

WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 3rd June 2025, 7.00pm, Wolverley Church Hall, Wolverley

Present:

Mrs V Bordewich
Mr B Brookes
Mr D Cox
Mr R Drew
Mr M Hart
Ms J Hicks
Mr D Jones
Mr C Sherrey
Mr J Wood

West Mercia Police: PC Ryan Bridgwood
County Councillors: Councillor M Hart (Chaddesley) Councillor J Shaw (Wolverley, Cookley & Wribbenhall)
District Councillors: Councillors R Drew, I Hardiman and M Hart.

28. Apologies

Cllr J Hart, W Southam and A Webber due to holiday. Cllr M Huselbee due to work commitments. It was proposed Cllr Cox, seconded Cllr Sherrey and unanimously agreed to consent to the absence of Cllr C Nicholls due to continuing ill health.

29. Declarations of Councillors Interests

- a) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded to complete and need to regularly update their register of interests.
- b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. None declared.
- c) To declare any Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. None declared.

Public Question Time

A parishioner from The Crescent, Cookley queried the distance you can build from a boundary as a building has been passed that comes right to her boundary and the builders have asked for access from her property to put felt tiles on the roof. Cllr Drew suggested sending an email to WFDC Planning Department or liaising with one of the local Cookley Councillors. Cllr Cox offered to liaise with Cllr Huselbee.

A parishioner raised a question that the Cookley Playing Fields are seeing an increased footfall due to the new houses at Lea Castle. Three new bins have been installed they asked will the Parish Council empty them? The Clerk advised that the bins were purchased from the Cookley Village Fund and the Playing Fields committee were going to negotiate with the contractor to empty them. Cllr Drew advised that the Parish Council cannot just add to the number of bins being emptied without discussion with the Contractor which is undertaken each January. He did however suggest that the Cookley Councillors consider using the village fund.

A parishioner representing Wolverley Tennis Club commented on response received from the Parish Council on a Freedom of information Request. He advised that they will be asking for an Internal Review.

A parishioner from The Crescent queried why at the recent elections she was not part of Cookley. Cllr M Hart explained that the boundary review determined all of Lea Castle should become a new polling district and this was moved into the Chaddesley Division. It was fully consulted on.

30. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th May 2025 at 7.00pm**

These having previously been circulated it was proposed Cllr Cox, seconded Cllr R Drew and unanimously resolved to receive and adopt the minutes as a true record of the meeting and these were signed by the Chairman.

Matters for Discussion / Decision;

31. **Police Report**

Report circulated.

WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY - Priorities April - June 25- Speeding / ASB / Burglaries

COOKLEY

In the April report, it was reported there was an issue with e -bikes in Cookley, this is continuing and believed to be linked with e-bike problems in other local areas. Reports are being received of e-bikes on the playing field, canal tow path and Castle Road, due to these reports we have been able to develop various leads, investigations are underway and targeted patrols are ongoing. We are encouraging public to continue to report information regarding identities and descriptions of those involved.

We are appealing to Cookley area for information following a Burglary on Bridge Road reference 00389_I_ 20052025.

The suspect was sighted in the kitchen of the property at 17:25hrs on 20th May. The suspect has been sighted from a distance hunched over in the kitchen; they have entered via the back door and removed food items from the fridge. Suspect has left the property swiftly. No further description is available.

WOLVERLEY

Nothing to report.

PC Bridgwood updated on travellers occupying Wolverley Mill Lane field overnight last week, but they moved on quickly.

Cllr Drew reported that electric bikes are now becoming an issue in Wolverley.

Cllr Sherrey thanked the Police for their input with moving the travellers on.

32. **To receive Councillors Reports;**
County Councillor Report;

Chaddesley Division - Cllr M Hart reported.

Lea Castle Issues

The main issue pertaining to this area is highways. The road and highway network for the development of the 600 houses is not yet adopted. At the time of typing this report I have chased an update with a senior highways officer at WCC.

I am also chasing an update as to when the highway infrastructure work will commence at the main traffic light junction at the A449/Park Gate Drive for the installation of the pedestrian link, pelican crossing and amending the junction to allow for a right turn, the redevelopment of the footpath linking Lea Castle Drive to the A449, together with the pelican crossing and refuge for the A449 between The Crescent and Castle Road.

Strategic Issues County Wide

By way of a brief devolution and unitary update, the Government has now formally written to the County Council and the six district Councils with an 'invitation to reorganise'. However, only six

councils are being taken through in the first tranche. We are in the second tranche and so elections to WCC of course took place as normal on 1st May 2025. We believe there would be 'shadow' elections for the new authority on the first Thursday in May 2027 and so no District Council elections that year, their four-year term would be extended until 1st April 2028 when WCC would cease too and the new unitary authority would come into being.

WCC and the six districts worked together to put in their initial proposals by 21st March and final proposals by 28th November.

There was not total agreement across the seven authorities as some are supporting a unitary in the north and a unitary in the south and some support a unitary for the whole of Worcestershire. Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet met on 20th March to agree to support a Worcestershire Unitary Council and agree the interim plan. We now await to hear from Government on the next steps which is expected in the next few weeks. This feedback was due some weeks ago and is now scheduled for 3rd June, the day of this meeting and so I may be able to provide an update.

Given that the Leader has appointed a Cabinet Member for 'One Worcestershire' I had assumed they supported a one unitary authority for Worcestershire. However, at the recent Worcestershire Leader's Board meeting held on 28th May for the 7 county wide leaders the Leader did not attend as they have not yet agreed their position on Local Government Reorganisation which is disappointing as a key part of the agenda was a discussion on this very important topic.

As it presently stands the Government are scheduled to make a decision in April 2026 albeit I can see this being delayed until after the local elections in May 2026. Between 28th November and their decision they need to undertake statutory consultation.

A word on the elections that took place for all 57 seats on the new boundaries last week on 1st May. I am delighted to say I was re-elected for a 3rd term to represent Chaddesley, which of course as a result of the boundary changes now includes the polling district of Lea Castle village and The Crescent, currently within the Parish of Wolverley and Cookley. My majority was just 76 votes over Reform but given what was a very difficult day for my party both locally and nationally I was very pleased to get over the line.

In May 2021, in Wyre Forest, all 10 seats were won by the Conservatives, last Thursday 8 were won by Reform and just Chaddesley and Bewdley won by the Conservatives.

In May 2021 there were 45 Conservatives and 12 others, the make up as of last Thursday is as follows:-

27	Reform
12	Conservatives
8	Greens
6	Lid Dems
2	Labour
2	Independent ,

Full Council met on 22nd May to appoint a new leader, Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Council and the various committee chairman and vice-chairman. The new Leader of the County Council is Cllr. Jo Monk, from one of the Redditch Divisions and the Deputy Leader of the County Council is Cllr. David Taylor from the same Redditch Division and he has cabinet responsibility for 'One Worcestershire'.

There are 9 members in the Cabinet, 3 from Redditch, 3 from Wyre Forest, 1 from Worcester City, 1 from Malvern Hills and 1 from Wychavon. The Leader was elected unopposed by all members of the Council. The new Chairman of the Council is Cllr. Louis Stephen, from the Green Party representing one of the Worcester Divisions and the new Vice-chairman of the Council is Cllr. Paul Bennett, from the Liberal Democrats Party, representing one of the Malvern Hills Divisions were elected by majority vote.

The constitution was amended to allow for substitutes on the scrutiny panels and to allow 14 members to sit on the main Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board, up from 9, this is to allow the 5 Vice-chairman of the scrutiny panels to sit on the Board too. The Chairman of the panels are made up from the opposition parties and the administration have the Vice-chairman. On a personal note I was very pleased to be elected Chairman of the Economy Panel.

