

Minutes of the monthly meeting of Grimley Parish Council

Monday 25th November 2024, 7.30pm
Peace Hall, Sinton Green

Present: Parish Cllrs A. Collett (Chair), R. Woodhouse (Deputy Chair), P. Ayers, G. Moore, G. Probert, S. Russell, A. Sinclair. S Wilson.
Attending: District Cllr Dean Clarke. Parish Clerk & RFO Lisa Stevens. 2 Residents. 1 visitor to the parish.
Apologies: Cllr M. Boyle on business.
Non-attendance: County Cllr Scott Richardson Brown.

Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

111/24 **Welcome and information** provided at the beginning of each council meeting, **points of order, apologies for absence and declarations of interest.**

- **Points of order** (nil).
- **Adjustments to facilitate public participation** (nil requested). Peace Hall contacted the Clerk to apologise for lack of heating – due to volunteers being stuck in traffic. Meeting was not hindered.
- **Declarations of interest (New or previously made).**
Cllr Collett in respect of kerb at MWGreen.
Cllr Collett in respect of the project to improve mobile connectivity.
Cllr Woodhouse in respect of the Open Ditch pub planning application.
- **Apologies accepted** as above.
- All positions for parish cllr are now filled, there currently being 9 parish cllrs in office.

112/24 **Public Open Forum.** *Please refer to 'information provided to public', a copy of which is on seats and on our website.*

A project to improve mobile connectivity - Information presented in Appendices 2 & 3. Nil questions from the public on this topic. Nil questions from the DCllr. Feedback from the residents (3 families) had been positive.

- Parish Cllr Comment: With having one 25m Tower – this will be capable of supporting all mobile operators for 4G and enhanced 5G services.
- Parish Cllr Comment: Area defined by Atlas excludes hamlets/villages in the local area that are perceived to have better connectivity – need to ask for more rigour to be applied to the criteria used to define weak signal.

Resolved. Motion – that this is a project worth pursuing and that the Clerk be instructed to inform Atlas of the same. Prps: GM. Scnd SR. **Duly approved.**

Clerk

No other questions or topics from the public.

Standing orders reinstated.

113/24 **Minutes of previous meetings** – Motion to approve previous minutes.

a. 21st October 2024. Prps: RA. Scnd: SR. **Duly approved.**

Clerk

114/24 **To receive the report of the District Councillor – Dean Clarke**
(Items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)

a. MHDC remains financially sound in comparison to WCC. No plans to drastically alter district budget at this time. Audit being undertaken at present.

115/24	Parish Council ditch and water working party - consider and Resolve to respond:	
a.	Dark Lane & Walton Lane (Bells Bank) water running down road. Highways and Severn Trent have scheduled further road works for 18 th November. Outcomes of this are that 2 out of the 3 leaks have been attended to – how successfully will not be known until drier weather. Resolved: Clerk instructed to refer back to County Cllr for urgent attention.	Clerk
b.	Oakhall Green to Sinton Green water running down road. Highways have inspected and are scheduling in ditch and grip works for spring 2025. Remove from agenda and keep on watch list. Cllrs noted that the pond opposite Hunters Lodge will require attention in the spring perhaps in order to excavate the headwall suspected to be in situ there, once WCC has attended to the ditches etc.	
c.	Monkwood Green flooding adjacent to Goodwin's Farm. Schedule as part of budget for 2025. Resolved: Include in 2025 budget. Prps: AC. Scnd: RW. Duly approved.	Clerk
d.	Moseley corner water regularly in road. Severn Trent have attended to inspect and tackle. Resolved: Clerk instructed to refer back to County Cllr for urgent attention.	Clerk
116/24	Planning, Enforcement & Consultations - consider and resolve to respond to:	
a.	M/24/00345/FUL New Inn, Sinton Green, WR2 6NW, Proposed 2no. dwellings with detached car ports and extended parking area for pub. Amended plans: Amended red line – new location plan. Amended Plans – changes to scale, design and layout. Visibility Splays, Transportation Statement and Automatic Traffic Count data submitted. <i>Extension granted to PC until 26th Nov.</i> <i>Standing orders were relaxed</i> and the application was invited to address the parish council if desired. Cllrs explored numerous aspects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarification of settlement boundary; - viability of the pub and whether this can be included within parish cllrs' material reasoning; - parking issues (application expands upon existing parking by 40%); - guided by Highways who have not objected to the location of entry to the proposed development; - viability of accepting that the houses are outside the settlement boundary and whether on balance this affects this application and how this would impact the ability of the parish council to examine future applications with all due credibility; - reflection upon the needs of the parish to retain a focal point and a local businesses. Resolved: Motion to support this application. Prps: AS. Scnd: GP. Duly approved unanimously.	Clerk
b.	WCC Verge Consultation for parish council to take on mowing and management and expense but not ownership of all verges in the parish in line with biodiversity best practice. Resolved. Motion: To decline due to budget and admin limitations. Prps: PA. Scnd: SR. Duly approved.	Clerk
c.	M/24/01548/HP The Old Farmhouse, Farm Lane, WR6 6NQ detached garage and carport. Councillors noted that the application plans do not mark the location of a long existing Anderson-style storage facility nearby. Also that the public footpaths/rights of way on the ground no longer strictly follow those routes demonstrated by the maps. Resolved. Motion: to submit these comments. Prps: SW. Scnd: PA. Duly approved.	Clerk
d.	Worcestershire County Council Enforcement Plan review 2024. Reviewed to take account of the updated guidance contained in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023. Resolved. Motion: to take as read and not submit a response. Prps: AS. Scnd: PA. Duly approved.	Clerk
e.	Standing Item: To consider and arrange an extra ordinary parish council meeting for planning applications received after date of publication of this agenda. Nil.	

