

**Minutes of the Eastham Parish Council meeting held on
Tuesday 25 March 2025 in Eastham Memorial Hall at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr P Arnold, Cllr M Adams and Cllr C Austin.

In attendance: Clerk and 1 Parishioner

1. **Apologies by Parish Councillors:-** Cllrs I Matravers; L Arnold; A Worsley & B Lewis. – Accepted.

Other Apologies District Councillor Bruton and Wilmott

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

- a. Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their Register of Interests as required.
 - b. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
 - c. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- Councillors who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or an Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of paragraph 12(4) (b) of the Code of Conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items.
Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may result in the commission of a criminal offence.

3. **Dispensations –**

- a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) – written requests to be with the clerk prior to a meeting.
- **Dispensations requested – none**

The Meeting was adjourned for Public Question Time

Brief notes will be appended to the minutes

The Meeting reopened

4. **Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor(s)** – appended at the end of the minutes.
5. **Minutes:** Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on the 21 January and the Extra-Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on the 4 March 2025 were agreed by all as true records and signed .
6. **Donation request** from Citizens Advice – none given at this time all agreed
7. **Notice Board Highwood** - Notice board of single door (9xA4 size) request for no lock to supplier. Agreed by all in principle
8. **Finances**
 - a. i Regular Payments on list (24 September 2024) as detailed below since last meeting – all agreed
 - ii To consider payments, Including urgent payments since last meeting, to be made as on list presented at meeting and detailed below –

Cheque number	Payee	Notes - Payments at meeting	£	
865	Cancelled			
866	C Bunn	LM March 25	214.50	reg.payment
867	L Jenkins	Clerks Expenses Oct to Mar	196.61	
868	L Jenkins	SLCC Arnold Baker	137.00	
869	Not used			
870	Clerk	Salary Mar 25	345.71	reg.payment
		To be paid this meeting		
		Total PAYMENTS	£893.82	

Payments – Agreed by all, resolved.

- b. Receipts - Receipts received since WCC LM reimbursements £ 391.88
- c. Bank Reconciliations - Reviewed reconciliation as of 2 March 2025, Balance reconciled £ 18,121.43
- all agreed and signed
- d. Budget Reports - To review and agree Budget Report as at 28 February 2025 and recommendations –
Agreed by All

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9. **Clerks report on any Urgent Decisions since last meeting** – none
10. **Mowing service for the year 2025-2026** – quotations to be considered. Approached 4 in all, 2 declined, 1 no response and only 1 quotation received D Clarke (Not VAT registered) All agreed to contract D Clarke at £1600 per season
11. **LM Scheme** FY 2025- 2026 there is a 3.95% rise by WCC on last year. LM (In2Out) increase 1 May to £17.00 per hour. Considered all agreed. Resolved.
12. **Policies to be reviewed**
 - a. Risk Assessment - all agreed and signed. Resolved
 - b. Grant Making Policy – all agreed. Resolved
 - c. Defib Policy – all agreed. Resolved
13. **Planning:**
 - a. Plans received since last meeting - none
 - b. Decisions received since last meeting – none
 - c. Plans for consideration at this meeting - M/24/01704/LB & M/24/01705/FUL The Dingle, all agreed for a comment to be made to the Planning application
14. **Progress Reports/ updates**
 - a. Roads, kerbing, drains – reported on WCC Site no update at present. Further report on pothole and gravel at Pipers brook area.
 - b. LM Report – none at present
 - c. Eastham Village Millenium Green (kerbing) – meeting arranged with WCC Highways Inspector 3 April 2025 at 10am.
15. **Reports on any Meetings attended by Clerk or Councillors** – None
16. **Correspondence for Information:** as circulated to Councillors from
RSN Weekly & Monthly Digest;
Worcestershire CALC newsletter, Webinar Healthy Heart, Webinar Community Health and wellbeing, Update 25-01, and Devolution
WMP Contract; RBL VE Day 8 May; MHDC – Storytelling, Register of Electors Request, Healthy Heart Webinar.
WCC Worcestershire Minerals and Waste local Development scheme
17. **Correspondence for discussion**
 - a. MHDC registers of Electors – Clerk is registered. Cllrs can register.
 - b. VE Day 8 May – no information
 - c. WMP Parish Charters renewal confirmation – agreed to continue with notes on previous 3-month contract
18. **Councillors reports and items for the next agenda**
to note Sign on A456 has swung around; Bridge frame/coping stones damage; Defib/ 1st aid course.
May Agenda item – Footpath Officer, 1st Aid Course/Defib training
19. **Confirm Date for next meeting – 27 May 2025 for the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm and followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting**
20. **Closure of meeting** - - 8:30 pm

Signed

Date

Notes from Public Question Time –

Update given on request of question for Eastham Village Millenium Green regarding the matting

County Councillor's Report – March 2025

1. At a meeting of the Council on 13th February, the Council approved the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026-2028. The main points approved were:
 - a. A net Budget Requirement of £495.598 million.
 - b. A Capital Programme of £490.854 million.

