

Great Comberton Parish Council

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council - Minutes Monday 12th May 2025, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: K Collingwood (Chair), S Hamilton, (Vice-Chair), G Hodgson, D Wilks, S Hickey & District Cllr Hardman

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: One parishioner

1. Apologies: Received from Cllr Lavelle & County Cllr Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations.

3. Election of Chairman and signing of declaration of acceptance of office: Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Hickey, all in favour to nominate Cllr Collingwood as Chairman.

4. Election of Vice Chairman: Proposed Cllr Wilks, seconded Cllr Hodgson, all in favour to nominate Cllr Hamilton as vice-chairman.

5. Casual vacancy: Two applications had been received ahead of the meeting, with apologies conveyed by one of the applicants who was unable to attend the meeting due to existing work commitments out of the area. Supporting statements based on their merit were discussed, and Cllrs agreed that both candidates brought valuable skills to the council. Following careful consideration and a subsequent vote, the majority vote was in favour of co-opting M Lolley and a Cllr declaration of acceptance of office was signed.

Action: Clerk to notify Wychavon District Council & forward a register of interest's form for completion & all relevant Council documentation. Cllr Hamilton to forward new Cllr information.

6. Parishioner's Comments: There were none received.

7. Minutes of extraordinary meeting held on Monday 1st April 2025

Proposed Cllr Hickey, seconded Cllr Collingwood, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

8. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates:

a. Lengthsman: Latest work undertaken in the parish was discussed. Cllr Collingwood agreed to make contact to agree the next work plan. The new 2025 contract was discussed under finance item 14d. *Action: Cllr Collingwood.*

b. Police Safer Neighbourhood Team: A comment was raised in relation to latest police updates regarding speed checks conducted in the village, which had been previously shared via the village email. A discussion ensued and the meeting was reminded of the council's continued actions in tackling this ongoing issue to date. The chairman had met PC Prentice in the village in November 2024 to discuss village concerns, however it was noted that every village perceives a speeding problem, yet in reality few actually exist as defined by the police: that is the 85th percentile, so 85% of the traffic. Speed monitoring was subsequently arranged after this meeting and data collected, which, as a reminder, identified that:

- The total number of vehicles passing through the village for the week was 4560.
- The average speed was 26mph and the 85th was 29mph.
- The number of vehicles recorded over 30mph was 3.9%.

As the above figures were low, the local police team were reluctant to set up a Community Speed Watch. All agreed that even 25mph is too fast on a single track road, however in the absence of higher data and traffic incidents, the police are unable to support further at this time. Cllrs discussed any other actions that might be considered such as a vehicle activated speed sign, consideration of a 20mph limit and road narrowing, however for persistent speeders, especially during Eckington bridge closures, these were not considered suitable, and would create additional street furniture and the need for lighting. It was therefore agreed that a positive temporary measure during bridge closures could be putting up bollards to deter speeds at the pinch point by the village hall. It was also agreed to highlight speeding again with the local police team as the parish's latest priority for consideration, with further requests for monitoring during rush hour and bridge closure times at the lower end of the village near Hands Orchard.

Action: Clerk to update the local police team & remove as an agenda item at this time.

Monthly updates from the local neighbourhood team are available via The Link & residents are also encouraged to engage in the free service, 'Neighbourhood Matters,' which allows you to receive updates regarding crime in your area & to message your local officer. For the website and further information, visit: <https://neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/>

c) 'Our Community Can': This initiative has now concluded and a successful fitness class continues to operate in the village with regular participants. It was noted that this was a lottery funded scheme as opposed to direct funding from Wychavon, who facilitated the meetings and initial set up. Although this took some time, it was noted that the local villages worked well collaboratively to enhance community well-being. Provision for men in particular continues to be a concern, therefore any suggestions about possible activities such as gardening & DIY continue to be welcome.

d. Water testing: Local volunteers continue to monitor the water quality at Comberton Quay on a weekly basis. High nitrates, phosphates & electrical conductivity have been discovered, however levels have varied slightly since testing commenced. It was confirmed

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that testing is only taking place in Great Comberton at present, as there is only one testing kit available, therefore Cllr Hardman requested details of Little Comberton's volunteers in order to acquire a testing kit for use in their parish, as a useful comparison of data.

