Town when the Environment Agency Scheme is completed. The latest cost estimate is E25 to E30 million, completion 2029/30. (Source: Environment Agency)

**Planning. MHDC** A raft of improvements were due to go live on 1 April that MHDC Planning expect to correct poor Planning performance over time. At a meeting with the then head of planning, I advocated more fundamental solutions. A performance review will follow to include any alternative action necessary.

**Speeding** West Mercia Police have agreed to Operation Snap and the signs are up in the Rochford area and more recently we have added Hanley. Other communities are showing interest. An application to include Berrington Green is in process.

**Parkrun** Parkrun is a free, regular, safeguarded event for which funding is now in place. More volunteers are still required to form the core team to run the Junior events in Tenbury on Palmers Meadow.

**Teme Bridge** The official line has moved from "there is nothing wrong with the Bridge - it's inconsiderate drivers" to: County has reported that corrective action, including a new footbridge for our "no longer fit for purpose" Teme Bridge is not affordable for some time. Government funds are being reallocated from HS2 to Local Authority transport schemes. I have asked, and our MP has agreed, to support our bid for a footbridge from this fund.

**Road Works** Roadworks methodology, how and when works are undertaken, is a local and national problem with roads closed and interrupted for long periods with no work being undertaken for the convenience of those doing the work - to the inconvenience of those reliant on the road network. I have asked our MP to lobby to bring forward legislation to redress the balance with adequate weight given to the disruptive costs of delays and trade disruption suffered by those that rely on the network. Harriett Baldwin has agreed to raise this with the Department of Transport.

**Tenbury Pharmacy** I find that some individuals and groups are taking their trade to other towns because of service problems at our pharmacy, local stakeholders concur. I am in correspondence with Rowlands HQ on the problem with no improvement evident at this time.

**Neighbourhood Plan** Tenbury Town Councillors recently decided not to have a Neighbourhood Plan. The town Council have sadly lost the Mayor and Deputy but these positions have now been filled and the Town has gained three promising new Councillors. This Neighbourhood Plan seems likely to be resurrected for reconsideration in due course.

**Brown and White Road Signs** These signs make drivers aware of venues. The rules on siting these signs seem unduly restrictive in Worcestershire - to the relative detriment of our venues. I have written to all County Councillors who also sit as District Councillors in our area, plus our MP, to lobby for change at the County Council.

**TSB Closing** The last bank is closing next May. Our MP, Harriett Baldwin, is pressing for a banking hub to replace it, similar to the one she successfully lobbied for in Pershore. MHDC has also joined the push for a replacement banking facility in Tenbury.

#### **District Councillor L Bruton – Tenbury Ward**

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It was an honour and a privilege to be re-elected last May as the District Council Member to represent the Tenbury Ward. Thank you to all residents who took the time to vote in the election.

Tenbury has been my home for the last 45 years since moving here with my family at the age of 11. I care passionately about the community, the town and surrounding area because it's my community.

It is an honour to help residents in so many ways and be able to make a difference to their lives. Thank you to all the residents' who have supported me and given me encouragement, which is very much appreciated.

Together with Town and Parish Councils' and hundreds of councils across the country, Malvern Hills District Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Council being created under the Local Government Act 1972. The anniversary is a great opportunity to recognise the work undertaken by councils at all levels and the important contributions they make to our communities. Thank you to the Town and Parish Councillors who serve our communities, giving many hours of their time for free.

The District Council has provided grant funding to Tenbury and other areas through several schemes including the Town Centre Support Scheme, Apprentice Bursary, Tourism Scheme and recently a large grant to The Regal through the Malvern Hills Rural Fund. Last year also saw significant investment in the renovation of the public conveniences located in Teme Street car park. The District Council has also supported Tenbury Community Pool with revenue and capital funding, which has helped provide energy saving measures. During the Easter holidays the District Council through Tenbury TIC provided an Easter Bunny Trail. The trails are always very popular with the children.

Last year I allocated my Ward Budget of £500 to Tenbury CofE Primary Academy to purchase new books for the school library. The school were able to purchase a set of books about diversity, which will benefit hundreds of children for many years. A school library plays a vital role in providing pupils a platform to gain knowledge, to support education and lifelong learning, to promote literacy and a love of reading. School libraries help reduce education inequality by providing children with equal access to the same breadth of reading as well as playing an important role for pupils' wellbeing and improves independent learning.

**Council Tax & Budget 2024/25** Council at its meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February, approved a net budget of £6,034,410. The Band D equivalent for the District Council has increased by £5.00 (2.82%) to £182.60.

**Changes to Car Park Times & Charges** The District Council made changes to car park times and charges – the first change for most tariffs in 12 years. As part of a recent public consultation, there are several changes which include stay-time increases, as well as a cost increase for some.

The cost of the most popular tickets – the 50p one hour and £1.00 two-hour tickets will be frozen. These will remain some of the lowest parking rates in the county.

Full details of the of the proposed changes and to comment on the proposals, please visit:

**Spacehive Crowdfunding** The District Council is encouraging individuals, organisations, and businesses to come forward with ideas that could make their area greener, healthier and connected. Working with crowdfunding platform Spacehive, MHDC is launching the next round of funding as part of Crowdfund Malvern Hills, which gives local people the opportunity to create and deliver projects that aim to enhance the district.

