

2025/10

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Great Comberton Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Monday 1st September 2025, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: K Collingwood (Chair), S Hamilton, (Vice-Chair) A Lavelle, G Hodgson, D Wilks & M Lolley.
District Cllr B. Hardman

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies: Received from Cllr Hickey & County Cllr Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations to report.

3. Parishioner's Comments: No comments were received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12th May 2025

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

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities - brief updates:

a. Lengthsman: The new parish lengthsman was in attendance to make introductions with the council. Thanks were extended to Cllr Collingwood & Hamilton for their initial meeting to discuss the role and points arising from the August work-plan were shared. A request to consider the purchase of salt boxes was noted, given that there is not one available within the village. Following a discussion, as these are a costly expenditure item and there have been few incidents reported, it was agreed that this was not a priority at present, given that the village is gritted regularly and efficiently as a main bus and diversion route.

It was noted that fence painting is within the lengthsman's remit and payable from the WCC budget, therefore a suggestion was raised to paint the fence around the culvert at the parish boundary at Mary Brook in order to preserve the metal. It was agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to include on October agenda for discussion.

A recommendation was shared for both homeowners & landowners to reduce the height of hedges in order to allow more light on the carriageways. Footways have been tidied and maintained during the Summer and it was confirmed that weeds around kerbing are the responsibility of the road sweeping team at WDC. Drains and grips have also been maintained and the blocked gully reported near Hands Orchard is now running clear.

A Cllr noted that the newly resurfaced footways have already shown signs of deterioration, notably towards the junction of Church Street and the main road. Although there have been unusually high Summer temperatures, cracks and weeds were present in the first months of the works, suggesting no barrier was used or insufficient tarmac laid. *Action: It was agreed to report to Cllr Hardman for Highway's attention.*

b. Water testing: Testing of the Avon continues on a weekly basis, with nitrate and phosphate levels remaining high, despite the dry weather. It was noted that a volunteer from Little Comberton works with the group in Great Comberton Parish at present and another group test the water quality of Mary Brook. It was agreed to consider advertising the work of the Great Comberton volunteers in a future parish magazine article, in order to raise local awareness. *Action: Cllr Lavelle & Cllr Hodgson.*

c. Brailles Orchard: The recent hot spell has resulted in little grass growth, however it was noted that the hedge requires topping. New fencing has successfully been reinstated and it was noted that one patch in the far corner of the orchard could be fenced in future for additional security. The gate is currently closed to deter unwanted access and it was agreed that this should be locked securely and a plate welded over the hinges for additional security. Thanks were extended to Cllr Lolley for his work in initiating improvement works to the fence and costings of a lock and additional expenses incurred would be presented at the next meeting for approval.

Action: Cllr Lolley/Clerk to include on October agenda.

d. Sewage: Unwanted odours continue to occur around key areas of the village on a regular basis, especially at Quay Lane and the war memorial. Objections were emphasised in the recent submission to WDC planning regarding additional sewage implications from the Bredon View application currently pending. It was agreed that although there has been little rainwater during the Summer months to flush the system, odours have also been noted during periods of heavy rainfall. A discussion ensued and it was suggested that a lead Cllr might take responsibility for a co-ordinated response to Severn Trent Water, establishing a main point of contact and informing the village of the importance of reporting and informing the Council for continuity. It was suggested that Cllr Wilks could start the process as a Cllr close to the source of the problem, and delegate to another Cllr where necessary.

6. District and County Councillor's reports:

County Cllr Hardman: As Cllr Hardman had offered his apologies due to attendance at a meeting at County Hall, a report was forwarded for Cllr's information which was circulated ahead of the meeting.

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District Cllr Hardman:

Planning: Bredon View Holiday Park: The revised site layout is currently too open from Bredon Hill, and further information and reports have been requested regarding archaeology and ecology issues raised. As the current documentation is considered insufficient to be taken to planning committee at this stage, further requests for information have been made and it was advised to take regular photographs of key areas to be dated and logged.

Banners: Comments were raised by Cllrs regarding the introduction of large banners towards the entrance to Bredon View Holiday Park, which have become intrusive. It was agreed to clarify the permissions regarding banners and if necessary, a Cllr would speak informally to raise the council's concern.

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. Cllr Hardman confirmed she is in the process of considering District Council owned land in her Ward, to establish the potential for small areas to be returned to parishes, ahead of any reorganisation.

7. WCC: My Parish Web Portal: It has been confirmed that Worcestershire County Council will withdraw provision of the My Parish Web portal as of September 2026, as the platform is built on outdated technology which does not meet current web content accessibility guidelines which are mandatory for public sector websites. As all councils must have a website that complies with accessibility regulations, it is advised that councils move to a .gov.uk domain name and have a generic email account for transparency, security and professionalism. As there is no funding available for this costly transition, Cllrs agreed that careful research needs to be undertaken and further information obtained from Worcestershire CALC before a considered response, as there are budget implications for next financial year. It was also agreed to liaise with neighbouring Little Comberton Parish Council, as a dual approach may be a positive consideration and solution.

Action: Clerk to provide updates as received for Cllr's information.

8. Planning:

W/25/00444/FUL: Bredon View Holiday Park Estate at, Great Comberton Golf Club Comments of objection to the revised plans received were submitted to the District Council on 13th August 2025.

W/25/00577/LB Associated Ref: W/25/00576/HP: Shelton Farm, Lower End

Demolition of minor outbuilding and new replacement conservatory – application approved.

W/24/02361/FUL: The Rickyard, Russell Street: Subsequent to the meeting, notification was received that the Planning Inspectorate had allowed the appeal following Wychavon District Council's refusal of this application, with planning permission granted for the conversion of an existing garage to 1no. dwelling.

9. Finance

a) Current Balances

Community Account:	£1,212.74
Business Account:	£6,826.22
TOTAL	£8,038.96

b) Payments to report:

Salary: June 2025	£337.57
Expenses: June – August 2025	£36.00
Brailles fencing	£394.80
Lengthsman: June 2025	£160.00
Salary: July 2025	£337.57
Lengthsman: July 2025	£160.00
Brailles rent (i)	£112.50
Salary: August 2025	£337.57

TOTAL £1,876.01

The Clerk reported an additional payment for printing expenses incurred @ £18.89.

Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Lavelle, all in favour to approve all payments presented.

Income to report:

Barclays: Interest	£26.07
WCC: lengthsman June/July 2025	£320.00

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c) Proposal to approve new Nalc model financial regulations 2024: Following circulation of the new Nalc model and checks made by the Clerk, Cllrs agreed to adopt the new version. It was reminded that bold text indicates legal requirements that the council cannot change, with the remaining text to be adapted to the size and needs of the council at this time.

Action: Clerk to publish final draft.

d) Proposal to consider Council Financial Risk Management policy: It had been advised as part of the internal audit process for the 2024/25 accounts that a Risk Management Policy be in place, to enable the parish council to assess the financial risks it faces and to satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them. Following research of example models, the Clerk had produced and circulated a draft model for consideration, tailored to meet the size and activities of the parish council. Cllrs agreed to approve the model, to be reviewed annually and shared with the internal auditor in April 2026.

Action: Clerk.

e) Notice of new NALC pay-scales for 2025/26 & Clerk's salary review: Latest pay scales for 2025/26 have been approved by the National Association of Local Councils, with a recommendation that councils note the new increase in hourly pay for employees, back-dated to April 2025. The Clerk circulated all guidance and calculations to Cllrs ahead of the meeting, with back-pay calculated @ £64.98. A review of the Clerk's current salary scale had been requested by the Chairman, which has remained the same since commencing the role in 2021. Following a discussion, an increase to scale 20 was agreed, given that there will be likely additional work involved in the data and digital compliance regulations discussed under item 7. The Clerk confirmed that the automatic hourly rate increase, resultant back-pay and new scale increase would be covered within the existing salary budget for 2025/26.

Action: Clerk to set up a revised monthly salary standing order, with effect from 1st October 2025, to be authorised online by Cllr Collingwood or Cllr Hamilton.

f) Bank reconciliation June 2025 & Budget Review: The Clerk had prepared and forwarded the first quarterly bank reconciliation of the financial year to Cllr Lavelle for checks. This was verified and signed as accurate, and the second reconciliation would be prepared and forwarded for 30 September.

Action: Clerk/Cllr Lavelle.

The Clerk had also prepared and circulated a review of the council's 2025/2026 budget at the half-way point in the financial year, noting that expenditure in audit, insurance and Calc subscriptions are complete, with the following items for consideration: Clerk's salary (as reported under item e), data and digital compliance (as reported under item 7), and replacement defibrillator pads required in November 2025, to be financed via the miscellaneous/contingency budget. There were no additional points to note and it was agreed to give careful consideration to the budget for the 2026/27 financial year with regard to new email/website expenditure.

9. Correspondence:

WCC: Worcestershire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP): the process of carrying out a new assessment and review of Worcestershire's ROWIP is beginning, to better understand the needs of Worcestershire's residents. The ROWIP aims to address the priorities of the area in terms of health and wellbeing, supporting people living with disabilities and mental health issues, regeneration, growth, transport, climate change, tourism and other priorities. Views from parish councils are requested, 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: Following a discussion about general maintenance of local footways and stiles, Cllr Collingwood agreed to complete and submit a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

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. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that given the size of the parish and the likely changes ahead with the restructuring of the local authority, this would not be pursued at this time.

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

The bench at Comberton Quay is in need of repair. The Chairman agreed to look at the work involved for further discussion at the next meeting. The Clerk reminded the meeting that £ 745.00 remains in the CiL Neighbourhood Fund which may be utilised for improving this community asset. *Action: Cllr Collingwood/Clerk to include on the October agenda.*

11. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 27th October 2025 at 7.00 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date.....