Action: Cllr Hodgson & Cllr B. Hardman.

e. Brailles Orchard: Railings & Trees: A quote was presented for Cllr's consideration for estate fencing rails, high end posts and uprights for repairs at Brailles Orchard. The quotation was discussed in detail, and it was agreed to leave the gate in its current location in order to reduce the overall cost, to be financed utilising some of the Community Infrastructure Levy fund. A formal proposal was considered under finance item 14c.

Brailles maintenance: Cllr Collingwood confirmed that a previous contact of interest in taking cuts had not proceeded, however a subsequent contact has now agreed to take two hay cuts, which would thereby result in no costs incurred by the parish council. The existing use of the orchard was revisited and it was noted that despite the previous circulation of a village survey, this remains predominantly used by a small number of dog walkers. It was also noted that wider village access may remain unclear, therefore as a note had been circulated via the village email last year, it was agreed to send a reminder to clarify village accessibility and timings to coincide with hay cuts. Suggestions were also raised regarding a possible bench to be constructed by village volunteers, to be placed near the trees for village use and the possible creation of a pathway to its position.

Action: Clerk to draft village email reminder/Cllrs to check. Cllr Hamilton to forward example letter regarding Brailles maintenance to Cllr Collingwood, to be forwarded to the contact agreeing to take hay and hedge cuts.

9. District and County Councillor's reports

- **District Council:** A new leader of the district Council will be appointed and detailed discussions continue regarding the government's proposed structural changes to a unitary system in the area, which will see the removal of the local districts. Further updates are expected in the coming months regarding the revised South Worcestershire Development Plan, to be provided once available.
- **County Council:** Cllr Hardman had provided an annual report ahead of the meeting to share with Cllrs and residents, as he had offered apologies due to his attendance at two other meetings.

10. To note model Calc standing orders and approved financial regulations: These were circulated ahead of the meeting and Cllrs were reminded to note the contents. The Clerk informed the meeting that Nalc have revised and produced a new 2024 model draft Financial Regulations template, to be adapted to suit the size and model of councils. It was confirmed that this therefore needs checking to fit the council's needs and adopted at the next full council meeting.

Action: Clerk to check the draft, suggesting amendments where necessary for Cllr's consideration ahead of the September meeting.

11. To note the Code of Conduct: This was circulated and Cllrs were reminded to note its contents.

12. To consider and appoint Councillor roles:

Finance: Budget – Cllr Hamilton

Bank Reconciliations – Cllr Lavelle

Lengthsman & Planning – Cllr Collingwood

Brailles Orchard – Cllr Lolley

Police liaison – to be agreed

Council email/website – Cllr Wilks

13. Planning

W/25/00444/FUL: Bredon View Holiday Park Estate at, Great Comberton Golf Club, Pershore Road, Great Comberton

The change of use of land for the siting of additional holiday lodges and decking, associated internal access provision, parking, landscaping including amenity areas, drainage, associated works and the redevelopment of the remaining golf course to provide a new, nine-hole course. Comments of objection were forwarded on 7th April 2025.

There were no further updates to report at present & Cllrs were reminded that a request had been made for consideration of the application by the planning committee, however there is no confirmed date at present.

Cllrs were also reminded of the parish council's consideration of the use of the field behind the war memorial, as reiterated at the Avison Young consultation event in January 2025. A brief discussion ensued and it was advised to wait for clarification once the application has been considered and also consider the mutual benefit of maintaining a positive relationship with the business in moving forward.

