

Little Comberton Parish Council

2025/23

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 10th September 2025, 7.30pm Village Hall

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

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Schmitz and County Cllr A. Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

No comments were received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 9th July 2025

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

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities - brief updates:

a. *Lengthsman:* Local footways have been cleared and the August timesheet is pending. The Clerk has requested a quote for sanding and repainting the telephone box as this requires tidying. *Action: Clerk to pursue.*

b. *Highways:* White lines – a four week works order was raised on 24th July for the white lining to be retraced through the village. As this is not yet completed, the Clerk agreed to inform WCC Highways for their attention.

Speeding – Following concerns raised by a parishioner regarding excessive speeds of vehicles along Pershore Road, contact had been made with the local policing team to relay these concerns and the parish council's ongoing commitment to address speeding in the village. It was confirmed that this is a common issue expressed by the majority of villages in the district, however Little Comberton is considered a low priority by comparison. It was, however, advised for contact to be made with the Road Safety Team to request police presence in the lay-bye & village hall car park where resources allow.

Action: Cllr N. Smithson.

A Cllr raised serious concerns regarding the excessive speed of a vehicle witnessed driving along Pershore near the junction of the Great Comberton turning towards a property in the village. A discussion ensued and the following actions were agreed:

(i) Cllr Jamieson to draft and circulate a standard letter to the resident as a reminder of the ongoing issue and raise further awareness of the dangers of excessive speeds, especially in this rural location.

(ii) Explore rotating the VAS sign inside the village, in addition to the two current outer locations.

(iii) Pursue the remarking of the white lines near the bend on Pershore Road, with WCC Highways.

Actions: Cllr Jamieson/Clerk.

c. *Footpaths/PRoW:* Prior to the meeting, Cllr D Smithson had prepared and circulated a presentation to members, outlining proposals for the consideration of a permissive access route, linking Porter's Cottages to the main village. The presentation was shared with the meeting, outlining the current situation, risks to public safety and possible options for a solution. It was agreed to share these options and consult with local residents to gauge opinion, engage with the local landowner/farming tenant and discuss the proposal with WCC Highways to establish any potential hazards. Cllr Hardman also recommended Cllrs explore the footway created by the river in Eckington, as a suitable example for comparison.

Action: Cllr D Smithson. Revisit at the October meeting.

PRoW # 501: Following the recent harvesting in the field, the footpath is now a muddy track. To ensure that pedestrians follow the correct route, it was suggested that a moveable way-marker may be a solution to resolving the issue, which could be lifted prior to machinery accessing the field. As this would require agreement with the Public Rights of Way team at WCC, Cllr Jamieson agreed to liaise with the footpath warden in the first instance.

Action: Cllr Jamieson/Footpath warden.

d. *Bonfires:* No issues had been observed, with any recent fires lit considerably. Continue to monitor.

e. *Data & Digital Compliance:* Cllr D Smithson has continued to explore alternative options and providers, however costs remain a concern. The Clerk had received and circulated confirmation from WCC that the My Parish online portal would be withdrawn on 1st September 2026, no longer allowing Clerks to publish statutory information on the site. The Clerk had consulted Worcestershire Calc for any further guidance and would forward as received. It was agreed to take no further action at present and continue to monitor.

Action: Clerk to forward any further updates/advice as received.

f. *Airband:* Following the Council's recent request for permission to initiate the removal of the redundant telegraph poles along Wick Road, Airband confirmed they would no longer engage in communication with the Parish Council. Further potential options were discussed and it was agreed to pursue the ongoing issue with MP Harriet Baldwin & a legal advisor to parish councils, in order to establish the legalities regarding redundant utilities.

Actions: Cllr Jamieson to draft a letter to forward to Cllrs, ahead of circulating to the village/Clerk to raise with legal contact.

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g. *Water testing*: A Cllr had spoken with a local potential volunteer, however concerns were raised regarding the need for specific, local data as opposed to national data. It was confirmed however that individual data is possible to be obtained as part of the process. Cllr Smaylen agreed to become a volunteer tester for Little Comberton and would liaise with a volunteer in Great Comberton in the first instance.

Action: Cllr Smaylen/Clerk.

h. *Trees: Tree warden* - the tree warden has volunteered to attend a forthcoming Three Counties Tree Warden Forum event run by Worcestershire County Council. Cllrs agreed to consider the £10 fee under item 8, finance.

Mistletoe - A quote had been obtained from a local tree surgeon recommending the removal of four trees along Wick Road, given their heavy mistletoe infestation, as it was confirmed this would return unless the trees are removed and replaced with another species. It was agreed that Cllr Jamieson would source one other quote for consideration at the next meeting, ahead of agreement by the parish council.

Action: Cllr Jamieson/Clerk.

Memorial Garden tree planting - Following a Freedom of Information request received on 28th May 2025 and subsequent response from the Parish Council, an internal review of the council had been requested as part of this process. A review was conducted at the close of the last parish council meeting, taking a fresh look at the issue. It was concluded that no further action was necessary and all reasonable steps had been considered following advice throughout the process. The Clerk had prepared and forwarded an agreed response on behalf of the authority to the requester.

