

Woolhope Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Woolhope Parish Council Held on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 7.00pm at Woolhope Village Hall

Present: Cllr. P. Hawkins – Chairman
Cllr. M. Windham
Cllr. S. Crozier
Cllr. A. May
Cllr. L. Mair

In attendance: Nick Richmond-Clerk, Ward Councillor Barry Durkin and 4 members of the public.

1. **To receive apologies, declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Slocombe, Tobey and Rolt. No written requests for dispensation were received. Cllr Windham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7a planning as a neighbour of the applicant.
2. **To receive a presentation from Ian Grafton of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust about the potential purchase of Pear Tree Walk, a 2.49 hectare site adjoining Wessington Wood & Pasture and also Church Wood, 2.6 hectares of ancient woodland contiguous with Lea & Paget's Wood and consider any support that might be offered.**
Ian Grafton outlined the proposals to raise £400,000 to purchase both plots of land, carry out restoration work and rebuild a barn at Pear Tree Walk to provide storage and a location from which work at the five local sites can be organised. Individuals and groups are encouraged to make donations to enable these very worthwhile projects to go ahead.
3. **Ward Councillors Report.**
To receive the report and consider any issues arising.
The report had been circulated. Cllr Durkin ran through the main points including the property purchased for the Emergency Accommodation Project helping those facing homelessness, the Hereford bypass on which work is due to start before Christmas, the new food bins system which some councillors felt was unnecessary but apparently is a central government requirement, and the resurfacing of 12.5% of roads in the county over the last few years.
4. **Public participation session: (3) minute limit per person (15minutes maximum).**
Mark O'Brien spoke to point out inaccuracies in the minutes of the August meeting, advising that he had only referred to three species of plant not 33, and that he had chosen to leave the meeting when he did. These minutes serve to correct those inaccuracies.
5. **Pentaloe Brook**
To consider any developments.
Following the decision made at the last meeting to hold an open meeting inviting all parties to come together on 28th October at Woolhope Village Hall to discuss ways forward the clerk reported that he had only received one response that a Herefordshire Councillor who hoped to attend providing there was no parish council meeting requiring his attendance, and a response from Hanna Dale of Canwood that she would not be attending. Woolhope Parish Councillors believe that the extensive flooding at Canwood last winter surely provides evidence of changes made to the watercourse, however not having any expert knowledge in these matters it is difficult to challenge the January 2026 investigation report from

Herefordshire Council that concluded there was no evidence of such changes. Cllr Durkin advised that he would be attending the meeting and that Herefordshire Council officers were continuing to monitor the situation.

6. Meetings:

To consider the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th August 2026.

Rather than make handwritten changes to the minutes following the comments made by Mark O'Brien the clerk agreed to include his comments in the minutes of this meeting. On that basis the minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

7. Planning Matters

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

P262490 – Sapness Farm – Stables and all weather Gallop.

Cllr Windham having made a declaration of interest the meeting allowed her to make comments but not vote on the matter. She advised that the ecological report contained several inaccuracies, including the omission of Glowson Wood as a nearby ancient woodland that she said had a dormouse population that was monitored regularly thus undermining the suggestion made that no dormice survey was necessary. The statement made that no still water existed within 250 metres she also advised was not the case. It was noted by councillors that the application is headed 'Stables and equestrian Gallop' but no new stables were included in the plans. Councillors voted to approve the application making comments about the ecological report and advising that if new stables were part of the application support for it might not have been approved.

b) To note decisions made:

P262453 Overbury Farm – Application to determine if prior approval is required for agricultural building – Prior approval not required. This was noted.

8. Financial Matters

a) The following payments were authorised:

- £ 585.93 Clerk salary Aug 2026.
- £ 146.40 Clerk tax Aug 2026.
- £ 47.30 Employers National Insurance Aug 2026.
- £ 585.93 Clerk salary Sept 2026.
- £ 146.40 Clerk tax Sept 2026
- £ 47.30 Employers National Insurance Sept 2026
- £ 300.00 Annual Contribution to Woolhope Village Hall
- £ 2,677.20 TGC4028/29/30/36/37/38 PROW Gates installation.
- £ 616.44 TGC4009 Maintenance Day July 2026.
- £ 1,440.00 TGC4026 Removal of Car Park wall.
- £ 616.44 TGC4027 Maintenance Day Aug 2026
- £ 252.00 PKF Littlejohn – external audit.