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- c. Council Tax Band D equivalent for 2024/25 be set at £1,615.71 and the Council Tax Requirement be set at £357.152 million, which will increase the Council Tax Precept by 4.99% in relation to two parts:
- 2.99% to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan.
 - 2.00% Adult Social Care Precept, ring fenced for Adult Social care services.
2. Following the collapse of the wall due to Kyre Brook flooding prior to Christmas in Tenbury, it was found that the land registry showed no details of ownership of the land on which the wall stood. The County Council announced they would rebuild a “like for like” wall but required a permit from the Environment Agency before works could commence. This permit was eventually received on 14th February and works commenced on 24th February, with an expected build time of two weeks.
3. At the time of writing (27.02.25), the Environment Agency’s statements concerning their Flood Defence Scheme for Tenbury remains, that the scheme is on pause while they attempt to seek additional funding. As you know, three years ago the EA’s funding assessment was that the scheme would cost approximately £6.4 million. Today, they anticipate the cost of the scheme will be between £25 million and £30 million, goodness knows what their estimation will be this time next year.

I have stated publicly that I do not believe the flood defence scheme will go ahead for reasons I will not detail here. My public statements to this effect have been made because I want the Environment Agency to do two things:

- a. I want them to admit that they do not intend to go ahead with the scheme.
- b. I want the £17.2 million funding, which they have secured so far, to be transferred to Worcestershire County Council who will ring fence the funds for flood defence use in Tenbury. I will suggest that the monies are used to install flood defences in every property (residential and business) that have flooded in recent years. Any monies remaining can then be used for other flood defence works around the town.

I have raised my concerns now because I am not seeking re-election to the County Council in May and wanted this agreed before these funds, which the Environment Agency have secured, are either transferred to other flood defence schemes or clawed back by central government.

Update: Since writing my report, at a meeting with the Environment Agency, they have confirmed that they will not be proceeding with the Tenbury Scheme due to lack of funding. I have asked that the £17.2 million be transferred to either/both WCC and MHDC where the monies would be ring fenced for flood defence works in Tenbury. Cllr Andrew Willmott (MHDC Tenbury Ward) and myself are liaising with the Leaders and Chief Executives of both councils.

4. The government is proceeding with its devolution programme. Unfortunately, Worcestershire was not selected to take part in the first phase but have to nevertheless, submit an interim plan to the Secretary of State on or before 21st March 2025 and a full proposal by 28th November.

This is a crucial time for local government in Worcestershire and will determine how local government in Worcestershire is run, for several decades to come. As I have mentioned before there are two stages:

- a. The formation of Unitary Councils
- b. The formation of a Strategic Authority headed by an elected Mayor.

For now, the seven upper tier councils in Worcestershire, (the County Council and Malvern Hills, Wychavon, Worcester City, Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove District Councils), will have to decide how their Unitary Council will be formed – there are many suggestions being discussed. Some want one Unitary Council for the whole of Worcestershire, some want two – one in the North and the other in the South, and some want to add on bits of other counties.

For me there is only one outcome that make any sense. We have excellent Town and Parish Councils in Worcestershire to ensure our residents have that “local” connection and so I hope colleagues will agree on a One Worcestershire Unitary Council. It seems madness to me to set up two Education Departments, two Children’s Services Departments, two Highways Departments, two Adult Social Care Departments and so on in Worcestershire. Two sets of Councillors, two sets of Officers and the cost implications would be considerable, resulting in a substantial increase in Council Tax.

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Andrew Willmott District Councillor Tenbury Ward

Items of interest 25 March 2025

Flood Defences, Tenbury Wells

The replacement Market Street wall is complete. On 7 March the EA confirmed that the Tenbury Flood Relief Scheme would not go ahead pending a funding review in April 2026. We now press Government for the £17.2 m allocated to the scheme to be released to WCC and/or MHDC for a property and locally based scheme. We believe that evidence on progress to date, and the government's fiscal position, means that otherwise, the funding will be lost.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Worcestershire District Councils support reorganisation within the boundaries of the County and within the strictures of compulsory Government reorganisation. Two options for unitary structures have emerged, a whole county unitary and a north – south split, with Malvern, Worcester City and Wychavon forming the south - itself pending larger, strategic, mayoral amalgamations of around 1,500,000 citizens when unitaries join together.

Neighbourhood Planning

I continue to press for MHDC to provide an additional layer of funding for neighbourhood planning as a statutory planning protection for when reorganisation and devolution is enacted, and district councils disappear in April 2028.

MHDC Strategy, Post White Paper

MHDC is in a strong financial position with good reserves funded by the citizens and businesses of our district and successfully husbanded by MHDC Officers and Councillors. Guided by the “wish list” exercise last month, an “expression of interest” invitation will follow to parishes, including towns, for spending on local community assets of up to £100,000 each thus spreading reserves back to the district. MHDC has also voted to freeze its portion of Council Tax for 2025/26.

MHDC Planning

I have asked for a formal review comparing best service in the public and private sectors.

Working from Home

I have asked for a formal review of MHDC productivity comparisons with exemplars in the public and private sectors.

