

Woolhope Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Woolhope Parish Council Held on Tuesday 29th April 2025 7.00pm at Woolhope Village Hall

Present: Cllr. M. Slocombe - Chairman
Cllr. P. Hawkins
Cllr. M. Windham
Cllr. A. May
Cllr. C. Scott
Cllr. S. Crozier
Cllr. L. Mair
Cllr. R. Rolt

In attendance: Nick Richmond-Clerk and 12 members of the public.

1. **To receive apologies, declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.**
Apologies were received from Ward Cllr Durkin. No written requests for dispensation were received and no declaration of interests made.
3. **Open forum. To consider the views of local residents on parish matters.**
Members of the public attending to speak about the Hills Ford Rally Cllr Slocombe said that this would be discussed now, and introduced the item by advising that the website poll had been suspended as it could not be relied upon as it was open to anyone so could not be relied upon to reflect parish opinion, and had been replaced by votes e-mailed to the clerk to be verified as parishioners against the latest available electoral roll. The clerk advised that the voting had been 33 in support of the rally and 15 against. Cllr Slocombe then invited members of the public to speak. First to speak was Nick Barron who was very opposed to the rally. John Watson described it as a damaging event breaking the tranquillity of the village and was concerned that this might become an annual event. Sarah Norton then spoke in opposition to the rally as bad for the environment and the peace of the village with up to 150 cars going through twice. Peter Randell also spoke in opposition to the rally citing high revving vehicles causing noise and pollution with no carbon offset and said that roads should not be closed for private purposes. Anthea Watson also opposed the rally as a misuse of the countryside. Kevin Smith speaking for the organisers said that the event raised around £300k for the community in air b&b bookings for both organisers and racers and provided an opportunity for the community to raise funds in car parking fees, and claimed that the decibels of noise were no greater than that created during an MOT test. Sally Webster said that a pledge had been given that any future rally would not use Broadmoor Common, and asked the organisers how damage from spectators to fragile species on the common could be prevented and indeed how spectator safety could be assured. Cllr May expressed concerns over the provision of toilets and race materials being left outside her house. Kevin Smith advised that there were 400 stewards and toilets were provided at the start and end of the course, although he suggested that stewards might ask supportive residents for use of their toilets. Cllr Slocombe suggested that a much more generous donation was required from the organisers to compensate the parish, and the question of compensation for H Art was brought up which Kevin Smith said was being considered by the clerk of the course.

Andy Williams spoke in support of the rally saying that although his farm is surrounded by it he felt that people should be allowed to enjoy the event. John Watson spoke again saying that there had been only vague comments by the organisers and no definite commitment not to hold the rally here next year. Cllr Hawkins said that it made sense to watch the rally from the common but access needed better planning to prevent spectators going through hedgerows to areas that require protection. Andrew Price spoke in favour of the rally as a driver saying that the organisers were a not for profit enterprise and the £300k figure was real. Cllr Slocombe concluded the discussion by saying it was disappointing that there was not more clarity about the organisation of the rally, that a written response to the issues raised was required and concerns about the future should be formally addressed.

2. Ward Councillors Report.

The report had been circulated. No questions arose.

4. Meetings:

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26th March 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

5. Planning Matters

a) To consider new applications received since the last meeting now due for consideration:

P250708 Broadmoor Cottage, Terrace Hall road – Variation of condition 2 of P232365 single and two storey extension. As it was not clear what the variations were councillors decided not to comment.

P250924 The Old Vicarage – Conversion of detached garage into studio with small extension. Councillors voted to support the application.

b) The following decisions were noted:

P250561 The Firs, Broadmoor Common – Ground and 1st Floor extensions – Approved with conditions.

P250536 Land at Seigewood Cottage – Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 4,5,6 and 7 of listed building consent - Approved

6. Highways Matters

a) To consider any new highways issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty.

