

Little Comberton Parish Council

2025/09

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 9th April 2025, 7.30pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: N Jamieson, C Rabbette, L Schmitz, N Smithson & D Smithson.
District Cllr Hardman.

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: Two parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Smaylen & Cllr A. Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

A parishioner raised the idea of an electric vehicle charging point in the village, as a possible future project. It was noted that the village hall car park could potentially be a suitable location, should future funding become available via Wychavon District Council.
Action: Cllr Hardman to advise further/Cllr N Smithson to raise for consideration with the Village Hall Committee.

To address the issue of parked cars on pavements in the parish, a suggestion was raised about the possibility of purchasing additional land adjacent to the village hall in order to extend the car park area. It was confirmed that the village hall committee had been in previous communication with the land owner in this regard, however there had been no further progress to date. It was proposed that an approach from the Parish Council could be a next step for potential consideration.
Action: Cllr Jamieson to make an initial approach on behalf of the Parish Council.

Communications raised at previous meetings this year were revisited, regarding tree planting at the memorial garden. A discussion ensued regarding the governing body of the garden. Attention was drawn to archived documentation acquired by the Parish Council and the wording therein, which states that in 1934: *'three surviving trustees for the piece of land at the memorial garden that had been granted by Miss Parker to the parish of Little Comberton on the 13th March 1920, gratefully accepted the offer of the Parish Council of Little Comberton to take over the care of it.'*

Cllr Jamieson agreed to provide a copy of the transcript referenced to a parishioner present, however as there is no knowledge of further formal documentation available to suggest that any charity or trustees are now in existence, after 91 years of maintenance by the Parish Council, ownership of the land would be granted to the Parish Council.
Action: Clerk to seek advice/clarification from Worcestershire CALC.

The meeting was reminded of archived documentation which included reference to previous council decisions regarding the upkeep of the memorial garden, including reduction in flower beds and changes to planting. Minutes researched in 2016 also stated that a replacement tree at the garden was not considered necessary. Following whole Council discussions in January to March 2025 regarding future visibility at the crossroads and effects upon neighbouring properties, it was reiterated that Cllrs remain united in their decision not to have additional tree planting, reminding of its request for the tree's removal, ahead of this being actioned with the support of the Council. Additional suitable locations were offered at the village entrance as a reminder, where a position of prominence could be selected for the tree/ a pair of trees.

A question was raised regarding voting mechanisms at the annual parish meeting and it was agreed to clarify this for information with the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC.) *Action: Clerk.*

The parishioner also noted public liability insurance implications when the garden is being maintained, in addition to payments made towards grass-cutting at the garden and parish church.

An additional parishioner raised concerns regarding the condition of the white central road line throughout the village, especially at the corner junction of the crossroads, where it was noted that vehicles now cut the corner due to the faded lines. The new 'dragon's teeth' markings on exit from the village towards Elmley Castle, are also now flaking. As the Senior Highways Engineer from WCC would be visiting the village imminently, it was agreed to report these concerns for his attention.
Action: Clerk/WCC Highways.

A lack of recent road sweeping in the parish was raised, resulting in mud on kerbs, weed growth and blocked gullies. District Cllr Hardman requested that the parishioner contact Wychavon District Council's Head of Client Services to request attendance in the village and to copy Cllr Hardman into this request.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025

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

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates

- a. Lengthsman: The lengthsman has moved the VAS sign to the outer edge of the village and a data reading has been taken by Cllr Jamieson. Although there has been a marginal difference since the sign has been re-sited, speeding still remains a concern. The WCC Lengthsman Scheme is currently closed due to finalising the end of year accounts and awaiting the uploading of the 2025-26 Annual Agreement. Once the Agreement is available, Clerks will receive an email to download and sign, and the 2025-26 Financial Year will then be accessible. Timescales are currently unknown at this time, but it was agreed to consider the figures at the next meeting and agree the new hourly rate and hours worked.
Action: Clerk to provide updates as received from WCC. Trees: Previous discussions relating to unapproved tree planting at the memorial garden were revisited, as summarised under item 3, parishioner's comments. Following a request from a parishioner to plant and dedicate a tree in memorium of a family member, it was confirmed that the planting had now been completed with the assistance of the tree warden along Wick Road. Further attention was raised regarding the apple trees along Wick Road which are heavily infested with mistletoe. As the council had been advised that this would be costly to remove on a regular basis and the trees are now dying, it was agreed that these will require lifting in May/June of this year, to be replaced with a more suitable species which is less susceptible to mistletoe. It was agreed to discuss this process further at the May/June parish council meetings.
- b. 'Our Community Can' WDC initiative: The 'Dance Fit' session offered in Elmley Castle is proving a success & it has been confirmed that the previous intention to provide a craft session in Little Comberton is still under consideration.
- c. Airband: Confirmation has been received that Airband have visited the site along Wick Road and conducted a thorough check of both the poles and the network. At this stage, the decision is currently with the business on whether the poles and network will remain in place or be removed. Once a decision has been made, further updates will be provided & it was agreed to make contact again in one month's time. Cllrs extended thanks to Cllr Jamieson for continuing to pursue this issue on the village's behalf.
- d. Local Police Team: There are no further updates to report at present, however Cllr N Smithson agreed to make contact with the Safer Neighbourhood Team to establish if speed checks using a mobile speed camera could be arranged in the parish. A parishioner present confirmed that he would permit the SNT to use the lay-by owned by residents of the bungalows along Pershore Road in order to conduct these checks, as a central visible point.
Action: Cllr N Smithson.
- e. Village Hall Committee: A recent meeting confirmed that plans for the new mural have been finalised and are ready for completion. Cllrs agreed to extend thanks to the village hall committee for all their efforts in the recent upgrades at the hall.
Action: Cllrs/Clerk.