117/24		Mowing Monkwood Green Common and SSSI - Updates & formulate Motions not requiring written notice	
a.	WWT green farm project update. Previously parish cllrs agreed to allow a deeper plough trench-ing on the SSSI in order to install the green farm water supply. Parish Cllrs also gladly accepted WWT very generous offer to pay for the water connection and standpipe only. The parish council will arrange the hard standing and trough at a future date as required. Timetable unknown at present and have noted the waterlogged condition of the soil. Contractor permitted to access the Common and SSSI to inspect or begin works at any time on condition that soil is firm enough. Duly noted.		
b.	Reinvigorate project to clear ditches on the Common from Woodlands to Green Farm. Cllr Collett to liaise with contractor M.J.		Cllr Collett
c.	Kerb and verge rediscovery behind main pond. Highways have acknowledged ownership of road at this section. Outcome of Highways inspection is that Donald (WCC) will schedule in kerb excavation and redefine the verge. It is not known who installed the kerb stones, which Highways have noted would not normally be installed in sections such as this. No further action required from parish council.		
d.	Nuisance bonfires on land parcel behind The Moorlands, Monkwood Green. New report raised with environmental health. Await progress. Duly noted.		
e.	Road repairs Monkwood Green (resident project) - updates if any. AR has completed voluntary works and has filled in potholes. Resolved. Motion for the Clerk to write to thank resident. Duly agreed.		Clerk
f.	Correspondence from Monkwood Green resident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requesting amendment to error on previous minutes and confirming that no correspondence has been received on the matter of mowing quotations. Clerk will make the required amendments. - Requesting clarification to works on Pigeon House pool. Cllrs were unsure which pool this is, as they had never heard of any pond/pool being referred to by this name. However, on the assumption that this refers to the main pond on the Common, it was noted that the weather this year has been unusual, that works to the pond several years ago have shown not to have affected the water table/water levels and that residents regularly clean out the pipes draining the pond to keep the water levels balanced. Cllrs agreed to watch the water levels over the next few months and consider again mid 2025. - Confirming that PC electric fence equipment previously under resident care has now been stolen. Duly noted. 		
118/24		Sinton Green - Updates & formulate Motions not requiring written notice	
a.	Update regarding village green ditch clearance. Contractor has received required licence. Cllr Collette to chase.		Cllr Collett
b.	Update from Regulatory Services – ongoing investigation of alleged noise complaints ref the Open Ditch. PC awaits further information.		
c.	Overgrown hedges encroaching on the village green and surrounding parish council land. - Reminder sent 17 th November. Await response or resident action.		
d.	Nuisance manure reported by resident but opted to deal with in house. No further action.		
f.	Dead tree in the pond opposite the Peace Hall – Information sent to the resident as per information received in 2022 with regard to land ownership with Highways.		
119/24		Grimley village - Updates & formulate Motions not requiring written notice	
a.	Overgrown hedges Camp Lane – Clerk has phoned owners to discuss. Await tenant/contractor action. JH and DH normally attend to some of these sections.		

