

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7pm
at Lower Moor Village Hall**

Present: Cllr. David Nuttall (Chair), Cllr. Paul Jeanes, Cllr. Mrs A. Jeanes, Cllr. B Lomax
Cllr. T Betteridge, Cllr. P Stone, Cllr. A Nuttall,

Also present: C Hirst - Clerk; 17 members of the public

1. Apologies: Cllr. L Tucker (WDC); Cllr. D Boatright (WCC) Cllr. A Nuttall

2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2025: The minutes of the meeting on the 22nd May 2025 were agreed as a true record. Cllr. Paul Jeanes Proposed and Cllr. A Jeanes Seconded that the Minutes be approved. All in favour.

3. Chairman's Annual Report: Cllr. David Nuttall

This Parish Meeting marks my first year as chair of the Parish Council.

During those 12 months, there have been a number of important developments for the Parish.

A matter of immense pride for me was the rejection by the planning inspectors of the new town at Throckmorton. This was the culmination of more than 3 years of work that I was involved in, and that outcome has avoided a serious detriment to the Parish.

In terms of other developments, we were sad to see the previous committee of the village hall wrap up and pass our thanks to Pat Stone and the others who served on that committee for their hard work over the years. I was pleased to see that their work has been carried on by a new and enthusiastic committee chaired by Nick Butler, who will also be ensuring that the big ticket village events will be held this year. I look forward to working with Nick going forward.

I am also pleased to note the continued work of the St Thomas Church group, who promote the services at the parish church and carry out extensive fundraising. The numbers of attendees have been unprecedented and I'm sure their efforts will mean the church will continue to be used for many years to come.

Also in the last year, we have continued to carry on our usual work. This involves the management and maintenance of the village green, footpaths, ditches, streetlights and defibrillators. It also requires us to consider the various applications for planning in the Parish, which we try to consider on a full and fair basis.

I have also been ensuring that our policies and agreements are modernised and up to date. Our grant policy is in the process of being fully updated, and we will notify the Parish when applications for grant funding can be made.

Finally, may I extend my thanks to the other Parish Councillors, our District Councillor and County Councillor, and our clerk Carole for all their hard work this last year.

4. District and County Councillor's Annual Report:

Cllr. Liz Tucker (WDC Annual Report)

First of all, My apologies that I can't be present in person at this meeting!

Planning over the year has been mostly minor household applications: Five additional lodges at The Springs have been approved, also Permission in Principle for up to five bungalows on

Church Lane. The application for 4 detached dwellings on the near end of Blacksmiths Lane has been withdrawn but may come back again with an altered plan. The application for up to 31 dwellings on Evesham Road has been on the books now for nearly 4 years, held up over public rights of way issues.

Throckmorton New Town proposal. The Examination in Public last year judged it was not sufficiently prepared for the inspectors to be confident it could be delivered in the newly adopted SWDPR but it should be an “area of search” for the next Local Plan which will start soon. New government rules mean the next plan has to be completed within 30 months of starting. Wychavon has employed consultants to work on the feasibility and detail of their New Town proposal.

Ridgeway Park Farm land has been in the control of the Receiver for nearly two years now because of unpaid monies to DEFRA. There is expected to be an auction in June but if unsold it will have to be passed back to the owner.

SWDPR Inspectors raised issues across the SWDPR proposals. Wychavon addressed these in its Main Modifications consultation and document, and the Plan was finally adopted at the end of March. We now have the protection of a 5 year land supply - previously the “tilted balance” in favour of more houses led to proposals that did not meet our planning policies still being approved. However, this could be short lived as our housing target numbers have been increased significantly and the 5 year land supply will require a 20% addition in June/July.

Wychavon Town has the go ahead. It is supported by Homes England but is not in their official New Town programme.

Local Government Reorganisation: Government requires us to reorganise into large unitary councils. This means that Wychavon District council will disappear April 2028.

Worcestershire will either become one unitary council or two new unitary councils, North and South. South is much better for us as the 3 districts already work together in many ways and council tax will not rise as sharply if North is separate. Government will decide which of the two options will go forward. We hope to hear their decision late this summer. Elections for the new shadow council will take place next May, and existing Wychavon Councillors will serve an extra 11 months while the new council or councils set themselves up.

In the meantime, Wychavon is working hard to use its resources in ways that support the future sustainability of our communities and organisations. A range of legacy projects is already underway, and it is setting up a £400k grants system which will start in June.

County Cllr D. Boatright WCC

County Council leadership and 2025 elections

The May 2025 elections saw Reform UK become the largest party on Worcestershire County Council but without a majority. They won 27 of the 57 seats in May and Jo Monk became leader of the council.

It has been a very tumultuous year with one Reform UK councillor standing down after four months without attending a single meeting. The by-election was won by the Liberal Democrats. The deputy leader of Reform UK then resigned from the party on live TV, leaving the administration with 25 councillors. At time of writing Jo Monk has been replaced by Alan Amos as leader of Reform UK at the council and there is a leadership vote at the next meeting in May.