6. Future Village projects

It was agreed to set aside some time to formalise firm ideas for consideration at the next council meeting. These could include the creation of a village communal garden, a walkway for outlying properties on entrance to the village for safer access to the main village, and an EV charging point as raised under item 3.

7. District Councillor's reports

There is little to report at present given the forthcoming County Council elections which take place on 1st May 2025. The count will be completed the following day at 10am at Pershore Leisure Centre (and other locations around Worcestershire for the other Districts). There are 12 County divisions in Wychavon – there has been a boundary review since the last election in 2021 but the changes for these divisions are relatively minor. More information and an interactive map is available via the LGBCE's website: [Worcestershire | LGBCE](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lgbce)
Each division elects one candidate, each on a first-past-the-post system.

WCC Highways: Following thanks extended to the Senior Highways Liaison officer for the support provided by Highways throughout the road safety village speed initiative, it was agreed to also draw attention to the condition of the white road markings throughout the village, in particular the new dragon's teeth markings along Elmley Road on exit to the village and the condition of markings at the Wick Road crossroads junction. *Action: Clerk to report to WCC Highways.*

8. Planning

W/25/00495/GPDQ: Land and Buildings (OS 9640 4333) Little Comberton Pershore - Notification for Prior Approval for the proposed change of use of an Agricultural Buildings to 2 no. dwelling houses and associated operational development – comments were forwarded on behalf of the Parish Council on 1st April 2025.

W/25/00444/FUL: Bredon View Holiday Park Estate at, Great Comberton Golf Club, Pershore Road, Great Comberton
Description of Proposal: 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 were forwarded on behalf of the Parish Council to WDC on 8th April 2025.

Cllr's reiterated concerns submitted to Wychavon regarding the consequences of additional sewage created by such a large development, which had been shared with Severn Trent Water and neighbouring Parish Councils. Thanks were extended to Cllrs for their input in formalising the council's submission at short notice and it was confirmed that a request will be made to Wychavon for this application to be considered by their planning committee.

9. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st April 2025

Treasurer's Account:	£12,264.70
TOTAL	£12,264.70

b) Payments to report:

Lloyds: Maintenance account charge	£4.25
Salary: April 2025	£405.08
Expenses: April 2025	£12.00
Lengthsman: March 25 work-plan	£165.00

TOTAL	£586.33
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Income received:

WCC: Lengthsman scheme: Jan/Feb 25 work-plan	£330.00
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The Clerk confirmed that the Sports & Social Committee had planned a VE Day celebration in May, as raised at the March meeting, and had therefore requested funding received by the Parish Council at the end of the 2024/25 financial year from Wychavon. Cllrs agreed to approve this as an additional payment @ £250.00.

Bank reconciliation (iv) 31 March 2025: Documents were forwarded ahead of the meeting to Cllrs for checks & approval. Cllr D Smithson confirmed these had been verified and signed as accurate.

Proposed Cllr Jamieson seconded Cllr N Smithson, all in favour to approve the payments presented and final quarterly bank reconciliation for the 2024/25 financial year.

Review of 2024/25 budget: The Clerk had prepared an end of year budget review for the 2024/25 financial year – documents were made available in advance and were shared with the meeting.

10. Correspondence

Wychavon Sport Invitation to Wychavon Parish Games 2025 – Dates/entry forms will be sent out to the Parish organiser before Easter - closing date for entries this year is 31st May 2025.
Action: Clerk to contact parish organiser as incorrect correspondence received.

Worcs. Calc Details of new project from Worcs. Wildlife Trust circulated about a new project focused on the historic Forest of Feckenham, an area of significant biodiversity importance in the east of the county. The project aims to enhance habitat connectivity by offering extensive land management advice to improve woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, and hedgerows for key species. In addition to supporting towns within the project area (including Redditch, Bromsgrove, Evesham and Pershore), they would like to collaborate with Parish and Town Councils to develop biodiversity plans tailored to local needs.

The project will also involve a major land purchase to extend their Trench Wood nature reserve. Parish Councils near this site will soon be contacted directly with more details and the opportunity for an in-person discussion. They are currently applying for funding, with a submission deadline at the end of May. If successful, the project will begin in early 2026 which would then extend in 2027 for a further five years.

Wores
Calc

A notification has been received 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, via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-your-parish-council-to-a-govuk-domain>
Full details and a guide were made available for the meeting.
Action: Cllr D Smithson agreed to consider and explore the guidance for further recommendation at the next meeting.

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

It was agreed to revisit the council’s bonfire protocol, in addition to inappropriate parking on pavements, future village projects & diseased apple trees.

Action: Clerk to include on the May agenda.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7pm.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7pm, followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Signed Date.....

Chairman