<p>b.</p> <p>c.</p> <p>d.</p> <p>e.</p> <p>f.</p> <p>g</p>	<p>Ref the trees planted on Camp Lane and resident enquiries, these are subject of a prior planning application some decade ago to plant fast growing trees to use in farm biomass generators. No further action</p> <p>Enforcement Ref: M/ENF/24/0298. Alleged Breach: Creation of hardcore area. Location: Camp Lane, Grimley, WR2 6LX. Parish Council involvement not required at this stage. Cllr Woodhouse has provided photos for ref.</p> <p>Condition of SSSI Grimley Brick Pits – Email sent to Natural England to enquire as to long term management plan. Await response. Clerk noted instances of fly tipping and dumped fuel in the standing water in these sections.</p> <p>Broken finger post adjacent to 609(C) and resident concerns that this bridleway has been downgraded to a public right of way without consultation – Clerk has made enquiry of WCC and awaiting inspection and response from them.</p> <p>Broken finger post directional arrow adjacent to 631(C) – reported to WCC. Awaiting action from them.</p> <p>Loose manhole cover – Parish Cllrs inspected but could not find. Report raised with Highways.</p>	
120/24	Budget for 2024/2025 - To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
	<p>Final proposal. Current precept is £20,580 pa.</p> <p>Major projects in calendar for 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pond and ditch clearance at Monkwood Green (Moseley end) to stop the road flooding. - New website and .gov email addresses. - Clerk payrise options under contract, see item 15 below. - <u>Post meeting, it was noted the impact of National Insurance Employer payments from 13% to 15% may require monthly parish council payments of up to £40 to HMRC.</u> <p>Major projects for 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Vehicle Activated Speed sign for the parish. <p>Resolved. Motion: Proposal is to put precept up by 7% to £22,020.6, which is a £5 band D increase pa or under 2 cups of coffee per household. Prps: RW. Scnd: AS. Duly approved. Unanimous.</p> <p>The Clerk was instructed to write to MHDC to confirm these requirements.</p>	Clerk
121/24	.Gov website and .gov email addresses for Cllrs. (County Council website closes June 2025). - To discuss updates and formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
a.	To consider next steps. Cllr Collett to follow up on options.	Cllr Collett
122/24	Finance and Administration - Updates & formulate Motions not requiring written notice.	
a.	Clerk timesheet inspected. No comments.	
b.	To review payments made within the month, to consider and motion to approve the payment of outstanding accounts. Appendix 1 Resolved Prps: AS. Scnd: GP.	Clerk
c.	To consider and approve payment of urgent accounts if any (Delegation to Clerk policy). Nil.	
d.	To receive and motion to accept Bank Reconciliation. Resolved accepted. Prps: GP. Scnd: AC.	Clerk


<p>122 con</p>	<p>Finance continued</p> <p>e. To note that the Clerk has attended training on Neighbourhood planning, hosted by district cllrs. Cllrs agreed that a Neighbourhood plan is not currently required. Duly agreed.</p> <p>f. To note that the Clerk has attended data protection training hosted by the ICO. Duly noted.</p> <p>g. Clerk Pay scales for 24/25 – Appendix 4 New pay scales can be found on WCALC website (see appendix 3) along with the latest information from NALC. WCALC recommends that Council's note the new increase in pay for employees. There is no need to formally agree to the pay increase as it is an existing contractual obligation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clerks current pay is £13.06 at pay scale 9. New pay scale within contract is £13.69 pay scale 9. - Backdated pay April 2024 – Oct 2024 at £ 211.68 please (0.63p x 12 hrs x 4 weeks x 7 months). - Contract grants automatic pay rise unless 'The Council may withhold an increment if it is considered that performance fell below the level expected, following an annual appraisal'. Clerk annual appraisal due March 2025. <p>Option to grant pay rise/backdated pay or organise a staffing committee or both. Resolved. Motion to approve pay rise as detailed above. Prps: AC. Scnd: PA. Duly approved. Staffing committee to go ahead as normal in the spring.</p> <p>h. Banking matters Correspondence received from bank indicating that charges will begin in January 2025 for £5 per bank account per month. Parish council currently has 2 bank accounts with the same bank. Interest p.a. is currently average £130 from the savings account but this cannot be used for daily transactions and the interest rate is being halved from January. Nb Future charges will be £120 pa for both bank accounts. Only other bank currently accepting parish councils is Unity, an online only bank. They already charge £4 per month. Motion: Clerk's proposal is that parish council remains with the same bank, move all money to one account and closes the savings account to reduce costs. Resolved. Close savings account and move all assets to the one remaining account. Prps: AS. Scnd: GM. Duly approved.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>123/24</p>	<p>AOB, Correspondence, Dates for Diary, Items for Future Agenda. This section is for items to note only and no financial motions can be raised in this section.</p>	
	<p>AOB. Nb. items not raised beforehand which require a financial vote to be moved to future agenda.</p> <p>Police. Introducing PC 21403 Molly-Ann Smith as the new Safer Neighbourhood Officer for the Tenbury and Martley area which covers Grimley Parish. Molly looks forward to working closely with parish cllrs in the future to combat any concerns there might be within the area. She will be working alongside PCSO Abi Partridge. Police Constable Tenbury & Martley SNT West Mercia Police. Duly noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add back to agenda sometime in 2025 – bench at peace hall. - Resident correspondence ref Sinton Green thefts from sheds and gardens, reported to police on behalf of residents. - Quarterly police contract arranged and in place. - Oakhall Farm overhanging building – arranged new signage to prevent vans from hitting building. - Correspondence ref parish council contractors list and new additions. VAT checks underway. - VAT reclaim received from HMRC. - Confirmation and validation of external audit with PKF Littlejohn. Two resident inspections of accounts Oct 2024. - Defib repairs MWGreen awaiting Heartbeat Trust engineer still. 	
<p>124/24</p>	<p>Dates of next scheduled meeting. The press and public are cordially invited to attend these meetings and should note Standing Orders in advance please.</p> <p>Monday 27th January 2025 7.30pm at Peace Hall, Sinton Green</p>	

Appendix 1_Payments. Within item, delegation to Clerk to pay standard monthly invoices, as within existing budget, as there is no parish council meeting that month.

