

Rous Lench Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 9 June 2025

at 7 p.m. at Rous Lench Village Hall

Present	Cllrs D Browne (Chair), S Davis, S Harrison, K Hitchen, L Newton In attendance: Michelle Marriner (Clerk) Public: 3 Meeting opened at 7 p.m.
Election of Chairman	Cllr Browne happy to stay on as Chair for 2025/26. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Newton
Election of Vice-Chairman	Cllr Newton happy to remain as Vice-Chairman for 2025/26. Proposed by Cllr Harrison and seconded by Cllr Davis
Election of Deputy Vice-Chairman	Cllr Harrison happy to remain as Deputy Vice-Chairman for 2025/26. Proposed by Cllr Browne and seconded by Cllr Bradley
Apologies	District Councillor Hurdman – accepted. Cllr Hughes has resigned and his resignation has been accepted.
Annual Report from Chairman	Cllr Browne provided an annual report to the parish council. A copy of that report is annexed to these minutes.
Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest	None
Welcome to new Clerk	Michelle Marriner was welcomed as the new clerk for the parish council and officially appointed. Proposed by Cllr Browne and seconded by Cllr Harrison
Open Session	County Councillor's Report: No report was provided.
	District Councillor's Report: Cllr Hurdman provided a report which was read out by Cllr Browne in Cllr Hurdman's absence. A copy of the report is annexed to these minutes.
	Police Report: PC Gayle provided a report which was read by out Cllr Browne. A copy of the report is annexed to these minutes.
	Village Hall Committee Report: Fran Herdman provided a report which was read out by Cllr Browne. A copy of that report is annexed to these minutes.
	Public Paths Warden Report: Oral report provided. Couple of issues of obstruction to public footpaths noted and raised. All dealt with. No issues to report
	Parochial Church Council Report: No report provided.
	Public Participation: 3 members of the public in attendance. Speeding – Two members of the parish raised concerns about the speed of vehicles into the village. They feel it has gotten so bad they don't feel they can walk along the road to visit friends and fear going out of the gate from their house. Queried if a speed camera could be installed as motorists are ignoring everything that is put up, including the VAS. Cllrs felt it was unlikely they will put a fixed camera there but feel the portable camera should be out more often. Speed camera sign doesn't seem to bring much difference. VAS system is monitoring it and the parish council are sending that

	<p>information to the police. Query whether double cables could be placed on the road, to act as a deterrent as well as gathering information. Action: Cllrs confirmed they will continue to keep raising it and will see if Cllr Hurdman can assist at County level or via Barry Thomas at Highways or Police and Crime Commissioner, John Campion. Will invite him to a meeting. Resolved that Cllr Harrison will make enquiries and the parish council will formulate a plan at the next meeting.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Watch – Terry Bennett provided an update. All parishes have been registered and are waiting approval. Once approved will get some names and members on the site so we can be visible. Need 5 members for site to be visible. TB is the co-ordinator, so that is at least one on it. Would like to press forward with it for members of the council to join. Would like the parish council to use the promotional material to promote through the village. Adding written media to website. Our News is a monthly alert – neighbourhood news. Circulation amongst the community.</p> <p>Car Burglaries - Part of the police report we've received confirms issues with car key burglaries in the Lenches. Put information on notice boards and add to website.</p> <p>Devolution – TB confirmed two meetings have taken place where devolution has been discussed. Asking for feedback and comments on whether there should be one unitary or splitting into two. Satinder Bell is the new county councillor (Reform). TB will share contact details.</p> <p>BBQ – Members of the public passed on their thanks to those who organised the BBQ.</p>
Consider and adopt minutes	The minutes of the last parish council meeting on 24.03.2025 were considered and adopted and signed by Cllr Browne
Matters Arising	Mobile mast – operating company didn't check on one of the two sites. On the land of the occupier on the top of the hill. Not heard anything further. Might be worth chasing. Action point to chase up mobile phone mast operator.
Planning Issues	None
Community Gardens and Allotments	Cllr Newton reported they had a very successful BBQ on 10.5.25, tied to VE day celebrations. It was a beautiful sunny day and 120/150 people attended. Raised around £500. Cakes donated. The Shed worked beautifully, with a makeshift bar. Liz Knight – took photographs of the celebration 30 years ago.
Rous Lench and Radford Parish	<p>Asset Management Checks: Defibrillator from Radford – Cllr Davis confirmed there wasn't a need to use it. Locked it up but doesn't know if they made sure it was ok or if we need to. Wasn't opened. Cllr Browne confirmed it should be ok. The Defibrillator on the wall needs new pads etc. Someone from the village made a commitment to deal with that. Cllr Browne will follow that up.</p>
	<p>Other Road Safety Issues Dealt with in open session</p>
	<p>Vehicle Activated Signs Lengthsman to check batteries on both. Battery outside Wheelbarrow dead. Solar panel is facing north east. Honeysuckle Cottage Rous Lench – not working.</p>
	<p>Trees on the Village Green: Substantial tumbling of branches on the green. A week later smaller one came down on the other tree. Recommendation made for independent tree survey on the village. Cllr Bradley asked for a quote previously (£570 incl VAT last April). Will ask for the quote to be updated as some time has passed.</p>