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W/25/00577/LB Associated Ref: W/25/00576/HP: Shelton Farm, Lower End

Description of Proposal: Demolition of minor outbuilding and new replacement conservatory – a decision remains pending.

W/25/00601/HP: Waterbrook House: Removal of existing balcony and bay window and construction of timber orangery to rear – application approved.

W/24/02361/FUL: The Rickyard, Russell Street: Notification that a planning appeal has been lodged with The Planning Inspectorate against the District Council's decision for the proposed development of existing garage to 1no. dwelling. A decision remains pending.

14. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st May 2025

Current Account:	£626.12
Business Premium Account:	£9,500.15
TOTAL	£10,126.27

b) Payments to report:

Salary: April 2025	£337.57
Salary: May 2025	£337.57
Hall hire: March/April x 2	£28.00
GC Social Committee: VE Day fund WDC	£250.00

Payments to approve following the meeting:

Expenses: Feb-May 25	£48.00
Calc subs 2025	£233.96
Internal audit fee: 23/24 accounts	£65.00
Parish Insurance: 3 year LTA 1/6/25-31/5/26	£358.91
TOTAL	£1,659.01

Income to report:

WCC LM March 2025	£180.00
Precept (i) 25/26	£2,950
Council Tax Support grant (i) 25/26	£121.00
TOTAL	£3,251.00

Proposed Cllr Hickey, seconded Cllr Collingwood, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

c) Proposal to consider & approve quotation for 9m, 1m high estate fencing rails, high end posts & uprights @ up to £502.00 exc VAT & expenditure of additional Community Infrastructure Levy funds (@ £1,074:

Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Wilks, all in favour to approve a quotation for fencing repairs at up to £502.00 exc VAT.

d) Proposal to approve lengthsman salary: 2025/26: details of the 2025/26 WCC budget were shared and a discussion ensued regarding the lengthsman's working hours and hourly rate. Cllrs were all in favour of a minor hourly increase to remain as closely in line to the budget as possible. Cllr Collingwood agreed to discuss this with the lengthsman and update Cllrs, so that the new contract could be provided by the Clerk. *Action: Cllr Collingwood/Clerk.*

e) Bank reconciliation (iv) 31 March 2025: The Clerk had prepared and forwarded the final quarterly bank reconciliation to Cllr Lavelle for checks and these were verified as accurate on 29 April 2025. The Clerk had also prepared an end of year budget review for 2024/25 which was shared with the meeting, noted and copies made available.

f) To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption for the year ended 31 March 2025: *Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Hodgson, all in favour.*

g) Audited accounts & Annual Return: 31st March 2025 – internal audit report & (i) Proposal to approve and sign Section 1: Annual governance statement - *Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Hodgson, all in favour.*

(ii) Proposal to approve and sign Section 2: Accounting statements - *Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Hodgson, all in favour.*

h) To approve the period of public rights to inspect the financial records of the Council, to commence on 3/6/25-14/7/26.

Cllr Hamilton agreed to publish on the notice board, Clerk to publish online via Worcestershire County Council's My Parish web page.

Action: Cllr Hamilton/Clerk

15. Correspondence

Notification has been received from Worcestershire Calc that there will be a new assertion as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR,) for the 2025/26 financial year regarding digital and data compliance – as one of these requirements is that every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, Councils are urged to investigate this further in order to be compliant at the end of the financial year, via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-your-parish-council-to-a-govuk-domain>

Details were relayed to the meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward further information to Cllr Wilks, and include as an agenda item for the September meeting. *Action: Clerk/Cllr Wilks.*

16. Councillor’s reports and items for future agenda:

- Data & digital compliance
- Financial regulations: 2024 Nalc model
- Policies
- Brailles Orchard

17. Date of Next Meeting Monday 1st September 2025 at 7.00 pm

Remaining meetings for the year were agreed as follows:

Monday 27th October 2025
Monday 12th January 2026
Monday 11th May 2026

Signed

Date.....

Chairman