43	Mr Simon Skeys	Lengthsman worksheet August. Claimed from WCC 20/11/2024. Received 10/11/2024	242.90
44	Mr Simon Skeys	Mowing August 2024. Received 10/11/2024	90.00
57	Mr Simon Skeys	Lengthsman worksheet September. Claimed from WCC 20/11/2024. Received 10/11/2024	270.95
58	Mr Simon Skeys	Mowing invoice September. Received 10/11/2024	90.00
65	Mr Simon Skeys	Lengthsman October worksheet received 10/11/2024. Claimed from WCC 20/11/2024	289.95
66	Community Heartbeat Trust	All three care packages amalgamated into one invoice each year. VAT £75.60	453.60
67	Nest Pensions	Nov payment for Nov wage. Clerk contribution £25.07. PC contribution £18.81	43.88
68	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Monthly Expenses Nov 2024	28.50
69	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Monthly wage for Oct paid in Nov is £626.88 - pension	601.81

Plus staff pay rise as approved above.

Appendix 2

 <p>Icon for attention only. Not indicative. Image courtesy of Clker.com and Dreamstime.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A project to improve mobile connectivity in our parishes</p> <p>The parish council has been approached by Atlas Tower Group Limited and the County Council with an idea for a project to improve mobile phone signal in the wider area. Atlas was established in June 2018, to provide telecommunications infrastructure to the Mobile Network Operators on a national basis. Over the past 10 months Atlas has been investigating mobile coverage in Worcestershire and have identified around thirty locations where they believe mobile coverage is particularly poor. Atlas will look to meet with the parish councils of Wichenford, Grimley, Hallow and possibly more, to discuss the options for improving mobile network coverage in our area.</p> <p>This project would, if parishioners support the idea, involve a joint consultation between residents, local businesses and charities, the parish council and the district and county councils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at whether the data and maps indicating poor mobile phone coverage matches the experiences that residents have. Also to investigate areas that are believed by mobile phone operators to have fair quality coverage, but where the reality may be different and, the reasons for this. - Initially to pin point options for sites that would, if a mast was located there, improve mobile phone signal over a widest area. This isn't straightforward, as topography and vegetation play a big part in this. The parish council understands that proposals would be for one signal mast that would tackle coverage over as wide an area as possible. No land owner has been approached about this - the project is in the very earliest stage. - Look to gather support for the project from the community. Atlas and the County Council state "this proposal is entirely voluntary. Atlas only work in locations where the local community are engaged and supportive." - No financial contribution would be required from the public for the project if it were to proceed. Atlas have contracts in place with all mobile phone companies who pay an annual rental fee to operate from the site/s. <p>The parish council is aware that the emergency services operate from the mobile phone network, that smart meters in your home also use the same networks and that working from home is significantly on the rise and will use this as a starting point for discussions.</p> <p>Councillors remain mindful of the extraordinary beauty of our home parishes – which is why residents will have a full say in all proposals.</p> <p>See appendix 3 for copies of slides provided by Atlas.</p>
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Appendix 3 – project for mobile phone signal improvement