Andy Williams questioned the amount being paid in National Insurance saying it looked high. The clerk advised that the amount was taken from the BASIC PAYE software and offered to show Andy the printout. He said that was not necessary he just wanted to ensure it was right, and subsequently to the meeting Cllr May checked the figure and found it to be substantially correct given rounding of figures.

b) The bank balance as at 10th Sept of £ 23,438.36 was noted.

9. Neighbourhood Development Plan.

To receive any update on the Herefordshire Council Reg16 consultation.

Following the last meeting Parish Council had received a list of potential external examiners and Cllr Mair had proposed the selection of Deborah McCann which was supported by Cllr Rolt. The clerk has confirmed the choice and was informed that Deborah would commence the examination on 21st September. The clerk said he had looked at the

three representations made under the latest HC consultation and did not think they meant a further addition to the addendum to the basic conditions statement was needed, which Cllr Mair and the meeting agreed was not required.

10. Highways.

10.1 To consider making representation to Herefordshire Council to repair/re-surface Scar Lane as a matter of urgency.

The response of the Locality Steward that it was in his top ten of the worst roads in his area was noted, as was his advice that it had been in a plan for resurfacing but was removed from the plan. Cllr Mair commented that a few potholes had been repaired probably a year ago and by now were probably back again. Cllr Durkin said that potholes were now being repaired much better than under Balfour Beatty now being dug out and fixed to a much higher standard sometimes by fixing a whole strip rather than individual potholes. He said that Herefordshire Council was doing what it could but there are many roads in the county in a worse condition than Scar Lane. Residents are advised to report potholes but check if the particular location is already under report.

10.2 To consider the response of the Locality Steward to the cutting of the verge at Welchston Court.

The clerk reported that the Locality Steward had said that he had a common sense approach to this that if a minor section of the verge was cut to promote safer visibility then Herefordshire Council would not take action against anyone doing so.

11. Footpaths.

To consider any new footpaths issues.

No new issues were reported. Cllr Hawkins advised that landowners he had spoken to were very happy with the gates that had been installed.

12. Lengthsman

To consider a quotation of £1,400 from Terry Griffiths to move the spoil from the church car park wall to Linkswell Farm and move the stone to The Hyde.

Cllr Hawkins expressed the view that, while the removal of the dangerous section of the wall was necessary council should keep further costs to a minimum given that the majority of the parish would see no benefit from the expenditure, and he could not see the merit of moving the stone to The Hyde and selling it from there rather than selling it to someone who would remove it from the church car park. The clerk will ask Cllr Rolt for contact details of the potential purchaser, and Cllr Windham will obtain an alternative quotation from Jake Price for moving both the spoil and the stone.

13. Broadmoor Common.

13.1 To consider the planting of trees in the deer coup installed last winter.

The clerk advised he is waiting for quotations from Dave Smith for saplings to be planted in the deer coup established last winter, and for an oak tree and guard that might be paid for out of the old gardeners club funds.

13.2 To consider proposals for future management of Broadmoor Common.

The search for a person who could fill the void left by Mark July seems to be proving difficult to achieve. Cllr Windham advises that she has a list of over 40 people willing to help in the management of the common. Cllr Hawkins suggested that a sub-committee be formed that could engage with those people and bring proposals to Parish Council for approval.

14. To consider a proposal from the cricket club that parish council pays approximately £ 215 to have the whole of Berryfield including the cricket pitch reseeded.

The cricket club having already carried out the reseeding of the cricket square it was agreed that they carry out the reseeding of the remaining areas of Berryfield and reclaim the costs from Parish Council with supporting evidence of costs.

15. Correspondence

To consider correspondence received.

The clerk advised that following receiving the letter from Gina Children regarding the Coronation Garden he phoned the gardener Mark Lewellyn, who told him he had been at the garden in May but not since given the dry hard ground. He said he will go there within the next two weeks tidy it up and put in around £30 of mixed daffodils for spring colour. The clerk will write back to Gina advising her of this but offering to return her donation if she wishes, adding that the council intends to maintain the garden as best it can.

16. Confidential Item

Clerk Salary.

Following the Local Govt Pay Award 2026-27 to consider an increase to the clerk salary to SL21.

Councillors voted unanimously to increase the clerk salary to SL21.

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

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 27th October 2026 7pm at Woolhope Village Hall.

Clerk - Nick Richmond

6th August 2026