Council Finances

Last year the council had to ask the government for £31 million of exceptional funding to balance the books. This is a loan that needs to be paid back. It was estimated this time last year that this would grow to £43 million black hole for 2026-27. This became over £70 million by December. Several causes of this deficit have come about. The adult social care bill continues to rise as the population gets older, the special educational needs bill is rising due

to a lack of investment in specialist places in the local school system (leading the council having to pay for private provision) and continued overspend on infrastructure projects and home to school transport.

The council budget includes a £59 million loan from the government again this year and a 9% increase in council tax. Any attempts to reduce the over spends and limit the chances of an above 5% increase in council tax happening again need to be coming forward before the summer as it takes time to action cuts to staff and services. The administration is yet to put forward plans but the term transformation is being used in many speeches.

Local Government Reorganisation

Government announcement on the unitary structure for the county are due in June-July 2026. Recent announcements for Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk have shown the 500,000 residents criteria is not a priority and, as yet, not a single whole county approach has been agreed. County council is heavily split on a whole county approach with a vote showing a large number of councillors against it. County is still approaching taking the whole county approach while the districts are leading on a north-south model.

The strategic mayor elections were expected in 2028 but the timeline seems to be becoming more vague and suggestions of 2030 and even 2031 have emerged. This makes things a tad more complicated as the Police and Crime Commissioner leaves the role in May 2028 so intermediary boards etc are likely to need to be formed. At the moment there is consensus in the area that Worcestershire will join Herefordshire and then Warwickshire and/or Gloucestershire. Not expecting updates on this area in the immediate future.

School issues and funding for SEND

Two issues currently appearing in this area. One is the lack of school spaces in Worcester and the construction of the Wychavon New Town. This will have an impact on school places in Pershore. This has now been flagged several times at scrutiny meetings and currently the issue of Worcester schools seems to have been solved without busing young people to Pershore. However the new town has flagged bigger issues with a secondary school expected to be in place for September 2031. It usually takes four years to build a school so we are approaching a point where we would expect to see a plan and funding in place. To be clear the costs are not fully covered by the contributions from developers so government funding would be expected. The council has committed to putting a plan in place for next year and I am following this closely as the capacity issue will have a huge impact on Pershore High given the first three years of the development will have no secondary school in place.

Secondly, recent calculations for overspends for Special Educational Needs provision are showing that the council will have a total debt of over £450 million by the end of 2028-29. The government has recently announced that they will be writing off 90% of this debt but it means the council has to find the £45 million, which currently does not sit on the council budget as part of an agreement with the government. This temporary measure has been in place for years but this change will mean it is back on the books. The council will need to find a way to finance or pay off this money in 2028.

Furthermore, current calculations are showing that these overspends are continuing to rise and at pace. The government has not shown exactly how any future overspends will be written off and the council is in talks with the government over how this will work. Either way, if we assume 10% of the overspend stays on the council books and it is expected to be financed this is millions of pounds every year that will need to be found. The council is still pursuing the new autism school in Malvern as a way to bring more places online but demand is still currently outpacing supply and it is clear that further specialist centres are required. The council has now committed to surveying all council owned buildings to see whether they can be repurposed as centres which would reduce the council reliance on private provision, where costs are rising fast.

Increased government funding for highways projects

The Liberal Democrat group secured government funding from the highways budgets to focus on some of the areas residents have been raising. The funding includes:

- £2 million of rural road resurfacing, focusing on areas where roads have not seen funding in recent years
- £1 million for drainage reconstruction where old infrastructure need replacing
- £10 million over two years for improvements to pedestrian crossings and village pavements
- Additional funding for councillors to fix footpaths in their own divisions

There is also a project to see if the council can retrofit existing buildings the council owns to turn them into special educational needs centres to save money on out of county or private provision.

5. Reports from Village Organisations

St. Thomas' Church

Revd Canon Sarah Dangerfield

Priest-in-Charge of the Five Alive Parish on behalf of St Thomas' Church.

There have been five services at St Thomas' Church since the last report to the Parish Council, all well attended and received.

In August 2025, 40 people from across our group of churches came to a service of Holy Communion. In September, 6 children and 35 adults celebrated Harvest. On Armistice Day at 6.30pm, 67 people remembered the fallen and prayed for world peace. On 19 December 7 children and 86 adults filled the church to sing Christmas Carols, and on Easter Monday 2026, 2 children and 39 adults celebrated Easter.

It's been wonderful to see so many people engaged in different ways contributing to worship and the care of the building and garden. We've enjoyed a selection of music in our worship, both downloaded and played live.

To mark the season of Lent, traditionally a season for self-giving, a simple Lent Lunch was held at the Old Chestnut and £87.35 raised for St Richard's Hospice.