Introduction

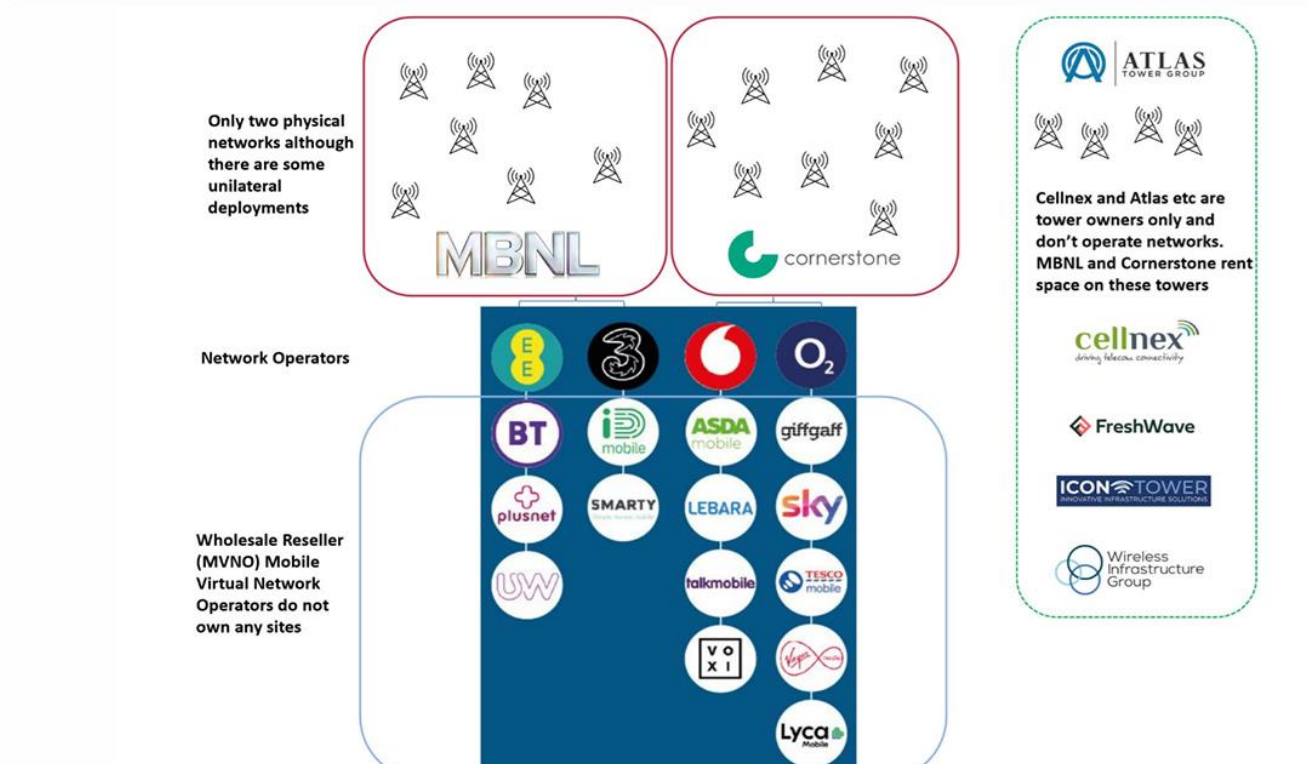
About Atlas Tower Group

- Atlas Tower Group Limited (Atlas) was established in June 2018, to provide telecommunications infrastructure to the Mobile Network Operators on a national basis
- Over the past 10 months we have been investigating mobile coverage in Worcestershire and have identified around thirty locations where we believe mobile coverage is particularly poor
- We are now meeting with the community leaders in groups like this one to discuss the options for improving the coverage issues
- No financial contribution required for the development of the site. Atlas have contracts in place with all of the mobile operators who pay an annual rental for having their equipment on our site
- This proposal is entirely voluntary, Atlas only want to work in locations where the local community are engaged and supportive of what we are trying to do. So far the response has been extremely positive in Worcestershire

One of our completed sites in Wolverhampton



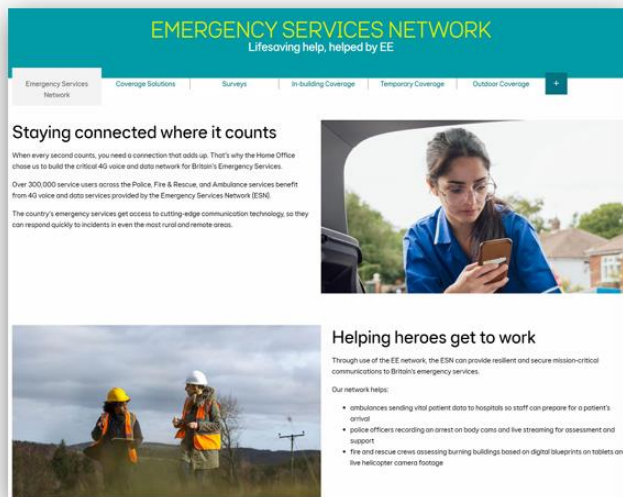
UK Infrastructure



Why do I need mobile phone coverage?

Emergency Services Network (ESN EE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-emergency-services-mobile-communications-programme/emergency-services-network>