I look forward to continue to keep working with you over the next 3 years.

Cookley, Wolverley, Wribbenhall Divison – Cllr J Shaw reported.

Caunsall Village Green

Some of the villagers have met with the highways liaison officer who has confirmed that the county council have a hold over the land and as such have a responsibility to maintain it. He has written to the owners of the land and asked them to remove the building materials, which I have been told has been done and to remove the fence which had been put up, I am awaiting confirmation that this has been done.

For now, the concrete bollards have been left to stop any unwelcome parking on the green but this can be reviewed in the future.

A licence has been granted to the parish to allow them to plant the area up as long as they meet with certain restrictions such as not to impede the view for road users.

A licence has also been granted to allow a bench to be sited in the middle of the green and highways will provide and install a concrete base for it.

Lea Lane Landslip

Still in the process of being reinstated for vehicular access, there are complications regarding the compulsory purchase of the land which is currently holding this up.

Safe walking routes for Wolverley CoE High School 2 million has currently been set aside for this major project of widening the pavement on Highlow bank and installing a pelican crossing by Hardwicks. I am still awaiting a further update on this project.

Bollards outside Wolverley CoE High School

I have raised an issue for the current damaged bollard.

An order was placed for the replacement bollards 02.06.25 I am told they is an approximate turnaround of two weeks so hopefully this will be completed by the next meeting.

The recent Lea Lane wall collapse

The landowner was written to back in February, the liaison officer was going to check this after meeting with myself and chase with a second stage letter if it has not yet been done.

I have raised an issue with highways to inspect the three streetlights on Caunsall Road down from the Anchor Pub which I have been informed are not working. I am awaiting a follow up.

Cllr Drew queried the licence to plant at Caunsall as the Parish Council have not requested this. A decision would need to be made by the Parish Council if they do want this and if so how it would be maintained, it is not up to Parishioners to request a Planting Licence. Cllr Drew also advised that the Parish Council own the streetlights so inform the Clerk of any issues.

Cllr Cox advised of fly tipping along Lea Lane and in Caunsall. WFDC have been notified. He also asked Cllr Shaw to chase when repairs to the bridge in Caunsall will be completed.

Cllr M Hart is curious why Worcestershire County Council is granting licences to the Parish Council when they have not requested them, usually a request is instigated by the Parish Council.

District Councillor Report; Report previously circulated.

Ian Hardiman reported.

Local Issues

We have no significant issues to report this month. However, we have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter and fly tipping on the main A roads and along the country lanes and continue to monitor all enforcement issues.

Update ref. Brown Westhead Road Parking concerns: Unfortunately, the blue signs installed here (by WFDC) to advise vehicle owners to park on the left side of the road only, are continuing to be vandalised and turned round. We have asked WFDC officers to secure these more securely.

Also, we look forward to Lea castle phase 2 coming to the Planning Committee next month. We, all 3 councillors have had meetings with the Lea Castle Residents committee members to assist with their engagement on local issues.

Wyre Forest Issues

Local Government Reorganisation continues, and we await the response from Government to Worcestershire's proposals.

WFDC now has a full complement of Enforcement officers: 7.7 FTE of Civil Enforcement officers; 3 FTE of Environmental Protection Officers.

We now look forward to more frequent visits to outside our schools in Cookley and Wolverley, at start and finish times.

33. **Financial Matters;**

- a) To agree the new model financial regulations.
Cllr Sherrey commented that these have been circulated and no issues raised. It was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr Drew and unanimously agreed to adopt the new Financial Regulations.
- b) To approve accounts for payment.
It was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr Drew and unanimously agreed to approve the accounts for payment.
- c) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024-2025
 - (i) To approve Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025,
It was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr Drew and unanimously agreed to approve Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025,
 - (ii) To approve Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024-2025.
It was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr Drew and unanimously agreed to approve Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024-2025.

Cllr Drew thanked Cllr Sherrey for all his work done on the accounts.