	Clerk to enquire with Worcs CALC about obligations on the parish and also what the policy of insurance says.
Finance	<p>Outstanding Financial Issues and Payments</p> <p>In the absence of a clerk Cllr Harrison has been managing payments. Sent authorisation to Cllr Browne but some haven't gone out of account (Zurich and Lengthsman), as believed they weren't authorised in time. Cllr Harrison will put the payments through again and continue to do so until the Clerk has access to the bank account. Cllr Harrison will liaise with Barclays on this point.</p>
Correspondence	None discussed
Councillor Reports and Items for Future Agenda	<p>Spoke to Chris Seaborn to float whether the Lenches had any prospect of becoming an area of outstanding beauty or conservation area. Cllr Bradley doesn't think we will meet the criteria. We do have a conservation area. Something we could be championing.</p> <p>Pub nights run Oct – April, every Friday. Start at 630 p.m has been suggested</p> <p>Sat 28 June 2025– pig roast event</p> <p>Cllr Newton raised the possibility of joining forces as much as we can with other organisations in the village. Opportunity to share some resources. Something that allows us to operate more efficiently as a village with fewer volunteers. Not relying on lots of time from same volunteers. Clerk to add to agenda for next meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Newton would like the parish council to start thinking about how as a parish council we can streamline and do things quicker.</p> <p>Cllrs queried whether we should we do a recruitment campaign to recruit 1-2 more councillors. Possible satellite member?</p>
Meeting Dates	<p>The following future meeting dates were agreed:</p> <p>26 June 2025 - 7pm Extraordinary meeting to deal with end of year financial matters only.</p> <p>29 July 2025 – 7pm</p> <p>23 September 2025 – 7pm</p> <p>25 November 2025 – 7pm</p> <p>20 January 2026 – 7pm</p> <p>24 March 2024 – 7pm</p>

MINUTE REFERENCE 03/25

Signed

Chairman – Councillor Browne



Rous Lench Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2025

For the whole of last year the Parish Council (PC) had a "1x below" complement of councillors with representatives from both Rous Lench & Radford.

Kerry Williamson was Parish Clerk for most of the past 12 months. We reluctantly accepted her resignation for personal reasons in March. However we have been fortunate in securing the services of Michelle Marriner who joined us very recently and is very warmly welcomed. This is the second appointment as a Parish Clerk for Michelle who took on a similar role at Upton Warren earlier in the year. She has undergone some training and familiarisation with the world of public administration and we will continue to support her ongoing training needs.

I have also (reluctantly) accepted the resignation of Glyn Hughes from the Council who has decided to step down after 14 years' service. On behalf of the communities, I would wish to thank Glyn very much indeed for his work and support and wish him all the very best for the future.

Parish Assets: We have twice this year had to sanction emergency work as a result of tree damage on the Village Green and will be considering a need for a further tree survey. We have work outstanding on updating/testing the defibrillator on the Village Hall Wall but have also purchased another defibrillator for Radford which is situated at the Wheelbarrow Castle pub.

In addition, we need to purchase a new key for the Parish Council noticeboards and also the possibility of a new mower for the village green (shared with the PCC/Churchyard).

Community projects: We are delighted to continue our support for the Community Garden project in Rous Lench and offer our thanks and appreciation to its founder (and our colleague) Lura Bradley for all her hard work. There have been issues of potential disturbance raised by some parishioners but hopefully these have been dealt with to the reasonable satisfaction of all involved.