6. District and County Councillor's reports:

District Council:

Council reorganisation: A decision remains pending regarding a one or two unitary reorganisation for Worcestershire, to be submitted to government in November with a potential decision at Easter time. It remains unclear about the process of 'bedding in' to a new system, however Surrey will be an example authority to monitor for reference.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy: Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a new type of spatial strategy for nature conservation action, introduced by the Environment Act 2021, setting out what the priority habitats, species and environmental issues are. The strategy is accompanied by a Local Habitat Map, which shows existing areas of particular importance for biodiversity and where the best gains for nature can be achieved if the suggested potential measures for nature recovery are delivered. The draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy and draft Local Habitat Map will be taken through a public consultation in 2025. Residents are encouraged to have their say on nature recovery via the following link:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lnrs>

Cllrs were encouraged to look at the draft strategy and map in relation to their local area.

Action: Cllrs.

County Council:

County Cllr Hardman circulated a report ahead of the meeting, which was shared with members for their attention and information.

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. Comments of objection to the revised plans received were forwarded to WDC planning on 21st August 2025.

Cllr Hardman confirmed that there remains insufficient information in the current plans to consider the revised application further, and concerns also remain regarding visibility of the site from Bredon Hill. Ahead of any decision as to whether the application will be considered at planning committee, further detail and paperwork has been requested for submission and it was advised to take regular photographs of key areas to be dated and logged.

Subsequent to the circulation of the agenda, a request had been received from a planning consultant to discuss an upcoming planning application with the Parish Council for a small scale residential development within the parish. Cllrs agreed to set up a meeting in the near future to establish and obtain further details.

Action: Clerk to check village hall & consultant's availability and confirm with Cllrs.

8. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st September 2025

Treasurer's Account:	£12,971.90
TOTAL	£12,971.90

b) Payments to report since the July 2025 meeting:

Lloyds monthly maintenance charge: July 2025	£4.25
Memorial Garden: Grass-cutting	£125.00
PCC: Grass-cutting	£125.00
LCVHC: June hall hire	£13.00

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Lengthsman: June work-plan	£190.00
Lengthsman: July work-plan	£190.00
Defibrillator pads: Clerk's expenses	£134.40
Lloyds monthly maintenance charge: August 2025	£4.25
Clerk's salary: August 2025	£425.62
Clerk's expenses: August 2025	£12.00
Clerk's salary: September 2025	£425.62
Clerk's expenses: September 2025	£12.00
TOTAL	£1,661.14

Payments to approve following September 2025 meeting:

LCVHC: July hall hire	£13.00
Lengthsman: August work-plan	£190.00
Tree warden: Warden Forum event fee	£10.00

Income received:

WCC: lengthsman June & July work-plans	£380.00
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Proposed Cllr Jamieson, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

Further to discussion at the last meeting, Cllr Smithson presented copies of the latest accounts for the village hall committee following their meeting on 2nd September. Cllr's were requested to consider a potential contribution towards further decoration costs at the hall. It was agreed to consider existing funds of all village organisations and possible fund raising opportunities in the first instance, ahead of formal discussion and consideration at the next meeting.

Actions: Cllr Rabbette to obtain latest accounts for the Sports & Social Committee, Clerk to include as an agenda item at the next meeting.

c) Proposal to consider & approve 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 at the last meeting, the contents of which were subsequently checked. It was proposed to formally approve the document and publish online with other key documentation.

Action: Clerk.

d) Review of Budget: September 2025: The Clerk prepared a summary of the 2025/26 budget to date, outlining the income and expenditure at this half way stage in the financial year, which was circulated ahead of the meeting. Details were summarised for discussion and noted, with the next review scheduled for December 2025. *Action: Clerk/Cllrs continue to monitor.*

e) Notification of Nalc annual salary award 2025/26: details had been received for the annual hourly rate pay-scales awarded to local government employees, recommending Council's note the increase. Details were circulated ahead of the meeting for Cllr's information.

Action: Clerk to amend monthly salary standing order.

9. Correspondence

WCC: Notice has been given to parish councils that the process of carrying out a new assessment and review of Public Worcestershire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan is beginning, to better understand the needs of Rights of Worcestershire's residents. The ROWIP aims to address the priorities of the area in terms of health and Way wellbeing, supporting people living with disabilities and mental health issues, regeneration, growth, transport, climate change, tourism and other priorities. Request for views from parish councils to help develop the priorities and actions of the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will be produced in 2026. One official response per council is requested, by completing the questionnaire at <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/RoWIPengage> closing at midnight on 26th October 2025.

Action: Cllr Rabbette agreed to explore further.

WDC Details had been received regarding funding for neighbourhood planning within Wychavon of up to £10,000 available to all parish and town councils to help cover the cost of preparing a new neighbourhood plan, or reviewing an adopted neighbourhood plan. To apply for the grant, parish and town councils need to submit an expression of interest form and support the application with a project plan Link to the expression of interest form: [Neighbourhood Planning Funding: Expression of Interest Form](#).

Following a detailed discussion, it was considered that for a village of this size and category and given the cost implications and considerable volunteer time involved, this is not a viable option to pursue at present. It was noted that the existing Village Design Statement preserves the characteristic qualities of the village, consistently used to feed into the planning process, however this carries much less weight than a Neighbourhood Plan in planning terms.

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

Cllrs revisited a suggestion raised previously by a parishioner at the April 2025 meeting of a potential electric vehicle charging point at the village hall car park, as also raised in the latest edition of the parish newsletter. Following further discussion, as the vast majority of homes in the village have driveways that could be suitable for this purpose, it was agreed not to pursue further at this time, however the council would keep aware of any potential future funding that may become available from Wychavon District Council.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th October 2025 at 7.30 pm

Cllrs D & N Smithson offered their apologies as they would be away on holiday.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman