

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 14th April 2025 at the Parish Councils Playing Field Pavilion
Suckley, Worcester, WR6 5DE

Minutes of the meeting are still draft until approved at the next council meeting.

Members Present

Cllr R Lewis (Chair)
Cllr S Jew
Cllr A Mansell
Cllr H Ormerod
Cllr R Roper

In Attendance

County Councillor K Hanks
District Councillor P Whatley
Clerk L Cleaver
No members of the public.

64. CHAIRS WELCOME AND TO RECORD APOLOGIES

The chair welcomed all and thanked them for attending. A special thank you made to Cllr Mansell for this work on the defibrillators, clearing up at the playing field, lottery ticket sales and asset register. No recorded apologies from Cllr Philpotts. Apologies recorded from District Councillor Rouse.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

66. GRANT A DISPENSATION

Nothing to be considered

67. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The chair adjourned the meeting for Public Question Time.

(a) **Public Question Time.** No questions to be considered

(b) **Public Presentation Planning.** Nothing to be considered

(c) **Report from County Councillor Cllr Karen Hanks.** Elections and Transition to Unitary Authority - County are looking to the future and electing a final administration to Worcestershire County Council on 1st May 2025. The transition to a Unitary Council already under consideration. Price Waterhouse Coopers have been commissioned by Worcestershire County Council to provide an independent

view to look at the optimum arrangements in terms of value for money for the local taxpayer and effective local democracy. The County Council have put together two proposals, either a single or two unitary authorities. Two unitary councils for Worcestershire, one southern (districts of Malvern, Worcester City and Wychavon, population 323,000) the other northern district made up of the other three districts. Only a single Unitary Model based on current county council boundaries and an estimated population of 614,000 would deliver the required scale and drive efficiency. A new unitary structure would be implemented across Worcestershire with effect 1st April 2028, elections being held May 2027. The full proposal must be submitted to MHCLG by 28th November 2025. The Council will follow a full and transparent decision making process with opportunity for full member involvement. Financial - since their last report and the fear of a funding gap of £33 million, it has been confirmed that Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) has been made available to county from Government. Councils in receipt of (EFS) must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government on a firmer footing. Digital Infrastructure – in respect of locating a mast to improve mobile phone coverage at Suckley, the owners of the land at the preferred sites did not respond. The challenge at Suckley, is finding a site that sees East through a gap in the hills and north to get enough properties in. Alternative sites identified probably too far north to get to Longley Green. Further thought required on it. Active local engagement needed to ensure it has support to find a viable site would be beneficial, then through to planning.

(d) Report from District Councillor Sarah Rouse. No report available.

(e) Report from District Councillor Peter Whatley. The futures extinction! Of the six district councils, none of them agree, half would like to see single unitary council, the other half dual. MHDC would like single unitary. However if dual unitary, the wealthy southern unitary would be funding the northern areas, see how it works out. The SWDP has gone through to the Inspectorate with a six month consideration. All sites for housing are viable except for Rushwick. West midlands housing target would not be removed. With regards to the community infrastructure fund launched last month, any organisation may apply you may claim up to £15,000 without having to fund match. Strongly advised to apply. £1,000 could be his budget this could help perhaps towards batteries for the defibrillator. The summer may be very quiet.

(f) School report Cllr Helen Philpotts. No report for consideration.

The chair re-opened the meeting.

68. MINUTES

Minutes of the parish council meeting held 10/03/2025, proposed by Cllr Ormerod and seconded by Cllr Jew and agreed by all, that the minutes be signed as a true and accurate record. The chair signed the minutes accordingly.

69. POLICY DOCUMENT INTERNAL/EXTERNAL

The Reserves Policy, ear marked and general, considered in line with the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide. As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both it's day to day operations and future plans. Sections 32 & 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months net revenue expenditure. Having considered the policy it was agreed by all for the policy to be implemented with immediate effect.

70. PLANNING – MHDC

(a) Nothing for consideration.

(b) **Decisions (for information only)** noted by all.

M/24/01436/HP The Crest, Crews Hill, Alfrick, Worcester, WR 6 5HF.

Extension and refurbishment of the existing house, together with replacement garage. **Approved** 11th March 2025

M/25/00109/FUL. Suckley Primary School, Church Lane, Suckley, WR6 5DE
Single storey classroom extension. **Approved** 11th March 2025

M/25/00153/HP Hillview, Suckley, Worcester, WR6 5ED

Single storey rear extension (incorporating existing studio). **Approved** 11th March 2025

71. PLAYING FIELD WORKING GROUP (PFWG)

(a) **Report** from the last meeting of the PFWG- nothing to report at this meeting.

(b) **To discuss the “Shadow Budget”** .- nothing to report at this meeting.

(c) **RoSPA** report considered by all. A discussion took place looking at Cllr Jews concerns that the large climbing frames plywood platform was delaminating around the mounting bolts, the see saw was in need of a coat of paint. Some of the works identify in the RoSPA report had already been addressed. Cllr Jew to obtain quotes for the boarding for the next meeting. Removal of the bark with consideration of a new surface (grass).

