

DRAFT

Little Comberton Parish Council

2025/20

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

Parish Councillors Present: N Jamieson, C Rabbette, L Schmitz, N Smithson, D Smithson, D Smaylen, County Cllr A. Hardman.

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from District Cllr B. Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

There were none received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 11th June 2025

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

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities

- a. Lengthsman: The lengthsman has been without his usual vehicle, however this should be resolved soon. The June work-plan has been received and brambles along Wick Road have been attended to. It was reminded that support would be helpful in maintaining the grass bank opposite the church. The Clerk had established the urban and rural cutting-schedule of village areas maintained by WCC and it was agreed to request if this area could be included for future attention.
Action: Clerk.
- b. Airband: Following advice received from a parish council legal consultant, it was agreed to make a further approach to Airband as a reminder that the company had previously agreed to remove the posts, that there is no operational reason for retaining them as nearby properties have made alternative arrangements and that the Company should therefore arrange for their removal without delay. In an effort to resolve the issue, the Council agreed that with support confirmed from a local contact, it is prepared to organise their removal by voluntary labour, should Airband provide their consent within 28 days.
Action: Cllr Jamieson.
- c. Footpaths/PRoW: PRoW # 501 behind Pool Close has been successfully reinstated by the farming tenant, though it was noted that there is currently little signage to guide walkers which the land owner is obliged to restore. It was therefore agreed to request that the footpaths warden liaise with the Senior PRoW officer at WCC for assistance in providing new way-markers.
Action: Clerk/Footpath warden.
- d. Trees: A nut tree has fallen along Wick Road on the right hand side. It was confirmed that the tree warden has sawn the fallen branches and pushed to one side, until a request can be made for its removal by a local contact. A quote has also been requested for the lifting, cutting and disposal of the heavily mistletoe infested apple trees along Wick Road. Following further examination of the trees, a quote and brief summary of how and when the trees should be lifted will be provided for further discussion and consideration.
Action: Cllr Jamieson.
- e. Data & Digital compliance: The Council remains concerned regarding the cost and time implications of the new assertion that all parish councils should move to a gov.uk email and website this financial year. The Clerk had shared these concerns with WDC & Worcs. Calc, who confirmed that central government provided funding for 1,000 Parishes (out of 8,500 in country) to change over to a gov.uk domain in 2024, therefore there is not going to be any further funding provided at this time. The requirement from the revised Practitioners Guide is a statutory instrument and as this is set for this year, there will not be a change to it. If Councils do not fulfil the assertions under the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), it is considered that the Council will obtain a "qualified audit" for the 2025/26 accounts. Calc confirmed they would help and support any short term funding from WDC, should the District Council be willing to provide this. The Clerk will share any further updates as received and Cllr D. Smithson was provided with information from another provider to establish if there are more cost effective options for the council's consideration in making this transition.
Action: Cllr D. Smithson – review at the November meeting.
- f. Parish projects: No alternative suggestions have been received following the recently circulated newsletter, therefore it was agreed to explore the original proposed option of the creation of two gateways and permissive footpath at Porter's Cottages, to enable safer pedestrian access to the main village. Cllr D. Smithson agreed to explore the proposal further and revisit initial plans previously discussed, with a possible link to the footpath to the golf course. This can then be submitted to the land owner and land agent for their consideration.
Cllr Hardman shared that a similar scheme had been successfully implemented in Eckington as a useful comparison. It was also suggested that a request be made to villagers to abstain from parking along Wick Road during harvesting, to work in partnership with the landowner in support of a one-way system when grain lorries are accessing the fields along Wick Road.

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Action: Cllr D. Smithson to revisit/revise initial plans to share with the Clerk, for future communication with the land owner for their consideration.

- g. Water quality testing: Two of the existing village volunteers had communicated their experiences of the water testing initiative, which to date, is taking place in Great Comberton parish. It was agreed that the scheme should be re-energised in an attempt to obtain an additional kit for testing and data comparison in Little Comberton Parish to check the water quality from the local treatment plant.

Action: Cllr Smaylen to liaise with the additional village volunteer who expressed an interest, Cllr A. Hardman to liaise with Cllr B. Hardman.

6. District and County Councillor's reports

District Cllr B. Hardman:

Cllr Hardman was in attendance at an Executive Board meeting at Wychavon District Council, therefore no report at present.

County Cllr A. Hardman:

The County Council is currently in a period of slumber, with the new administration unclear at present, pending a new direction and vision. There remains a £7.9 million budget overspend with the cancellation of proposed new schools in Malvern and Worcester due to insufficient funding.