St Thomas' is part of the Five Alive Parish. It's governance, including safeguarding, falls within the P.C.C. of the Five Alive. A St Thomas' fund used for maintaining the fabric of the building and within the PCC accounts, had a balance of £3,872 on 31 December 2025. A Quinquennial Inspection of the fabric (required every five years) is arranged for later this year.

Contributions to the expense of heating, light, insurance and provision of a Vicar are always welcome to the Five Alive general fund. This is possible through the Parish Giving Scheme. It is easy to set up and change, offers the options of Gift Aid and keeping donations made in pace with inflation. Click on the link

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/five-alive-parish-pershore/>

Parish Code 420642081

We are looking forward to our next service on 30th August at St Thomas and are always pleased to welcome everyone to services and events across the Five Alive Parish, details of which can be found on the website or by free subscription to our weekly Church E-News <http://eepurl.com/h3dEmv>.

Hill & Moor Village Hall Report

Trustees

Two trustees, Pat Stone and Carol Oliver have resigned and have been replaced by Blair Holme and Nick Butler. Linda Foorde-Saunders and Diana Ward remained. Owing to recent changes in personal circumstances, Diana Ward has decided to resign as Treasurer. We would like to thank Diana for staying on to work with the new Committee and allow us to settle in. We are currently recruiting a new Treasurer in time for our AGM.

Committee Changes

In January the existing Chair resigned and was replaced by Nick Butler. Carol Oliver also resigned as Secretary and was replaced by Blair Holme. New members have been co-opted onto the Committee and an Events Committee has also be created. New members are Ashley Pattison, Gary New and Simon Treacy. David Sanders has also taken on leadership of the Events Committee.

Finance

As of 16 March, the hall is set to increase its funds from £16,964 to £18,373. A budget has been set for 2026/27. Three new regular bookings have been taken, which will help increase revenue to the hall.

Report

During the second half of 2025, owing to lack of support, the Village Hall Committee decided to disband and only undertake minimal maintenance and management of hirers. In December a public meeting was held to decide the future of the hall and it was agreed that a new management committee would be formed.

In January 2026, the new committee was able to co-opt a full complement of new members and also formed a new Events Committee. It was decided that the hall needed to be brought into the 21st Century and has successfully launched a new website and social media channels. A launch day was held in March, which was a huge success, with over 110 residents attending.

Governance has also been reviewed and the lack of policies and risk assessments has been addressed or, in the case of CCTV, is being worked upon. Outstanding maintenance issues have also been addressed, with a roofer employed to undertake roof repairs. The Committee is addressing the lack of maintenance of the solar panels which, if left, would have an adverse effect on revenue generation and the lifespan of the panels and inverter. In addition, the heating management has now been replaced with a Wi-Fi management hub to allow remote adjustments of the heating schedule.

The Events committee is also working on reintroducing a summer fete/fun day and also the fireworks night. It is also introducing small events, such as coffee mornings to promote community togetherness.

Future Projects

The Committee is exploring the potential for increasing the solar panels and adding battery storage, with the aim of making the hall a Resilience Hub. Grants will be sought to cover

costs as well as replacement of the current solar panel infrastructure, which is starting to approach end of life.

Nick Butler
Chair 21/04/26

Lower Moor Allotments Association - Report from Maurice Hayes- Hill & Moor Allotments Association

There are currently several allotments available, and the costs still remain the same at £15 per year with an initial registration fee of £5. If you are interested or would like more details, please contact Maurice Hayes on 01386 861967.

Also with trustee numbers reducing there is room for new trustees and again please contact Maurice Hayes for more details.

Maurice Hayees- Trustee

6. Parishioners Open Forum

Question: When will the VAS sign be moved back into the village. – Response to this is that it rotates between Salters Lane and the village and it is due back in the village in around 6 weeks.

Speeding in the village was discussed generally and whether it would be worth discussing setting up a volunteer group to undertake speed assessments with a speed gun. Discussions took place regarding speed humps being installed to slow traffic and what options are available. Cllr. P Jeanes to discuss the issue of speeding with Cllr Tucker (WDC) and Cllr. Boatright (WCC)

Steve Guy stated he has reached the end of the road with Wychavon DC Planning in relation to the proposed development of the field adjacent to the A44 between Hill & Moor Meadows and the roundabout.

Wychavon DC want him to purchase the track currently occupied, by a horse, for 25% of the value of the entire development plot which is ridiculous.

He is still proceeding with the signing of the 106 agreement with Wychavon DC but will then sell the land to the highest bidder and it will be up to the new owners to negotiate access if needed to May Tree Road for services.

Gates for the car-park – a hole needs drilling to be able to secure the gates back on the car park Cllr. Jeanes noted this with a view to inspecting it and get it fixed.

Playing field strimming – can this be done more frequently? Cllr. Jeanes has said that he will speak to the Lengthsman to increase frequency of strimming.

Meeting Ended at 19.47pm