

WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 5th August 2025, 7.00pm, Wolverley Church Hall, Wolverley

Present:

Mr B Brookes (Chairman)
Mrs V Bordewich
Mr D Cox
Mr R Drew
Mr J Hart
Mr M Hart
Mrs M Huselbee
Ms J Hicks
Mr D Jones
Mr C Sherrey
Mr W Southam
Mr A Webber

West Mercia Police: PCSO Becky Ruston, Dave Foden
County Councillors: Councillor M Hart
District Councillors: Councillors R Drew, M Hart

53. **Apologies**

Cllr J Wood due to holiday. County Councillor J Shaw due to holiday.

54. **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

No Public Questions

55. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st July 2025 at 7.00pm**

These having previously been circulated it was proposed Cllr R Drew seconded Cllr D Cox 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;

56. **To fill vacancy by co-option for a Parish Councillor (Cookley Ward).**

Councillors had been circulated with copies of the two application forms received.

Cllr Huselbee advised that Mrs Karin Bareford sent apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. Cllr Huselbee read out a statement from Mrs Bareford.

George Connolly was welcomed by the Chairman and invited to give a short presentation on why he would like to become a Parish Councillor.

The Clerk gave out and then collected voting slips and with 8 votes for Mr Connolly and 4 votes for Mrs Bareford, Mr Connolly was co-opted as a Parish Councillor for Cookley Ward and duly signed his declaration of acceptance of office.

It was proposed Cllr Cox, seconded Cllr Brookes and unanimously agreed the Clerk send a letter to Mr Nicholls thanking him for his dedication and service to the Parish.

57. **Police Report**

Report circulated.

Cllr M Hart advised of antisocial behaviour at Lea Castle Village and wishes to raise this as an issue with the Police and ask for additional patrols.

Cllr Huselbee thanked the Police for their continued support in Cookley. Cllr Jones echoed Police presence is helpful, particularly with issues at Cookley Playing Fields.

Cllr Webber advised of vehicle damage to several cars in Wolverley following an after-prom party. The Police advised there will be updates in due course.

There are still issues with the use of electric bikes in Cookley and Wolverley.

July - September 25 Priorities - Speeding / ASB / Burglaries

22/66914/25. We are investigating a shed theft which occurred on Shatterford Lane, Wolverley between the 10th and 11th July 2025, where a saddle and other equestrian equipment were stolen.

00187_I_27072025 - have received a report of criminal damage to the lock and chain securing the tennis courts at Wolverley. It is believed an angle grinder was used to commit this offence.

23/07/20235 - We did Tru Cam speed enforcement Franche Road, WOLVERLEY - 0 speeding offences reported.

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

Cookley, Wolverley, Wribbenhall Division - Cllr J Shaw reported.

Prior to going on leave I have not managed to get any further updates, this is all I have till September.

I have reported the overgrown hedge on the pavement of the A449 between the Crecent and the Island Pool, the green team is going to wright to the landowners and ask them to cut the hedge back. County Council News On Thursday 10th July the county council unanimously agreed to the expansion of the Worcestershire on Demand Bus Service, we should see the scheme rolled out to the Wyre Forest District by the end of the year. I do not know how this will look at present which places within our district will be placed as points or interest. For those who are not familiar with the service. Worcestershire on Demand (WoD) offers an alternative transport option to fixed route public transport services. It helps people make essential local journeys within a defined area and offers residents and visitors transport within a zoned area and to specific places of interest outside of the zone. The service can also provide journeys to connecting transport services, such as other local buses or to local train stations. Worcestershire on Demand allows passengers to book on to the service from an app. Passengers can request transport for a specific time or to arrive at their destination at a specific time and this will give a selection of boarding times available. Transport will collect the passenger from a designated pick-up point and will drop off at the required location. Unlike fixed route bus services, the service is flexible depending on the destinations and collection points. A full priced ticked is currently £2.50.

Chaddesley Division - Cllr M Hart reported.

Please find my report for reading at the meeting and circulation to Parish Councillors.

Lea Castle Issues

As reported back in May and in subsequent reports, 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 have chased this again, given that the planning application for additional 800 houses has now been approved on 15th July.

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, especially now the application has been approved.

Regarding the recently approved planning application for phase 2, the 800 houses, there is scheduled to be a temporary speed reduction on the A449 Wolverhampton Road which commences on 25th August and is to last 18 months. There is planned as part of the development to be a permanent speed reduction on the A449 as you approach The Crescent from the Wolverhampton direction right through to the traffic lights at Park Gate Road. This is in both directions.