(d) **Three quotes (bark removal)** required as per above for consideration at Junes council meeting.

(e) **Hire agreement**, form considered by all, although it didn't meet the needs of the council, without any other agreement in place, hiring the facilities out would not be possible. It was therefore agreed by all to use the form for the time being, Cllr Mansell to bring back to the council his alternative agreement at the next council meeting.

(f) **Hire rates** considered. It was agreed for the time being, Cllr Lewis to be given delegated powers to negotiate hire rates for any use of the sports facilities and pavilion on behalf of the parish council.

(g) **Pavilion Appraisal**. The appraisal and grant opportunities of the pavilion and the play area by Community First considered, recommendations agreed as follows:

G1 Play area: to consider replacing with up to date equipment –agreed by all for future consideration and to be mentioned at the Annual Parish Meeting by the Chair on May 12th.

G2 Play area brook: to consider “water hazard” signage – agreed by all three quotes required.

G3 Pavilion: to consider the upgrading to an electric hand dryer for ease of management- agreed by all, three quotes required.

G4 Pavilion: to consider undertaking a fire risk assessment up to £300 plus vat, agreed by all to contact the Fire Brigade as a suggestion, to look at the internet as well and ref back to the chair who would action.

- G5 Pavilion: to consider having an alternative fire exit and signage of exits no more than £1000 plus vat. Agreed by all, this to be deferred until the fire risk assessment undertaken, only if required to then obtain 3 quotes.
- G6 To consider membership to Community First network for access to online information and advice, £10 per annum, agreed by all.
- G7 Roll out pavilion upgrades, boarding for the all weather pitch and new play equipment into a single project, budget to be added to the village precept, spread across 20 years very little cost per household. Deferred until June meeting.
- G8 To apply to MHDC for grant funding. Agreed by all to talk to the community group at Malvern Hills DC to understand how to plan and requirements needed for grant funding.
- G9 To consider other grant options, National Lottery (£20,000), Sports England, Severn Trent, Platform Housing, Festival housing. Agreed by all to progress when specifics have been identified.
- G10 Grant applications to be undertaken by for example the clerk. Agreed when the clerks administration constraints have been reduced.

72. REPORTS

(a) Footpaths. .

Nothing to be reported.

(b) Clerks.

Trauma/Bleed kit and their role in the community understood. Kits being freely offered by Worcestershire County Council, the clerk has applied for a kit and is waiting for response. A problem with the Lengthsman scheme has been resolved, payment for all five Lengthsman invoices now received. PKF Littlejohn is the appointed external auditor until 2026/2027 therefore the council will need to submit an (AGAR) no later than 1st July. The AGAR will form part of the councils June agenda. The council's electricity tariff "fixed business for 3 years" ends 20th June 2025, Cllr Mansell considering new tariff options.

73. COMMUNITY - PROJECTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/UPDATE

- (a) Mobile Phone Mast** (Atlas Tower Group), Cllr Mansell has spoken to Michael Rose of Atlas as none of the three locations accepted. A Suckley playing field visit took place along with two other sites. Power evaluated. The site visit produced a more positive evaluation of the area.
- (b) Neighbourhood Plan** Considered by all email (3rd April 2025) from Andrew Ford, Planning Officer (Policy) Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils. He acknowledged he'd been late with his reply having been busy with the SWDP. He had received the parish councils request to designate the parish as a Neighbourhood Area and provided a plan to Cllr Jew from another village. To move the project forward a brief report to be prepared for the district council's Executive Committee on 17th June 2025. Cllr Jew to prepare and submit a letter of intent on behalf of the parish council which was agreed by all. Andrew Ford keen to join any future meeting and would be invited to the Annual Parish Meeting on 12th May 2025 to answer any questions parishioners may have.
- (c) Defibrillators**
(c1) **Roll out** update by Cllr Mansell, The original defibrillator grant application refused by Worcester County Council due to its close proximity to the one at the school. However the grant re-submitted using the location of Longley Green and letters from Cllr Mansell and Doctor Lewis, which was accepted.

The council to be awarded a grant funding of £2500. Cllr Mansell wished to thank Mr and Mrs Bradley who would supply the sites electricity.

The defibrillator at the Bruff discussed, its location not easy to find ie around the corner, however it was noted that the battery indicator low (one bar).

(c2) **Defibrillator purchase** considered following the successful grant award of £2500 by Worcestershire County Council, The iPad SP1, same as the school with cover/cabinet to be purchased as soon as the terms of the grant funding agreed by the council and funding received.

- (d) **MHDC Community Recognition Scheme.** The scheme discussed by all, 7 names considered for the “individual” category. After careful consideration of all candidates, it was unanimously agreed to put forward Anne Lewis having over 30 years long term involvement in many areas of the village.

- (e) **Summer Event.** Considered by all a summer event at the playing field and walks to increase community engagement. £350 incidental costs, net cost £100. To be taken from general funds budget “Community Activities” set at £200. Possible alcohol license, BBQ, for example.
Agreed by all to set up a working party to progress and advertise the summer event and walks, net cost £100 without referral back to the council. Working Party Summer Event, Cllrs Jew, Lewis, Mansell and Roper.