Terrills Lane Development

The formal Appeal Hearing on the speculative development of up to 125 houses is complete. MHDC having withdrawn their objections following the Highways withdrawal. We await the deliberations of the Government Inspector.

Malvern Hills District Council Report (March 2025)

Cllr Lesley Bruton (Tenbury Ward)

Council Tax

At the council meeting held on 25th February, councillors voted unanimously for a Council Tax freeze for the district council's element of the bill for 2025/26.

Following the announcement that Worcestershire will be moving to a unitary, MHDC is budgeting to the end of its expected lifetime and believes this can be funded within existing budgets.

From the bill, eight percent goes towards district council services, including waste and recycling collections, planning services, business support, housing, public toilets and more. The Band D has been calculated at £82.60.

Residents are being encouraged to access their Council Tax bill online rather than receiving a paper copy through the post. The District Council is urging people to sign up to its e-billing option, to provide a more environmentally friendly and convenient service for taxpayers. 38 percent of residents have already signed up to e-billing and the council would like to increase this percentage.

Visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/council-tax/paperless-council-tax-bill for further information and to register for e-billing.

Planning Inquiry

The Planning Inquiry for the Terrills Lane Appeal was held on 25th — 26th February, which included a site visit by the inspector. The inspector's report and decision should be published in the next two months.

South Worcestershire Development Review (SWDPR) Examination

Public hearings to scrutinise a key planning document setting out where thousands of new homes will be built across South Worcestershire by 2041 will begin this week.

Government appointed inspectors will test whether the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review is legally compliant and meets national planning policy — known as being found sound — during the hearing sessions to be held at Worcester Guildhall.

The examination will take place over three weeks, starting from Tuesday 4th March to Thursday 27th March. Inspectors will explore a different theme each day, ranging from economic growth policies to the different housing sites identified in the Plan. Further sessions will be held at the Civic Centre in Pershore on 29th and 30th April to consider issues including climate change and transport.

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Once the hearings have finished, if the inspector agrees the Plan can be found sound, then changes will likely be required to the document — known as major modifications. A consultation on these changes is pencilled in for summer 2025. All three South Worcestershire Councils will then be formally asked to adopt the Plan by the end of the year or early 2026.

Dog Fouling

The District Council is asking residents to share their views on how the council tackles dog fouling across the district. On Monday 3rd March, a consultation will be launched to gather responses on the Dog Control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). The consultation aims to understand the experience of residents and to gather suggestions to help improve public spaces for everyone. Reports in relation to dog fouling continue to be received and the Council would like to extend the Protection Order that was previously in place to address these issues.

The current order makes it an offence if you:

- Don't clean up after your dog
- Don't keep your dog out of fenced off or enclosed children's playgrounds
- Don't place your dog on a lead when directed by authorised officer
- Can't produce the means to pick up your dog's waste.

If approved, the PSPO will continue to allow the District Council Officers to deal with dog control offences. Currently, officers carry out regular patrols and issue fixed penalty notices if they witness someone committing a dog fouling offence.

The consultation will run for six weeks and will end at midnight on 14th April 2025.

Visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/consultation to take part in the PSPO consultation.

UNITY — Building Brighter Futures UKSPF

The UNITY Building Brighter Futures programme is a UKSPF funded programme designed to provide support to those who are economically inactive in the Malvern Hills District. This is a hard to access cohort of constituents and requires a different set of activities.

The support has been designed to be holistic including self-confidence skills, careers advice and help accessing the correct health care or training. The programme has been delivered by a team of experienced job coaches from Community Housing. £50,000 has been invested over 2-years into the provision of advice, 1-1 support, social media and regular drop-in advice sessions in various locations across the district including The Pump Rooms at the Welcome Space on Friday mornings.

Overall, the project has so far supported 141 constituents across the Malvern Hills District including 67 people in employment or self-employment following support.

Malvern Korosten Twinning

Malvern has a new twinned town, the Municipality of Korosten in Ukraine. To learn more about the new twinning plans and the opportunity to meet new people, an open day is being held on 15th March at the Community Hub, Malvern.

To reserve a place, email korostenmalvern@gmail.com

Malvern Hills Upskilling Grant

Malvern Hills businesses can continue to benefit from the Malvern Hills Upskilling Grant.

The grant scheme provides funding of up to £500 to help with the business cost of training new staff (i.e. apprenticeships, trainee or other). To qualify businesses must be based in the Malvern Hills district postcode area, employ fewer than 250 people and pay at least the minimum wage to the trainee for a post of at least 30 hours a week including training leading to a recognised qualification.

Visit <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/business/skills-and-training/training-andupskilling-information-for-businesses> for further information.

Apprenticeship Bursaries

£500 is available to trainees and apprenticeships to help cover the cost of travel, equipment, tools and clothing necessary to access training.

The support is available to residents of Malvern Hills District who:

- Earn less than £250 per week
- Attend a qualifying course
- Are employed for a post of 30 hours a week for a minimum of 12 months.

<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/business/grants-andfunding#:~:text=Apprentice%20Bursary%202024,-The%20council%20recognises&text=An%20Upskilling%20Bursary%20Scheme%20has, clothing%20necessary%20to%20access%20training..>