A current project is Kyrebrook Daycare Centre, which has been allocated £18,617 through Malvern Hills District Council's Connected Communities Fund. Contact: [communityservices@malvern hills.gov.uk](mailto:communityservices@malvern hills.gov.uk)

Visit: [www.spacehive.com/mevement/mavernhills](http://www.spacehive.com/mevement/mavernhills) for more information.

**Farming Recovery Fund** On 9 April, the Government opened the Farming Recovery Fund to support farmers who suffered uninsurable damage to their land due to flooding this winter. Under the scheme, eligible farmers can access grants of between £500 and £25,000 to return their land to the condition it was before exceptional flooding due to Storm Henk.

Eligible farmers are being contacted directly by Rural Payments Agency outlining the support available to them through the Farming Recovery Fund and they can make a claim. Eligibility for the fund will remain under the review by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure it is supporting areas where farmland is most impacted. If you have any questions, please contact [FRF@rpa.gov.uk](mailto:FRF@rpa.gov.uk)

**SWDP Review** The Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent scrutiny towards the end of last year, a process known as examination. Dates for public hearings to provide inspectors with the opportunity to ask questions on parts of the plan and the evidence supporting it were expected to be announced this month.

While the inspectors say they have made good progress on preparing for the hearings they have requested for some evidence documents to be updated first. This will avoid delays further in the process and ensure people

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making people making representations at the hearings have the latest information available to them. Inspectors have requested further information about the impact of increased traffic generated by the plan on the surrounding road network.

It is worth noting that the plan states that development opportunities at Tenbury Wells are limited due to the flood risk, landscape and access issues. The plan allocates 147 dwellings at Tenbury Wells and proposes an additional 10 dwellings.

### **SkillsBoost Worcestershire**

SkillsBoost Worcestershire is a new programme to help organisations with the costs of upskilling and training their employees. Worcestershire organisations can claim back 50% of their training costs, up to £6,000 for their Worcestershire based employees. This means that the funding can allow organisations to upskill or redeploy their employees to maximise their effectiveness. Businesses of any size and sector are eligible for the programme as long as the employees are looking to upskill or retrain in Worcestershire. The SkillsBoost Programme is part-funded by Malvern Hills District Council using its allocated UK Shared Prosperity funding. Funding for the SkillsBoost programme is limited to on a first come first served basis and is only available from Tuesday 2 April 2024 until 31 March 2025. Visit

[www.worcestershiregrowthhub.co.uk/do-you-want-financial-support-to-upskill-your-staff](http://www.worcestershiregrowthhub.co.uk/do-you-want-financial-support-to-upskill-your-staff) for more information.

### **Talk to Tom**

Residents recently had the opportunity to have their say about local issues when the Leader of Malvern Hills District Council, Cllr Tom Wells, at his 'Talk to Tom' session held at The Pump Rooms. Sessions are held regularly in Malvern - visit: [www.malvern hills.gov.uk/talktotom](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/talktotom) to make an appointment via an online form.

### **Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service**

Later this year, the six district councils will be recommissioning the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service. The HIA provides a range of services to help residents remain independent in their homes, including management of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and delivery of funded adaptations. If you have any questions, please contact the Private Sector Housing Team at

[PrivateSectorHousing@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:PrivateSectorHousing@wychavon.gov.uk)

### **Free Property and Home Security Events**

The Community Safety Team are offering free Property and Home Security events to parishes. The drop-in events will offer advice on a wide range of preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of being a victim of theft or burglary.

Visit [www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community-safety](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community-safety) for further information.

### **Seatbelt Covers**

Seatbelt covers are being issued to neurodivergent children and adults to help emergency responders provide appropriate support. Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils have joined forces with the West Mercia Police Autism & Neurodiversity Network to deliver 'Project Treasure', which will see 500 seatbelt covers provided to children and adults who live or travel through the two districts. The seatbelt covers will include a contact card with important information about the child or adult and their needs if they are ever to be involved in a road traffic collision. The card will explain how best to help them should the parent or carer be unresponsive or unable to relay the information. The covers will be distributed to special education providers, but residents can apply for a seatbelt cover by visiting [www.malvern hills.gov.uk/project-treasure](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/project-treasure)

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### **Item 7. Chairman's Report**

This is a summary of the matters over the past year

A year in which we have welcomed 2 new District Councillors Andrew Willmott and Lesley Bruton to our meetings.

The Parish Council currently has a vacancy for a Councillor by Co-option if you are interested please email the Clerk for details and form. Email – [easthamparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:easthamparishcouncil@gmail.com)

Footpaths, these have been walked regularly

Flooding along the A443 resulted in damage to Eastham Bridge by a Lorry

The Kings Portrait has been received and is in the Hall

Thank you to fellow Parish Councillors, Lengthsman Chris Bunn and Worcestershire County Cllr David Chambers, Malvern Hills District Councillors and our Clerk

**Paul Arnold**

**Chairman**