74. GRANT APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

a **Defibrillator grant**, terms of the grant funding of £2500 from Worcestershire County Council for a defibrillator at Longley Green considered and agreed by all. Noted by all that any funding received to be “ear marked” reserved.

b **Grant application to the Football Foundation** Junior goals for the grass pitch discussed for a long time, some metal goal post frames exist, but this type are no longer allowed for safety reasons. The playing field advisory group has said it would like to run a junior football tournament in 2026 when these will be required. Smaller goals will also be well received for groups playing during the summer holidays. A grant application to the football foundation (75%) for junior goals, (25%) funded by the parish council to a maximum amount of £400. The playing field budget for 2025/2026 considered. The grant application only to be applied for if a 100% grant could not be obtained. Cllr Roper to address.

75. RATES REDUCTION CONSIDERATION

Confirmation, that the application form sent by MHDC “Mandatory and Discretionary Rate Relief” had been submitted but refused; Parish Councils are not allowed to claim relief under this scheme. Therefore, the council agreed to apply for the “Discretionary Rural Rate Relief” instead.

76. FINANCE –

- (a) **Bank Reconciliation** to the end of February 2025 scrutinised. The councils current account £15,500.90, playing field account £248.72. Cheque remained un-presented 00296 from October 2024, the chair to address. With no further comments the reconciliation signed by the chair.
- (b) **Budget v actual** figures to the end February 2025, scrutinised. Budget spend £17,090.00, actual spend £19,598.30, budget income £16,059, actual income £21,470.22.

- (c) **Findings to be reviewed.** How did the councils reserves of £37,757 at 1/4/2023 dramatically change. Discussed:- financial year 2023/2024

Balance b/fwd	£37,758
Receipts	£44,665
Payments	£68,271- (equipment £26,431)
C/fwd	£14,152

- (d) **Football Foundation update.** What had happened to the grant applied, why had it been turned down. Council minutes November 2023 (113/23) Grants had been applied for works on the pavilion and new boards around the all-weather pitch. Confirmation, except for the grant applied for the goalposts end of 2023, no other grant had been submitted to the Foundation to cover some of the payments as outlined above reference (c).
- (e) **Defibrillator pads renew quotes.** Previously paid £59.93, three quotes required, best price £75.18 delivered. Agreed order to be placed.
- (f) **Asset Register** reviewed by Cllrs Mansell and Ormerod for replacement valuation purposes. As the review still ongoing, the council to reconsider at Junes meeting.

(g) **APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

Proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Roper and agreed by all to make the following payments two signatures required:

Playing Field account:

£ 54.00 Cheque 0298	MHDC. Rates due 1 st may 2025 Pavilion
£ 96.00 Cheque 0299	RoSPA Play Safety, Annual Inspection (po2503)

General funds account

£645.95 Cheque 1185	L Cleaver, clerks March 2025 salary
£ 28.91 Cheque 1185	L Cleaver, clerks expenses March 2025
£342.00 Cheque 1186	R Wilks, Lengthsman work February & March 2025
£504.63 Cheque 1187	HMRC final quarter
£130.00 Cheque 1188	Marion Griffiths payroll admin April 2024 to March 2025

(h) **PLAYING FEILD ACCOUNT**

Noted by all direct debit payment, Water Plus £11.65 February 2025

(i) **PARISH COUNCIL GENERAL ACCOUNT**

Noted by all the automatic monthly receipts, St. Johns Football Club £130.00, bank interest £16.96 both February 2025

77. CONTRACTOR RENEW CONSIDERATION

Internal auditor appointment. Suckley parish council has always used the services of their current provider for a few years, an experienced accountancy firm based in Malvern. Only for the audit year 2024/2025 the council have agreed to use the services of this provider £70 plus vat.

78. PRECEPT CONCERNS

To consider a parishioners email with regards the council's precept (sent to all Cllrs 14th March 2025), a reply to be formulated and sent.

79. MEETING DATES

Meetings dates reviewed and agreed to the end of April 2026 (lottery requirement).
Dates to be posted on the councils Facebook page and e-services website.

80. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

Cllr Ormerod - the playing field lottery ticket sales going well. Another £330 banked today, making it £1620 (54) ticket sales to date and still two weeks to go.

Cllr Lewis has still to make contact with the school regarding the idea for the children to create a logo for the council and sports day.

81. MEMBERS TO RAISE ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

Three year forecast

The meeting closed at 21.58

Signed..... Dated 12th May 2025

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS: _

Cllr Richard Lewis Chair, Cllr Simon Jew, Cllr Andrew Mansell, Cllr Howard Ormerod, Cllr Helen Philpotts, Cllr Rebecca Roper.

Additional /corrected:-

The figures discussed by Cllr Mansell with reference the councils spending for 2023 incorrect. The correct figures to be noted electrical work £2908, Showers £9000, CCTV £ £700. Total spend for the pavilion £12,608. 75% grant funding would have recovered £9456.