It was confirmed that the opposite footway to the village hall has now been submitted for attention by WCC Highways, following recent positive resurfacing enhancements outside the hall towards the church. Thanks were extended to Cllr Hardman for pursuing this submission on the village's behalf.

Cllr Jamieson shared findings from the recent Parish & Town Council event at WDC on 23 June, regarding restructuring changes to Worcestershire proposed by government, with the creation of a new unitary system. A one or two unitary model will be set out in a publicly shared proposal in the Autumn ahead of submission to government, and it was noted that the event was informative and well presented.

7. Planning

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

A decision remains pending with no further updates at present.

8. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st July 2025

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|----------------------|-------------------|
| Treasurer's Account: | £14,314.66 |
| TOTAL | £14,314.66 |

b) Payments to report since the last meeting:

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| LCVH: May hall hire | £13.00 |
| Lloyds Bank: Monthly service charge | £4.25 |
| Salary: July 2025 | £425.62 |
| TOTAL | £442.87 |

Payments to approve online following the meeting:

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| LCVH: June hall hire | £13.00 |
| Lengthsman: June work-plan | £190.00 |
| Grass-cut (i) 24/25 Memorial Garden | £125.00 |
| Grass-cut (i) 24/25 PPC | £125.00 |
| Back-pay: salary scale increase 1 April-30 June 2025 | £61.62 |
| TOTAL | £514.62 |

Income to report:

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| WCC: Lengthsman April & May 2025 | £374.00 |
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Proposed Cllr Jamieson, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

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Documents had been shared in advance of the meeting for the first quarterly bank reconciliation at 30 June 2025, which were verified as accurate by Cllr D. Smithson and signed. The Clerk also provided a summary of the first quarterly budget review, noting slight increases seen in parish council insurance, Worcestershire CALC annual subscription and internal audit fee for the 2024/25 accounts. Following the Clerk's salary review in June 2025, the Clerk had considered the current salary budget and it was noted that this is adequate to accommodate the resultant increase, however any Nalc inflationary scale increase normally applied annually in the Autumn, would be considered from the existing contingency budget.

c) Proposal to approve new Nalc model financial regulations 2024 – a query regarding procurement under Financial Regulation 5.20 was clarified, and proposed Cllr Schmitz, seconded Cllr N. Smithson, all in favour to approve adoption of the model draft, to be published online by the Clerk.

d) Proposal to consider draft Council financial risk management policy – in line with advisory recommendations from the internal audit of the 2024/25 accounts, the Clerk had sourced an example model suitable for the council's size and activities for Cllr's consideration. It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting in September for formal approval, to allow sufficient time for all members to note and review its contents.

Action: Cllrs.

9. Correspondence

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|---------------------------------|---|
| WDC | Slides received from the Government reorganisation event held on Monday 23 rd June were circulated. Cllr Jamieson was in attendance and provided updates under item 6. |
| Worcs Regulatory Services | WRS dog warden team's request for council's support in promoting responsible dog ownership through publicity & education. A local microchipping event took place on Wednesday 9 th July, 11.30-1.30 at Abbey Park, Pershore, plus additional sessions across the county, as advertised on the village email. |

10. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda

- *Phone box book exchange refresh & provision* – Clerk to request an estimate from the lengthsman for preparing and refreshing the paintwork.
- *White lines* – It was agreed to pursue further with BB at WCC Highways, as the centre white line on the Pershore to Elmley Road has deteriorated to such an extent that traffic is now cutting the corner at the crossroads. *Action: Clerk/Cllr Hardman to raise again with WCC Highways.*
- *Bonfires* – Feedback received from the recently circulated newsletter requested reference in the council's bonfire protocol to fireworks and the risks posed to animals & thatched rooves. It was agreed to send out a reminder to this effect in the Autumn via the village email.
- *Local Policing Team* – Further contact has been made with Cllr N. Smithson, confirming that further police presence will be sited at the village car park, however given higher priorities elsewhere, this would be periodic. It was noted that support would be requested from the safer neighbourhood team regarding traffic management at future street markets, as it was confirmed that the cycle event which coincided with this year's market would be held on the same date next year.
Action: Cllr Rabbette/Cllr N. Smithson.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th September 2025 at 7.30 pm

Cllr Schmitz offered her apologies as she would be on holiday.

12. Proposal to pass a resolution to exclude the public and press for consideration of the following item:

Internal review of the Parish Council's Freedom of Information response to a request received on 28th May 2025.

It was proposed to complete a review with a fresh look at the issue, for the Clerk to formulate a response on behalf of the authority.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman