



Rous Lench Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20th January 2025

at 7pm at Rous Lench Village Hall.

Present	Cllrs L Newton (Chair), G Hughes, S Davis, S Harrison & K Hicken. In attendance: Kerry Williamson (Clerk), PCSO Vicky Elliot & PC Pete Meredith. Public: 1 Meeting opened at 7pm
01/25	Chairman's Welcome: Cllr Newton opened the meeting and welcomed the Councillors, Police and member of the public.
02/25	Apologies for Absence: Cllr D Browne and Cllr Ben Hurdman (District) sent apologies.
03/25	Declarations of Interest: Cllr Davis registered an interest in agenda item 6.4. Planning application W/24/02530/PIP was Cllr Davis's application.
04/25	Dispensations: Cllr Davis submitted a dispensation form requesting to remain in the meeting and participate in discussion on agenda item 6.4. Dispensation was granted.
05/25	To receive reports from District, County Council, Police and Public Question Time (PQT): Wychavon Dist. Council (WDC): Cllr Ben Hurdman provided the following report to be shared at the meeting: <i>As I'm sure you are aware the present Government have made a decision that they would like to change the way councils in England are to work going forward. It's important to emphasise that as a council we don't have any choice in this. This is a top-down plan imposed on us by the Government. Every two-tier county and district council in the county will cease to exist in either 2027 or 2028, to be replaced with a new unitary authority. No referendum, no public consultation, no alternative. The only thing that is in our hands is to try and reach a local agreement as to the nature of the new unitary and whether we go for a 27 or 28 switchover. But even that isn't guaranteed. If we can't reach an agreement or if the government doesn't like what we agree we will have a new structure imposed on us.</i> <i>The leadership of the County Council has decided that the county's preferred option would be for the new unitary to cover the whole of Worcestershire. Effectively replacing the existing County Council and all of Worcestershire's district, city and borough councils with a new, county wide unitary and for the transition to take place in 2027.</i> <i>The government has set a minimum size for all unitary authorities of 500,000 people. Worcestershire has a population of around 610,000. The leader of Labour controlled Redditch Borough Council has been quoted in the media as saying he would prefer a North Worcestershire council rather than being combined with the rest of Worcestershire. However, that is unrealistic as it would not meet the size criteria set by the government.</i>



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The County Council have written to the Government requesting that the May elections are postponed. Which personally is a disappointment to me as I feel we need a new County Councillor.

The decision is now with the Government, and we should hear something in February about our future. I am concerned that as the most rural ward in Wychavon we are already on an outpost, and I feel that by combining the authority this will make us an even smaller part of the puzzle. However, I will do my utmost to represent the ward to the best of my ability. I will be interested to hear your thoughts on the matter.

In December Wychavon councillors had the opportunity to attend a Housing Delivery Presentation. I was mainly interested in the Rural picture for the ward. The recommendation from the Rural Affordable Housing Manifesto (ACRE) is a long-term strategy for scaling up and delivering a national programme of affordable rural house building.

There is going to be new survey software made available to conduct Parish housing needs surveys. I don't currently have a timescale on this but will keep you posted.

I picked up the email that was sent to Carl Brace about The Caravan, I will do my best to keep abreast of what's going on there and come back if I hear anything in the meantime.

Councillor Ben Hurdman

Action: Clerk to provide feedback to Ben as follows: disappointment at the County Elections potentially being postponed due to the lack of input and contact from current County Councillor. To ask if there is any information on what will happen to Parish Councils under a unitary authority, how will residents be represented?

Worcs County Council (WCC): No report provided.

Police: PCSO Elliot discussed the Parish policing priorities – Speeding, rural crime and road safety. Crime rates stay low in rural villages – two vehicle thefts locally in January. Random, no consistent targets – thought to be opportunistic. PCSO Elliot would be undertaking the training to use the Tru Cam (speed detection camera) and would aim to bring the Tru Cam to the Parish soon. PCSO Elliot highlighted the 'We don't buy crime' campaign (SmartWater) and suggested that a local event could be held for residents to sign up and collect the SmartWater marking kits, signage is also available for communities that participate.

PC Meredith discussed his role as Rural Officer covering rural business crime, wildlife crime and environmental crime. He appreciated the time it takes to report crime via 101 or using the online form and is advocating for rural businesses and farmers to have access codes that could make reporting crime more efficient.

Both PCSO Elliot and PC Meredith stressed the importance of reporting all crime or suspicious activity to help support/guide the work of the Police. It was noted that reporting crime via the 101 online form takes more time to filter to the correct team than phoning 101.

Action: Clerk to follow up with PCSO Elliot about the 'We don't buy Crime' campaign. Councillors would like to produce a crime prevention advice leaflet for the Parish, based on information provided by PCSO Elliot and PC Meredith. Clerk to draft the leaflet.

PQT: One member of the public was present to express concern with planning application W/24/02530/PIP (agenda item 6.4), namely the live/work unit and the policy around live/work units. The resident felt that there was a danger that Mill Lane could become an industrial estate with houses in between, given the number of live/work units that have been applied for or approved locally. The policy did require the nature of