Highways: The new speed sign purchased appears to be working well but the older one requires attention as it is not functioning properly. Speed data captured shows some worrying speed merchants and an average speed around/slightly above the maximum limit. Additional 30mph road markings have been provided in Rous Lench.

Planning: The usual mix of refusals and approvals of small projects took place during the year. In the majority of cases the Parish Council expressed a view, either for or against. Two applications of note were for the additional accommodation at the site of the Caravan on the Radford Road, which was the subject of a large volume of local objections (approved). Also an application for 4 houses on the Radford Landfill Site (withdrawn and new application submitted).

Council Finances: The PC continues to exercise a measure of control over expenditure during the year and the finances are looking healthy. This has allowed us to keep the annual precept increase down below 5%.

"Devolution": The Chairman attended a meeting to learn about HM Government's plans for local government re-organisation. As things stand, Wychavon will cease to exist from April

2027, so the only bodies below County level will be Town and Parish Councils. For some towns and parishes this will have a significant impact for us the implications will be less dramatic. Nevertheless it is likely that some functions currently carried out by Wychavon will be devolved to RLPC. The PC will keep all parishioners informed as plans emerge.



David Browne

Chair, Rous Lench Parish Council

9 June 2025

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I, David Browne having been duly elected to the office of Chairman of Rous Lench Parish Council DECLARE that I take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability. I undertake to observe the Code of Conduct which applies to me as Councillor of this authority.

Signed

Dated

VH.

Rous Lench and Radford Village Hall report 2024-25

Works on the stage floor were completed in the Spring of 2024. New carpet tiles have been laid and the stage doors have been rehung. The hall looks back to normal again and is now in full use. Thanks go to the parish council for awarding us a grant of £420 towards the cost of rehung the stage doors.

Other maintenance works have been carried out, namely some roof repairs and tidying up the back yard by cutting down lots of brambles. Many thanks to the committee members and also residents who helped with the tidying and cleaning of the hall and outside areas last September and this Spring.

The main success of the year has been the pub nights which have been well attended. Not only have they been a success in terms of getting people together they have also raised an amazing £1700 profit from bar sales which has helped the village hall funds enormously.

There haven't been many events at the hall this year although the church has held harvest and Easter suppers which have been well supported. Another great evening was organised by Frances Jones in aid of Brain Tumour Research. Liz Knight's quiz was as tricky and fun as ever and it was nice to see the hall so full.

The pig roast was a fantastic event again and raised over £2000 towards village hall funds. Thanks to everyone involved in making it happen.

The hall continues to be at the heart of the community. It is in a reasonable financial position and manages to cover its costs although the work on the stage floor cost around £25000 so funds are somewhat depleted.

Fran Herdman (Chair Rous lench and Radford village hall committee)

Dear Lenches Residents

We are investigating reported car key burglaries in the Lenches and we want to reassure residents we are doing everything we can to trace those responsible.

If you've seen anything suspicious or have information that might help with enquires, please call 101.

You can also report a crime here:

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The information we receive from the public is essential in bringing criminals to justice.

Important advice and information:

Car key burglary is when an offender breaks into a home with the specific aim of stealing car keys and the vehicle from the property.

Perpetrators often target specific vehicles, based on demand and value. If a criminal is targeting a certain vehicle, they will also be targeting the owner, looking for easy ways to exploit their security and get to their keys.

If you think you are being followed or see any suspicious vehicles lurking, take the registration number and report it to us.

Of note, within a most recent incident on the 18/05/2025 a BMW 3-Series (possibly gold in colour) with two men in the front was seen driving past slowly looking at dwellings.

Further crime prevention methods to deter car key burglars:

- Keep your keys somewhere safe and out of sight
- If you can, lock your car in a garage
- Fit a high-quality alarm to your vehicle
- Consider additional security systems such as immobilisers and visible security locks
- Always take your keys with you when leaving your vehicle unattended
- Keep your keys safe and concealed in public places
- Make sure doors, windows, the boot and sunroof are locked and secure before leaving your car
- If there are more than one vehicle at your property, park the lesser valued vehicle behind the more expensive one on the driveway
- Also make sure you keep your house doors and windows locked
- Install a high-quality burglar alarm
- Install an exterior security light
- One increasingly popular solution is the **Ghost Immobiliser**. A Ghost Immobiliser is an aftermarket security device professionally installed in your car. Unlike traditional alarms or trackers, it prevents the engine from starting unless a unique, pre-set code sequence is entered using the vehicle's own buttons (such as on the steering wheel or dashboard). This means that even if a thief manages to gain access to your keys or signal, they won't be able to drive off with your car. Because the system is hidden and doesn't rely on key fobs or signals, it offers an extra layer of protection that is very difficult for criminals to detect or bypass. We recommend it as a proactive measure, especially for high-value or frequently targeted vehicles.

