



3/26
Minutes

Rous Lench Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 24th March 2025
at 7pm at Rous Lench Village Hall.

Present	Cllrs D Browne (Chair), S Davis & K Hicken. In attendance: Kerry Williamson (Clerk), Cllr T Bennett (Cookhill Parish Council). Public: 0 Meeting opened at 7pm
16/25	Chairman's Welcome: Cllr Browne opened the meeting and welcomed the Councillors.
17/25	Apologies for Absence: Cllrs L Newton, S Harrison, G Hughes and Cllr Ben Hurdman (District) sent apologies.
18/25	Declarations of Interest: Cllr Davis registered an interest in agenda item 6.4. Planning application W/24/02530/PIP was Cllr Davis's application.
19/25	Dispensations: None.
20/25	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: This week the Government announced major reforms to the planning system through the tabling of its Planning and Infrastructure Bill (see Appendix 1). Key proposals in the bill include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The introduction of a national scheme of delegation which will set out which types of applications should be determined by officers and which should go to committee.• A limit on the size of planning committees.• Mandatory training for all planning committee members.• The ability for councils to set their own planning fees to reflect local circumstances. Money can be reinvested to further speed up the planning process.• The creation of a Nature Restoration Fund. This will allow developers to pay into a pot and the money can be pooled, to fund large projects to connect and restore nature over wider geographic areas. Currently, developers pay to mitigate the environmental impact of a development on a project-by-project basis, which the Government claims slows down delivery.• Changes to the rules around the Compulsory Purchase system to make it easier for councils to acquire land.• Strengthened powers for Development Corporations to make it easier to build the Government's planned New Towns.



Clerk: Kerry Williamson

- The introduction of strategic planning where development is looked at across multiple council areas. This will be the responsibility of Mayors or councils where necessary.
- A restriction on the legal challenges that can be brought against major national significant infrastructure projects.
- Clean energy projects like wind and solar power will be prioritised for connection to the grid.
- People living within 500m of new pylons across Great Britain will up to £2,500 over 10 years off their energy bills. A community fund will also be created meaning communities could get £200,000 worth of funding per km of new overhead electricity cable in their area, and £530,000 per substation.
- Streamlining the process for installing EV chargers.

A consultation is also underway on removing Sport England, The Theatre Trust and The Gardens Trust status as statutory consultees on applications. The role of other statutory consultees will also be restricted to heritage, safety and environmental protection. This will reduce the type and number of applications they must be consulted on. There will also be guidance clarifying councils should only consult statutory consultees 'where necessary' and decisions should not be delayed beyond the 21-day statutory deadline unless a decision cannot be reached or advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal.

The examination phase of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) started on 4 March, with public hearings taking place at the Guildhall in Worcester. This is a crucial stage of the plan-making process and a key step on the way to having the SWDPR officially adopted later this year. Officers are positive about the response the Plan is getting from the inspectors so far, although we obviously won't know until we get their final report.

The hearings are being live streamed on the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review YouTube channel. You can also watch back the previous sessions. Final sessions take place on 25, 26 and 27 March at the Guildhall in Worcester. The final session on 28 March takes place at the Civic Centre in Pershore. There are also some reserve sessions planned on 29 April, 30 April and 1 May should the inspectors need more time. If these take place, then they will also be at the Civic Centre in Pershore.

Over 60 people attended our latest Parish and Town Council event held on 6 March. The event was chaired by Councillor Emma Sims, Chair of the Communities and Funding Advisory Panel, who explained the role of the Panel.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Chris Day, gave an update on the We Are Wychavon Plan and some of our promises. He shared the headlines of the 2024 Residents' Survey results, which saw 82% residents being satisfied with the local area as a place to live (79% in 2023) and 72% satisfied with how we run things (64% in 2023). He highlighted the results from the Corporate Peer Challenge that took place last year, which some of the parish councils had been involved with. He then spoke about the Devolution White Paper, local government reorganisation and the next steps.

Jonathan Morgan, Electoral Services Manager, explained how parish councils can deal with casual vacancies and by-elections.

Ciaran Power, Head of Planning Services, spoke about the changes to planning policy, what's in the pipeline and how to engage effectively in the planning process.

	<p>The attendees then had a choice of three workshops to attend. These covered the topics listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Transport Research – participants heard the results of Wychavon’s recent research and were invited to feedback on experiences in their areas. • Neighbourhood Plans – participants heard more about what neighbourhood plans are, the benefits and how to get started. • Health and Wellbeing - Lucy Bird, Wellbeing Officer at CALC, talked about her role in supporting parish councils with health and wellbeing. <p>The final speakers were representatives from Cleeve Prior, Pinvin and Crowle Parish Councils. They shared their experiences of creating large scales projects, the financial challenges, how to engage with the community, identifying local needs and how to be resilient when a project doesn’t initially go to plan.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to ask Cllr Hurdman when a response could be expected to the letter that had been sent to Wychavon Planning Department and Cllr Hurdman regarding W/23/00321/FUL.</p> <p>Worcs County Council (WCC): No report provided.</p> <p>Police: No report provided. Email request for Q2 Parish Priorities.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to collect speed data and send as Q2 Parish Priority.</p> <p>PQT: Cllr Bennett from Cookhill Parish Council updated the Council on his progress with Neighbourhood Watch and creating a village network. Cllr Bennett gave the Council some stickers which remind drivers not to speed, these could be stuck to resident’s bins. Cllr Bennett could get more stickers for the Parish if required.</p>
21/25	<p>To approve minutes of previous meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 20th January 2025, were agreed as a true record and approved.</p>
22/25	<p>Planning Applications and Appeals: The following applications were noted and/or discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) SWDP Review consultation – Examination stage, legal compliance of the Plan. Noted. 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. Application approved by Wychavon District Council. Noted. 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. Comment provided by RLPC, currently pending decision. Noted. e) W/25/00271/FUL, Radford Landfill Site, Alcester Road, Radford – Construction of 4 houses to supersede approval of W/22/00731/GPDQ for two residential units.