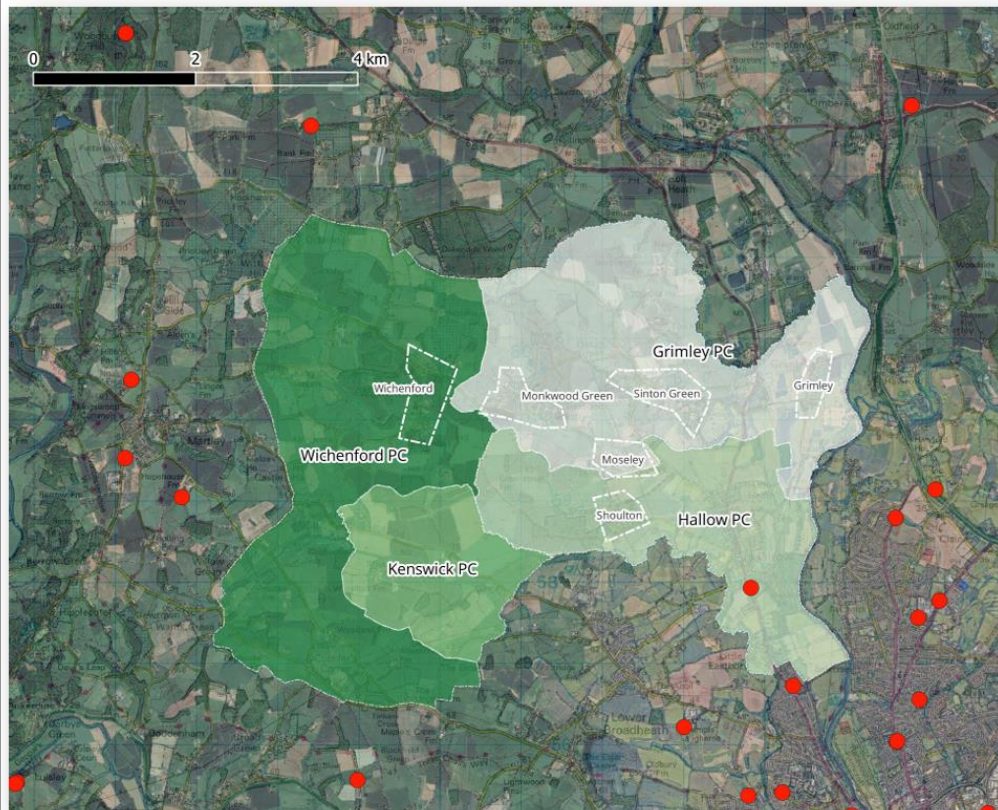
Smart Metering (VMO2 & Vodafone)

<https://www.smartdco.co.uk/our-smart-network/does-a-smart-meter-need-wi-fi/>



<https://www.renewableenergyhub.co.uk/blog/why-smart-meters-are-important-for-the-net-zero-target>

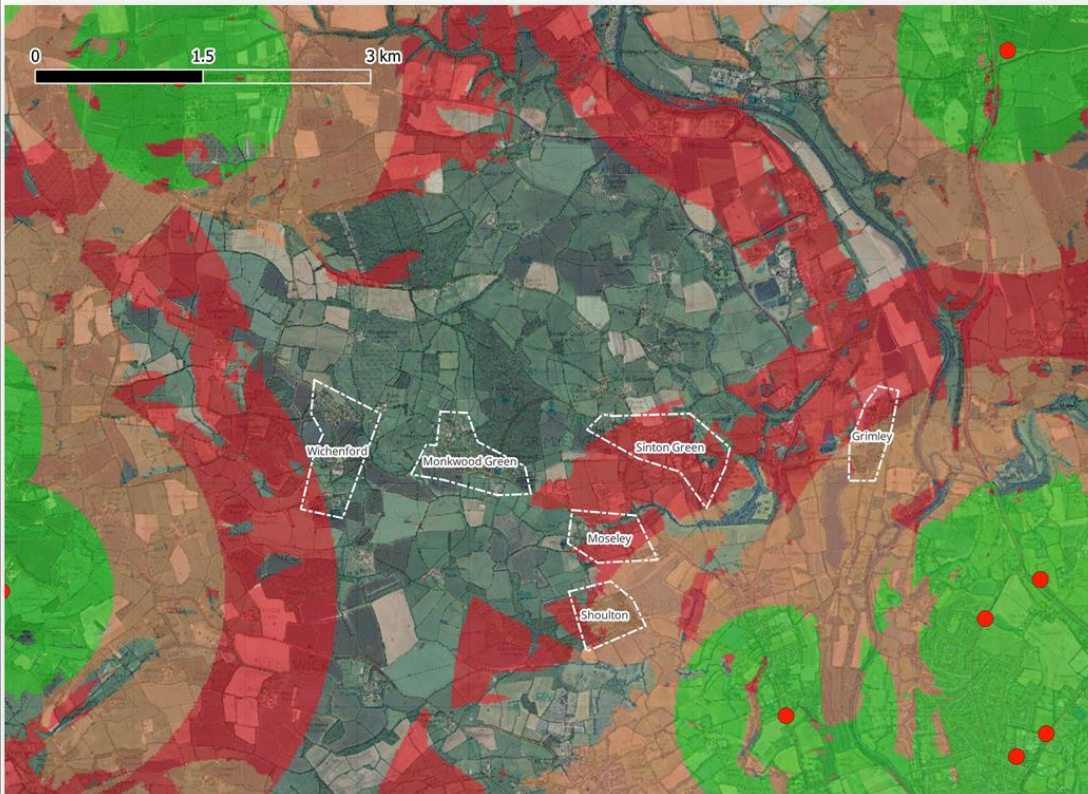
WR2-01 Monkwood Green: Existing Mast Sites



The map shows the parishes of Grimley, Wichenford, Kenswick and Hallow, together with the mobile phone sites that service the area (red dots).