I am receiving speeding complaints, but the police will not carry out enforcement until the TRO is in place.

I have received an enquiry from the parish council regarding land at The Crescent and a resident wanting to plant trees on a parcel of land. I have asked WCC to advise me if they own this parcel of land and if not, who does.

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 its initial feedback from our initial submission.

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.

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 latest Worcestershire Leader's Board meeting held on 25th July for the 7 county wide leaders the Leader indicated they have still not yet agreed their position on Local Government Reorganisation and the Leader indicated at the Scrutiny Meeting held in public on 24th July that there was no settled position but the administration will be considering the two options ie a unitary Worcestershire or a unitary North and unitary South and forming a group position in due course and have a position by September. They have also not agreed a position on a footprint for a strategic authority.

WCC will be imminently conducting a public engagement survey in due course.

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.

District Councillor Report: Report previously circulated.

Cllr Marcus Hart reported.

Local Issues

We continue to report routine issues such as litter on the A-roads.

We have recently reported fly tipping on the B4189 Shatterford Lane within the parish.

We reported the Lowe Lane street nameplate for repair and this has now been repaired.

We note the recent planning appeals in the Parish, in particular the one allowed for the siting of 12 caravans at Kinverdale Park.

WFDC's full council met on 16th July and approved the setting up of 3 separate parish councils for Wolverley, Cookley and Lea Castle which was in line with the outcome of the local advisory polls. Furthermore, WFDC confirmed that the land at the former Sion Hill Schol and the land at Weavers Chase would not be transferred from the Parish of Wolverley and Cookley to the Parish of Kidderminster in line with the outcome of the local advisory polls.

Draft reorganisation orders were approved and the shadow parish councils will come into being from 1st September 2026, in advance of the ordinary elections for all 3 parish councils on the first Thursday in May 2027.

The number of parish councillors has also been approved, 7 for Wolverley, 7 for Cookley and 8 for Lea Castle.

At the last WFDC's planning committee meeting held on 15th July the further 800 houses at Lea Castle were approved. This decision was unanimous. Many residents and indeed members of the parish council have raised the fact that they don't object to houses but there does need to be the necessary infrastructure, ie money for schools, health, highways.

The s.106 agreement has developer funding of £23 million, including £7.3 million for highways infrastructure improvements. There is also funding towards a new 2FE Primary School.

There will be 4 new entrances, this has reduced from 7 on the high-level master plan and there will be public open space, a community centre, a parade of shops and employment land.

We have received complaints from local residents and the residents' association regarding ASB and have written to Citizen Housing for a meeting.

We have also raised issues around unsafe heras fencing and also bricks and rubble in the woods. These have been raised with Bovis homes.

We are meeting with some residents of Crocus Way on 4th August and will have met them by the time of the meeting regarding the recently approved planning application to discuss some of their concerns.

Wyre Forest Issues

WFDC handed over the Piano Building on 27th August to our contractor Speller Metcalfe (who are doing the Town Hall work too) and they are starting on internal work and work that doesn't require planning permission. The planning application was approved at the September meeting and work has well and truly begun and the building is being actively marketed for office space on the first and second floors and food and beverage on the ground floor. The project should be completed by September 2025.

WFDC have let the contract for the next phase of the Connectivity Project and work has commenced on the construction of the urban park. The contractors are Shropshire based building and civil engineering contractors McPhillips (Wellington) Limited and as of 21st August they were mobilising. The

main body of the work should be done by the end of the year, the project was due to finish this July but will be December now due to unforeseen groundworks.

Since the official opening of The Old Court on 30th January we have held an open day to the public and we now have a number of tenants with leases on office space, including a company called Beta Den and a firm of architects are also shortly to take up occupation.

Work on the £2.4m HLF project at Brinton Park has finally commenced with the building of an artificial badgers sett to get the badgers to move from underneath the Sons of Rest pavilion. Badgers have so badly undermined the foundations of the building it has been deemed so unsafe it must be demolished. WFDC will be seeking planning consent for a replacement building and this will house the café. The planning application has now been submitted. Work has also now commenced in earnest last week.

WFDC have previously commissioned a feasibility study for Worcester Street, Market Street, the former Crown House site and Lionfields (former Glades site) and cabinet has approved in principle a mix of residential development on this site with formal proposals to come in the autumn in a further cabinet report.

