

Strensham Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 15th May 2025

1. Chairman's Welcome

2. Apologies for Absence: Cllr. Gilder, Cllr. Pedley, County Cllr. Hardman

3. Chairman's Annual Report for 2024/2025

The Chairman began his report by thanking Cllr. Malcolm Gribble for all the work he has done on the playground improvements. The Parish now has first class facilities in the playground, with two grants from Wychavon Rural Fund. The first was for climbing equipment and a train, the second for renewing the swings. The Chairman thanked District Councillor Paul Middlebrough for his guidance and support with the funding.

Unfortunately, the Village opposition to the proposed solar farm on land at Home Farm has been unsuccessful. This will cause major disruption to residents in the construction phase. Although it has not yet received planning permission, a meeting with Gavin Greenhough the Wychavon District Planner left no doubt that the scheme would go ahead.

A new vehicle operated speed sign has been installed, as have new Twining Road signs to aid delivery drivers.

The Parish Council has employed a new Lengthsman, Steve Baker, who has started work.

The Precept was raised by 5% to £5,900, however our cost to the residents declined due to our larger electoral role.

Joanna Knight has gone through the task of organising internet banking: the first payment was made today.

The Parish Council has commented on planning applications passed to us by Wychavon District Council. One request that conditions should be placed on the litter created by the proposed McDonalds Drive-Thru made national news on the BBC website.

Sadly, Suzy Wingate the Clerk who retired early last year has died. She had been Clerk for many years.

With the coming changes to a unitary council coming, the Chairman wished to thank our District and County Councillors for the work they have done for Strensham, and the funds they have helped the Parish access.

Lastly, the Chairman thanked fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their work.

4. Any other matters / issues relating to the Parish

Prior to the meeting, District Councillor Middlebrough provided the following written report of key issues for Strensham residents.

During the year Wychavon services to Strensham have continued to be run in the efficient manner expected by residents. Waste collection remains unchanged but there are impending changes due to Government policy for a separate waste food collection service on the horizon for 2028.

The planning service is very busy with many applications coming in across the district. The applications for the Eckington ward were as follows

	Besford	Birlingham	Defford	Eckington	Strensham	Total
Planning Applications	11	9	11	31	10	72
Approved	8	6	9	28	7	58
Refused	0	1	1	0	0	2
Withdrawn	0	1	1	0	1	3
Pending decision	3	1		3	2	9
Pending decision from previous years	0	0	1	1	1	3
Enforcement	0	0	0	2	0	2
Enforcement from previous years				1		1

The review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan by the Independent inspectors has finished and their conclusions will emerge towards the end of the year.

Political Change

The election of the Labour Government last July has resulted in the impending abolition of Wychavon in 2028 when a unitary council will provide services. On the 31 March 2028 Wychavon council along with Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Redditch, Malvern Hills and Bromsgrove councils, along with Worcestershire County council will cease to exist. The service provided by all the councils will be run by a new council covering the footprint of the existing Worcestershire or two councils, one covering the north of Worcestershire and the other covering the south of Worcestershire. The Government will decide in November what will happen.

Worcestershire County Council

Following the May 2025 County Council elections the Reform Party are the largest party at County Hall. Wychavon awaits to find out how the council will be controlled.

5. Open Forum

Although the meeting had been advertised and Parishioners invited to attend, none had done so.

The meeting closed at 19:40.