34. **Street Lighting Columns**

Cllr Sherrey reported that there are still 83 columns that need replacing. The Parish Council have budgeted 50 this year and the rest will be done the following year. All will be done before the Parish Council split if this is agreed by WFDC. Cllr Sherrey proposed to move forward with the next 50, to be decided by Worcestershire County Council, this was seconded by Cllr Jones and unanimously agreed.

35. **Planning Applications for Consideration:-**

WFDC No/Details

24/0470/OUT 3 new dwellings comprising 2 two-storey 3 bedroom dwellings and 1 two-storey 2 bedroom dwelling. Allowance for 6 spaces for the adjacent development and Rock Tavern Cottage at land adjacent Rose Cottage, Caunsall Road, Caunsall.

Cllr Jones proposed refusal. There are lots of issues with who owns land where the time capsule is buried, it is inappropriate development and has suffered flooding. This was seconded by Cllr Cox.

Cllr M Hart advised that land ownership is not a material planning consideration so to refuse it the Parish Council need to come up with material planning considerations. Cllr Drew reported that highways have serious concerns and are asking for a deferral, Worcestershire waterways are objecting on rainfall and contaminated land body also have concerns, so suggested the Parish Council concur with this and request deferral. Cllr Jones agreed to change his proposal to recommend deferral, this was seconded by Cllr Cox and unanimously agreed.

25/0083/TPO Lime tree to have crown lift by 4m and to prune away economic growth around base to keep tree in a good shape at land to the side of former workshop building, Wolverley.

Recommend Approval, Proposed Cllr Hicks, seconded Cllr Bordewich and unanimously agreed.

25/0259/106A Modification of S106 agreement to allow either refurbishment of existing football club changing rooms or demolition and rebuilding of changing rooms, following approval of an agreed specification by the LPA at land at OS 385100 278850 Lea Castle Drive, Lea Castle.

Recommend Approval, Proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Cox and unanimously agreed.

25/0358/HOU Removal of existing septic tank and replacement with larger capacity tank with associated drainage field at Sion Hill Lodge, Sion Hill, Wolverley.

Recommend Approval, Proposed Cllr Hicks, seconded Cllr Bordewich and unanimously agreed.

25/0385/PNR FOR INFORMATION ONLY
Conversion of agricultural holding to form new dwelling at barn at Honey Top Farm, Bridgnorth Road, Kidderminster.

25/0419/HOU Single storey extension, conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation along with alterations to fenestration at 9 Bury Hall, Wolverley.

Recommend Approval subject to comment that alterations to fenestration need to be agreed and monitored by the Conservation Officer. Proposed Cllr Hicks, seconded Cllr Sherrey and unanimously agreed.

Planning Decision Notices.

25/0119/S73	Greenways, Austcliffe Lane, Cookley - Permit
25/0194/PNH	2 Beechcote House, Mill Lane, Wolverley - Refused
25/0230/HOU	Honey Top Farm, Bridgnorth Road - Permit
25/0232/S73	Townsend House, The Shortyard, Wolverley - Permit
25/0252/HOU	Foxwood, 5 Mill Lane, Wolverley - Permit
25/0263/HOU	Brookfield Cottage, Lowe Lane, Wolverley - Permit

Parish Matters for Update Only – no decisions required.

36. Clerks Report. (Clerk) FOI Request Response – the Clerk reported that advice had been received from Breakthrough Communications via Worcestershire CALC. The urgent business committee had reviewed the advice and voted with 3 in favour and 1 against to submit the suggested response. clerk.gov.uk email address – this has been obtained, Flag Flying Ceremony 15th August, (VJ Day) 3rd September (Merchant Navy Day), Parish Forum 8th September.
37. Lengthsman. (RD/WS) The Lengthsman continues to do an excellent job.
38. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. (All)
39. Date of Next Meeting – to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 1st July 2025.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.02pm