Thank you for your help. It is only by the police and the public working together that we can prevent and detect crime.

Kind regards,

PC Gayle 22969

Hi David,

Digital Fundraising for Town/Parish Councils and Village Halls

The first three months of this year has seen Wychavon's Communities Team partner with the Directory of Social Change to provide a series of training sessions for town/parish councils and village halls around digital fundraising.

Each session built on the previous one to explore approaches to improving local engagement and fundraising opportunities. Topics have included:

- Identifying and Putting Your Resources to Work
- Understanding Your Community
- Communicating Effectively with Your Community for Effective Fundraising

Fundraising has become increasingly challenging within the voluntary sector and how to grapple with these challenges to support local projects is of vital importance. The Communities Team continue to offer support, advice and guidance to make sure communities are able to keep their spaces accessible and sustainable.

Community Youth Projects

As part of our new promise to develop five new community youth projects in rural areas some new detached work is taking place. YMCA Worcestershire will be out and about in rural areas across the district over the next year to check in with young people and find out what is going on for them in their local area. Detached workers will be targeting identified areas for around six weeks to engage with young people and encourage local communities to start a youth project. Volunteers can also access the training and support needed to help them get a new youth project off the ground. For more information about this exciting community resource please contact robin.mace@wychavon.gov.uk

Planning & SWDPR

A backlog of planning applications has started to form due to the planning application fee increase on 1 April which resulted in a large increase of planning applications prior to the fee increase. The fee increase, combined with Easter annual leave, Bank Holiday and other unavoidable absences have had an impact but the team continue to work extremely hard to process as many planning applications as possible, alongside completing all other duties.

The final week of the Public Examination commenced on the 29 April to discuss the remaining strategic policies and the development management policies within Matter 15 (Policies for Climate Change, Resource Management and Environmental Quality) and Matter 16 (Policies for Transport, Green Infrastructure, Historic Environment, Tourism, Leisure and Community Facilities). Both of these matters were concluded on the first day, and the Hearings were closed for now. The Planning Inspectors raised the prospect of a further hearing session in the week commencing 8th September to consider further work on ecology (curlew surveys) and transportation, which is currently underway regarding the strategic allocation at Mitton.

All the latest news, evidence and representations can be viewed on the examination webpage.

<https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/swdpreview>

Rural Matters Advisory Panel

The Rural Matters Advisory Panel received a presentation from Robert Stepniewski, Portfolio Lead in the Broadband and Connectivity Team and Ste Ashton, Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity Manager, Worcestershire Council on broadband speed and mobile reception in the rural areas and some of the innovative projects they have been involved in.

Wychavon businesses coaching

The latest round of fully funded business coaching through the Enterprising Worcestershire programme is now open for registration.

Business owners will gain access to up to 10 hours of one-to-one coaching with an experienced Business Coach, designed to help you develop a focused, actionable growth strategy aligned with your business, professional, and personal goals.

- Start with a 6-hour strategy day to shape your roadmap for long-term success
- Follow up with up to 4 hours of tailored support to stay on track and build momentum

Whether the business is scaling up or looking for a change in direction, this expert support will help you unlock business's full potential.

To learn more on this visit <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/> or visit the website of our specialist provider, Real World Consultancy at EWBCP — RWC

Business Worcestershire Conference

The Business Worcestershire Conference is back this summer! Join them at Sixways Stadium, Worcester, on Wednesday 11 June 2025 for a day packed with insights on growth, skills, and grant support.

This year's conference will feature an expert panel and offer valuable information on how to access our new business support programmes. You'll also learn the key elements of a strong grant application.

You can book here: <https://businesseventsworcestershire.com/events-search/details/?id=316>

Best Regards

Ben Hurdman