Due to terrain and the distance between the villages and phone masts, the coverage in the area is poor.

WR2-01 Monkwood Green: Existing Coverage

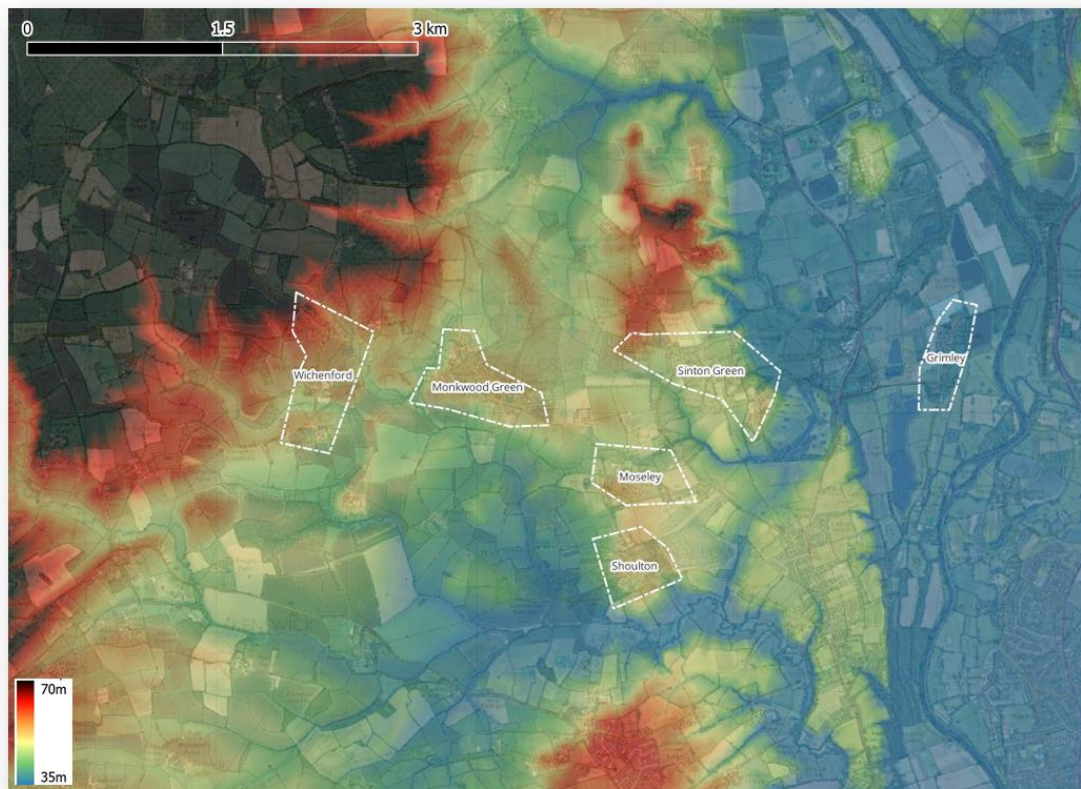


Existing predicted coverage from nearby sites (at the centre of the green circles).

Coverage to the villages is from 3km away, resulting in poor mobile signal levels.

The nearest site, south of Sinton Green, is a church site which gives limited coverage and is not suitable for 5G.

WR2-01 Monkwood Green: Terrain



The terrain around Monkwood Green and the nearby villages consists of hills and ridges with much higher ground to the west and a lower river valley to the east.

Terrain has a significant impact on coverage from nearby sites and careful site selection is required for a new site.