The recent resurfacing and patching carried out by Herefordshire Council were appreciated and considered to be of a good standard taken to the edge of the carriageway. Cllr Windham expressed concern over the movement of manure from Sapness Farm stables, saying that the volume now built up if moved all together would involve ten trucks a day for a considerable period with resulting noise and road congestion. Cllr Slocombe proposed some verge work to be carried out by the lengthsman close to the village and the clerk will instruct the lengthsman to contact Cllr Slocombe for specific instructions.

b) To consider a motor rally proposal for Sunday 14th September 2025, and the votes cast by e-mail or letter. See above.

c) Village signs.

The clerk is to chase Herefordshire Council over the reported missing signs and obtain pricing for parish council to replace them.

7. Financial Matters

a) The following payments were authorised:

- £ 540.13 Clerk salary April 2025
- £ 135.00 Clerk tax April 2025.
- £ 636.00 First Rescue Training & Supplies Ltd
- £ 559.20 Terry Griffiths Contracts – maintenance day
- £ 168.00 Jake Price grass cutting Broadmoor Common

27.5.25


£ 94.50 Woolhope Village Hall

b) To receive and approve the Year End council accounts up to 31st March 2025 and sign the bank reconciliation.

The year end accounts were approved and Cllr Hawkins signed the bank reconciliation.

c) To approve the asset register as at 31st March 2025.

The revised assets register was approved.

d) To approve the draft AGAR report.

The draft AGAR was approved.

8. Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The closing date for the Herefordshire Council consultation having passed the result of the consultation has not yet been communicated to parish council so the clerk will chase.

9. Broadmoor Common

To receive an update.

The clerk asked Cllr Slocombe what was happening about the deer fencing coup on the border of land owned by Clive Boulton-Brooks. Cllr Slocombe advised that some fencing had been removed and a plan was required as to where the fencing should be re-installed using a line that can remain where it is being on the common. A meeting of the steering group is overdue and the clerk will propose a meeting on June 11th.

10. Lengthsman.

To consider new parish lengthsman work, and to approve the submission of an application for the Parish Lengthsman Scheme 2025-26.

The clerk advised that a considerable proportion of the expenditure on lengthsman services had been reclaimed from Herefordshire Council, so it was agreed to apply for the parish lengthsman scheme again and Cllr Slocombe and the clerk signed the application form.

11. Footpaths.

To consider any footpaths issues.

Cllr Hawkins advised that he had attended an induction course for footpath officers and there is funding for equipment including high-vis jackets with 'Footpath Officer' on the back. He reported that the gates supplied to replace stiles had all been incorrectly manufactured and had to be replaced which had delayed installation, but the correct gates were now there so installation can begin.

12. To consider the problem of crows in the village.

Cllr Slocombe advised that the village was now inundated with vast flocks of 500 crows, a fact illustrated by the loud noise of them outside the village hall. It was agreed that the clerk will obtain a licence to control them, and Cllr Scott will ask his wife who works at Slimbridge Wetlands Trust what measures can be taken once a licence is in place.

13. Correspondence.

To discuss correspondence received.

It was agreed that the 'Marquee' charge of £250 was appropriate for the lady who had contacted the clerk to use Berryfields for a wedding reception in 2026. Cllr Slocombe suggested a clay pigeon shoot possibly a laser one on Berryfield during the village fete with the Rose Bowl as the trophy. Cllr Windham advised that Gina Children had sent a cheque for £500 for the upkeep of the Coronation Garden. The clerk said he had not received the cheque. It was noted with thanks that 7 residents had taken part in the village litter pick session that resulted in 3 large bags of litter collected.

14. To consider further work on the wall at the Church.

A contractor will be engaged to spray the ivy.

15. Date, time and venue of next meeting and items for the next agenda.

The next meetings will be the Annual Parish Meeting at 6pm on 27th May followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7pm on 27th May and then the Annual Meeting of the Parish Hall Committee at 8pm.

Clerk - Nick Richmond

2nd May 2025