	the 'work' to be defined. The 60/40 split leads to large homes being built which do not meet the local need for low-cost homes or starter homes or downsizing homes. There was no obligation to demonstrate the benefit to the local community. The Parish Plan stated that residential land should not be developed.
06/25	To approve minutes of previous meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 18th November 2024, were agreed as a true record and approved .
07/25	<p>Planning Applications and Appeals: The following applications were noted and/or discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) SWDP Review consultation – Examination stage, legal compliance of the Plan. The Clerk had received notification of the Examination stage and details of the Hearings. The Parish Council could provide further comment and individuals could attend the Hearings. Action: Clerk to forward the notification email to Councillors, to see if any further comments should be provided in response to the questions the Inspectors have identified, or if any Councillors would like to attend the Hearings. b) W/23/02236/FUL, Land On, Little Ashdene Farm, Kington Lane, Kington - Change of use of land to residential for the erection of 3 dwellings. Comment provided by RLPC, currently pending decision. Noted. c) W/24/02012/FUL, The Nathan, Evesham Road, Inkberrow - Proposed steel framed building for the storage, repair and maintenance of vehicles and parts (use classes B2 and B8) in connection with existing business for sale and hire of HGVs (Sui Generis) – Retrospective. Comment provided by RLPC, currently pending decision. Application approved by Wychavon District Council. d) W/24/02530/PIP, Land at (OS 0081 5524), The Court House, Mill Lane, Radford – Application for Permission in Principle for a self build live work unit with associated detached garage and landscaping. <p>Councillors agreed that the live/work policy was poorly worded. Councillors felt that consistency in response to live/work unit was important. Councillors were concerned about the lack of control over the nature of the 'work' part. Action: Cllr Newton would update Cllr Browne, and Cllr Browne would draft a response to be circulated to all Councillors for approval, except Cllr Davis due to this being his application.</p>
08/25	<p>Public Rights of Way and Highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) PROW maintenance and obstruction issues – Clerk had received and circulated notification from Worcestershire County Council that bridleway RL-515 had a collapsed culvert and was closed. Diversions provided. b) Lengthsman Scheme – None. c) Flooding <p>A letter had been sent to local farmers and landowners asking them to keep their ditches clear, to keep roads and neighbouring properties clear of flood water. No responses had been received. Councillors reported that the Inkberrow junction had been heavily flooded in the recent heavy rainfall.</p>

09/25	<p>Progress Reports - Clerk reported:</p> <p>a) Update on Actions since Previous Meeting – routine work. VAS data collected. Budget/precept 2025/26 work and meeting.</p>
10/25	<p>Community Orchard/garden & allotments – Cllr Newton provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shed, compost toilet and play equipment had been fitted. • Trees from Heart of England had been planted. • Date to be decided to plant specialist fruit trees.
11/25	<p>Rous Lench & Radford parish matters for discussion or decision:</p> <p>a) Asset maintenance checks (standing item) All assets checked. Clerk reported that the Radford noticeboard had a few issues – stiff locks, one door had fallen out of alignment. Councillors suggested that Colin Harris may be able to look at these issues. Action: Clerk to ask Colin Harris if he can look at the Radford noticeboard issues. Action: Cllr Browne to find out if defibrillator in Rous Lench needs any new components.</p> <p>b) Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) – The Clerk had collected the data from the VAS. All data was related to Rous Lench Village. Action: Clerk to send the new data reports to the Police as requested by PCSO Elliot.</p> <p>c) Superfast Broadband – Cllr Browne had written a letter to Wychavon District Council and Cllr Ben Hurdman to make further enquiries. The Clerk had contacted Worcestershire County Council to make further enquiries. The Clerk had received a reply from Worcestershire County Council regarding the project Gigabit.</p> <p>d) Local Groups Recruitment Campaign – In Cllr Browne’s absence this was deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>e) Letter to Wychavon Planning – a letter had been sent to Wychavon Planning Department and Cllr Ben Hurdman regarding W/23/00321/FUL. No further updates were available.</p>
12/25	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) Budget & Precept 2025/26: To consider and approve. The budget and precept were approved. Precept of £7,155 to be requested. Action: Clerk to send the budget/precept requirement form to Wychavon District Council before the deadline of 24th January.</p> <p>b) Internal Auditor: To consider the appointment of Iain Selkirk to review the 2024/25 accounts. The appointment of Iain Selkirk as Internal Auditor for the 2024/25 accounts was approved.</p> <p>c) Budget expenditure: To consider and approve. The budget expenditure was approved.</p> <p>d) Bank reconciliation: To consider and approve. The bank reconciliation was approved.</p> <p>e) Invoices: To approve the proposed payments. The proposed payments (see table at the end of Minutes) were approved.</p>
13/25	<p>Correspondence: All correspondence has been circulated to Councillors. Worcestershire CALC: CALC Update 24-09.</p> <p>Wychavon District Council: Wychavon Polling Places & Districts Review Feedback Form.</p>

	<p>Wychavon District Council: Parish & Town Council Newsletter.</p> <p>Wychavon District Council: Parish & Town Council Event – 6 March 2025, 6pm.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council: Bridleways RL-515, RL-516, RL-519, RL-520 & RL-521.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council: SWDPR – Examination Arrangements.</p> <p>Rous Lench & Radford Resident: Planning Application Ref W/24/02530/PIP.</p> <p>Rous Lench & Radford Resident: Application Reference W/24/02530/PIP.</p> <p>Flyfords Parish Council: Meeting 21st January – A422 Safety.</p>
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14/25	<p>Councillors Reports & Items for Future Agenda</p> <p>Litter pick – Sunday 16th March.</p> <p>Parish Council Website – options for a new website.</p>
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15/25	Date of next meeting: Monday 24th March at 7pm.
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Meeting closed at 9.08pm

SIGNED:..... Chair

Date:

Rous Lench Payments and Expenses 20th January 2025 meeting					
Payments for authorisation.					
Chq. No.	Payee	Details	Net	VAT	TOTAL
online	Mrs Kerry Williamson	Salary & Expenses	£685.32	£0.00	£685.32
online	HMRC	PAYE	£6.40	£0.00	£6.40
online	Parish Lengthsman	November (£240) & December (£240)	£480.00	£0.00	£480.00
online	Rous Lench Village Hall	Meeting booking January 2025	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00
TOTAL			£1,195.72	£0.00	£1,195.72

Kerry Williamson
Clerk and RFO