	<p>Councillors considered the design and access statement. Councillors felt that the size of the properties would not meet local need.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Browne to draft a response and circulate to all Councillors.</p>
23/25	<p>Public Rights of Way and Highways</p> <p>a) PROW maintenance and obstruction issues – Cllr Hicken reported that the culvert on bridleway RL-515 had been fixed and the bridleway was reopened. Cllr Hicken reported an unsafe stile on footpath 505C.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Hicken to send photos and location of the damaged stile to the Clerk and the Clerk will report to Worcestershire County Council.</p> <p>b) Lengthsman Scheme – VAS batteries need to be changed and VAS rotated from Rous Lench.</p> <p>c) Flooding – Cllr Browne reported that the roads and drains in Rous Lench need to be cleared.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to report drain clearance to Worcestershire County Council and request a road sweep from Wychavon District Council.</p>
24/25	<p>Progress Reports - Clerk reported:</p> <p>a) Update on Actions since Previous Meeting – routine work.</p> <p>b) The Clerk's resignation was noted.</p> <p>c) The Clerk reminded Councillors about the CALC information sessions for Councillors on devolution.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to send the Zoom link for the Wychavon session to all Councillors.</p>
25/25	<p>Community Orchard/garden & allotments – In Cllr Newton's absence there was no update.</p>
26/25	<p>Rous Lench & Radford parish matters for discussion or decision:</p> <p>a) Asset maintenance checks (standing item) Cllr Browne reported that the defibrillator component replacement was in hand by resident, Mr. White. Cllr Browne reported that damage to the grass on the village Green from local building work had been reseeded. Cllr Browne felt that the village Green would benefit from 'No Parking' signs. Cllr Browne reported that a new flag was required.</p> <p>b) Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) – Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Highways had confirmed that a larger pole could be sited opposite The Wheelbarrow Castle pub for a solar panel.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to ask WCC Highways to fit the larger pole at the site opposite The Wheelbarrow Castle.</p> <p>c) Superfast Broadband – The Clerk had received notification from Worcestershire County Council that Openreach would not be carrying out further investigations in Rous Lench at this time.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Browne to draft a reply in light of landlines being lost within the next 14 days.</p> <p>d) Local Groups Recruitment Campaign – Cllr Browne would be having a meeting with the PCC and Village Hall committee.</p> <p>e) Letter to Wychavon Planning – a follow up email had been sent to Wychavon Planning Department and Cllr Hurdman regarding the letter with reference to W/23/00321/FUL. No further updates were available.</p> <p>f) Clerk Recruitment – no applications had been received. Deadline had been extended to 28th March.</p>

	<p>Action: Clerk to readvertise on Facebook and Cllr Hicken would share the post to other local village community pages.</p> <p>g) Parish Council Website – Clerk was waiting for quotes.</p> <p>h) Litter Pick – the litter pick had been a success. Around 20 residents had collected over 10 bags of rubbish.</p> <p>i) Footpath Diversion – Cllrs discussed how the footpath had been as it was now for as long as they could remember.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to provide a response that the Parish Council had no comment in favour of diverting the footpath, the Parish Council was happy for it to stay as it is.</p> <p>j) VE Day Community Events Funding – The Rous Lench & Radford Gardens would be holding an event for VE Day, there were no other known local events. It was agreed to transfer the £250 funding from Wychavon District Council to the Rous Lench and Radford Gardens for their VE Day event.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to make payment of £250 to Rous Lench and Radford Community Garden.</p>
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27/25	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) Budget expenditure: To consider and approve. The budget expenditure was approved.</p> <p>b) Bank reconciliation: To consider and approve. The bank reconciliation was approved.</p> <p>c) Invoices: To approve the proposed payments. The proposed payments (see table at the end of Minutes) were approved.</p>
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28/25	<p>Correspondence: All correspondence has been circulated to Councillors.</p> <p>Worcestershire CALC: Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Wychavon Area of CALC.</p> <p>Worcestershire CALC: Health & Wellbeing Update.</p> <p>Wychavon District Council: VE Day Celebration.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council: Budget Consultation.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council: Parish Lengthsman Scheme – End of Year.</p> <p>Worcestershire County Council: Proposed Diversion of Footpath RL-522 in the Parish of Rous Lench.</p> <p>West Mercia Police: Parish Priorities.</p> <p>West Mercia Police: Worcester Police Station Open Day.</p>
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29/25	<p>Councillors Reports & Items for Future Agenda</p> <p>Replacement Clerk</p>
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30/25	<p>Date of next meeting: Monday 19th May at 7.30pm. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Monday 19th May at 7pm.</p>
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Meeting closed at 8.42pm

SIGNED: Chair

Date: 9/6/2020