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The seven councils have recently conducted a public engagement survey and the results are now out. In respect of Wyre Forest, 40% supported a single unitary authority which is in line with the decision that WFDC took to support a single unitary.

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.

Cllr M Hart reported that he has investigated ownership of a parcel of land at The Crescent. It was thought to be owned by WCC but is in fact owned by Homes England.

Cllr Southam queried when the infrastructure would be built at Lea Castle. Cllr M Hart responded that the school and shops will come in due course, things will be done incrementally.

Cllr M Hart advised that the previous administration allocated 1 million for safer routes to school, the money is in the budget and we need assurance from the County Councillor that this capital project will go ahead.

Cllr Webber advised of complaints regarding overgrowth in the alleyway Sebright Road / Evans Close and is looking for support in dealing with this.

Cllr Cox wants an update on Lea Lane and an update on the spending review as all big projects seem to have been put on hold.

Cllr Drew gave an update on junction works and speed limit restrictions at Lea Castle.

59. **Financial Matters. To agree the schedule of accounts to be paid.**

It was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr Drew and unanimously approved the schedule of payments be paid.

60. **Outcome of Community Governance Reviews (CGR) Wolverley & Cookley.**

Cllr Drew had produced a document which had been circulated to all Councillors detailing items that will need to be considered .

Cllr Drew suggested the Parish Council need a mechanism for decision making as the re-organisation order needs to be done by 1st December 2025.

Cllr Jones stated that as monies are held by Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council, they are the decision-making body and proposed any subcommittee should report back to Full Council with recommendations. Cllr M Hart seconded that a sub committee be formed and should report back to Full Council. Membership was discussed and agreed as Chair, Vice Chair, Cllr Sherrey, Cllr J Hart, Cllr Southam and Cllr Connolly. This was unanimously agreed.

There was various discussions on matters for consideration but the subcommittee will meet and report back at next Full Council meeting.

61. **To agree street lighting column replacements 25/26.**

Cllr Sherrey reported that the Parish Council have budgeted for 50 street light replacements to 31st March 2026. WCC have identified 46 to be done and it was proposed Cllr Sherrey, seconded Cllr J Hart and agreed that these be placed on order. Cllr Sherrey and the Clerk will meet with James Douglas, WCC street lighting to identify remaining columns to be replaced.

Cllr Huselbee will undertake a review of Cookley lights and Wolverley Cllrs, Wolverley lights and report back to Cllr Sherrey.

62. **To appoint a second member of the Staffing Committee to review Clerks Pay and report back to September meeting.**

Cllr M Hart advised that as Mr Nicholls has resigned a replacement is needed on the staffing committee. He also proposed that membership should be increased to four. This was seconded by Cllr Drew and unanimously agreed. Membership was agreed as Chair, Cllr M Hart, Cllr V Bordewich and Cllr D Cox. The committee will meet and report back to the next meeting.

63. **Planning Applications for Consideration: -
WFDC No/Details**

25/0375/TCA

Various tree works at Wolverley High School, Wolverley.

Recommend Approval subject to approval from Tree Officer, proposed Cllr Bordewich, seconded Cllr J Hart and agreed.

- 25/0489/HOU Construction of residential annex for disabled relative at 4 Gaymore Road, Cookley.
Recommend Approval, proposed Cllr Southam, seconded Cllr Huselbee and agreed.
- 25/0524/HOU Proposed two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and front porch extension at 18 Gaymore Road, Cookley.
Recommend Approval, proposed Cllr Southam, seconded Cllr Jones and agreed.

Planning Appeal Decisions.

Land at Drakelow Lane, Wolverley - Appeal Allowed

Land as OS 381890 279050 - Fairfield Lane, Wolverley - Appeal Allowed

Kinverdale Park, Kingsford Lane, Wolverley - Appeal Allowed

Planning Decision Notices.

25/0386/HOU - 91 Castle Road, Cookley - Permit

25/0419/HOU - 9 Bury Hall, Wolverley - Permit

Parish Matters for Update Only - no decisions required.

64. Clerks Report. (Clerk) No report
65. Lengthsman. (RD/WS) Excellent work and timesheets being sent on time.
66. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. (All) Cllr Webber - Maintenance of benches, Cllr Jones - Litterbins Cookley
67. Date of Next Meeting - to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 2nd September 2025.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.17pm