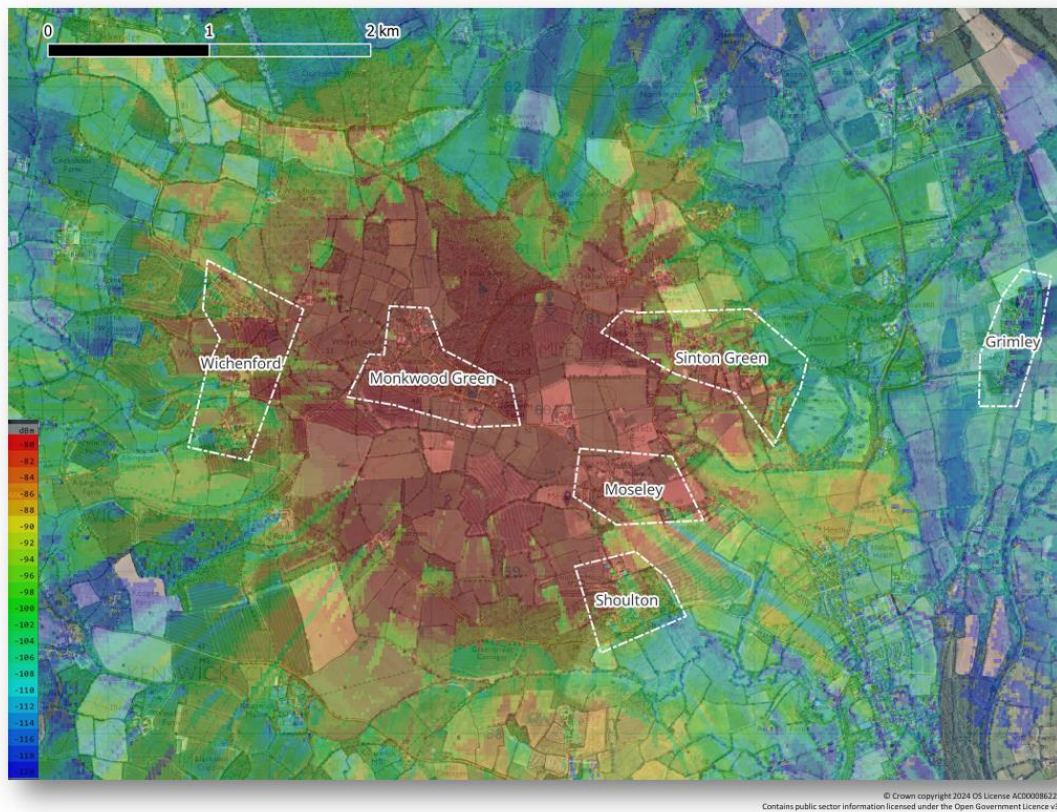
WR2-01 Monkwood Green: Predicted New Coverage



A site located close to Monkwood Green gives good coverage to all the main villages except Grimley.

Due to terrain and distances an option that covers all the villages is not feasible.

WR2-01 Monkwood Green: Predicted New Coverage



This plot shows a more detailed view of a potential coverage option.

Areas shown as red, yellow and green provide good levels of mobile phone reception. Indicating that the closer you are to the site, the better the signal strength.

A central location to the main villages is essential to provide the required mobile phone coverage.

Parish clerk has contact details for Atlas if anyone requires them.
-end-



t: 020 7637 1865
 e: nalc@nalc.gov.uk

w: www.nalc.gov.uk

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2024/25, a comparison with 2023/24 agreement

SCP	01 April 2024		1 April 2023		Scale Ranges
	£ per annum	* £ per hour	£ per annum	* £ per hour	Based on SCP
2	£23,656	£12.26	£22,366	£11.62	Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
3	£24,027	£12.45	£22,737	£11.82	
4	£24,404	£12.65	£23,114	£12.01	
5	£24,790	£12.85	£23,500	£12.21	
5	£24,790	£12.85	£23,500	£12.21	LC1 (5-6) (below substantive range)
6	£25,183	£13.05	£23,893	£12.42	
7	£25,584	£13.26	£24,294	£12.63	
8	£25,992	£13.47	£24,702	£12.84	LC1 (7-12) (substantive benchmark range)
9	£26,409	£13.69	£25,119	£13.06	
10	£26,835	£13.91	£25,545	£13.28	
11	£27,269	£14.13	£25,979	£13.50	
12	£27,711	£14.36	£26,421	£13.73	
13	£28,163	£14.60	£26,873	£13.97	LC1 (13-17) (above substantive range)
14	£28,624	£14.84	£27,334	£14.21	
15	£29,093	£15.08	£27,803	£14.45	
16	£29,572	£15.33	£28,282	£14.70	
17	£30,060	£15.58	£28,770	£14.95	

<https://worcscale.org.uk/component/edocman/local-government-services-pay-agreement-2024-25-and-2023-24-v2/viewdocument/187?Itemid=0>



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including this agenda

Contact the parish clerk if you would like to receive agendas or minutes by email.
Parish Clerk & RFO: Mrs Lisa Stevens, 9 The Limes, Kempsey, WR5 3LG.
Tel: 01905 820956 / 07950256363
clerkgrimleypc@gmail.com



Scan with your phone to directly access the information provided at the beginning of each parish council meeting.

Notes to minutes – Terms

- Once approved, the Motion/decision is called a "resolution"
- **Resolved** – Where a decision is made about a Motion.
- **Duly Approved** – Motions where a formal vote took place, accepting the Motion.
- **Duly Accepted/Agreed** – Motions where no formal vote took place but the action/recommendation within the Motion or debate is to proceed. Usually for non-financial matters or for items already agreed as part of an existing budget.
- **Declined** – Motion where a formal vote took place, with the Motion rejected.
- **Duly Noted** – Information not requiring a vote.
- Abstentions or votes against a Motion will be noted but the minutes will NOT always show individual names, unless Councillors have declared an interest and the transparency of that interest must be maintained.

<https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/>

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