



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council held at Welsh Newton Village Hall on Thursday 19th December 2024 at 7.30pm

Minutes

Present: Councillors Sue Parkinson (Vice chair, acting Chair), Martin Barter, Keith Simmons

In attendance: Andrée Mitchell (Clerk), Ward Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst

Public: 8

Cllr Parkinson (Vice chair) opened the meeting at: 7:31pm

1. To note the resignation of Cllr Bligh and to elect the Chairman of the Council

Cllr Bligh's resignation since the last meeting due to work commitments and the council's gratitude for his significant contribution to the parish was NOTED.

Cllr Parkinson requested nominations for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Parkinson was proposed by Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Barter. There were no other nominations. It was RESOLVED: to elect Cllr Parkinson to the position of Chairman. Cllr Parkinson signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council should this be necessary

Cllr Parkinson having been elected as Chairman requested nominations for the post of Vice Chair. Cllrs Simmons and Barter expressed an interest in standing as joint Vice Chairs for the Council and It was RESOLVED that the clerk would seek advice on whether this would be legally possible.

3. To receive apologies for absence

There were none.

4. To receive declarations of interest and written dispensation requests

There were none.

5. To note that a casual vacancy is deemed to have occurred in the office of Councillor for the Parish of Welsh Newton following failure to attend meetings by Cllr Clarke and consider next steps

It was NOTED that a casual vacancy is deemed to have occurred in the office of Councillor for the Parish of Welsh Newton following failure to attend meetings by Cllr Clarke under the six-month rule. And it was RESOLVED that the clerk will liaise with Elections Team at Herefordshire Council to follow the process of advertising the post.

Signed by the Chairman *Sue Parkinson*

Dated *13th March 2025*



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6. To consider the co-option of applicants to fill current vacancies and receive any declarations of interest

It was NOTED that Herefordshire Council Elections team had notified the Clerk that no election had been called and that the casual vacancy for the Llanrothal Parish should be coopted into as soon as possible. There was one applicant for the vacant post who had been a parish resident for more than five years.

It was RESOLVED to co-opt Julie Francis onto the Parish Council, by unanimous vote.

7. To agree and sign the minutes of the Group Parish Council meeting held on 20th June 2024, 11th July 2024, 12th September 2024 and 10th October 2024.

The minutes were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

8. Public Question Time

Graham Brookes, a resident of Welsh Newton Common spoke about the loss of the recently installed high speed broadband on the common which had been down for ten days because of trees falling during Storm Darragh. He had been in contact with Herefordshire Council and various others about the issues including TPOs, commoners' rights and the possibility of tree pruning to address the risk of such an outage occurring again. It is planned that a meeting of residents be called using social media, noticeboards and a mailshot delivered by volunteers to establish support for a way forward.

Cllr Parkinson thanked Mr Brookes for raising his concerns and his very proactive approach and advised that the Parish Council would like to be invited to attend.

A resident raised a concern about the power outages during the storm having caused water to be cut off as there is no back-up generator for the pump at the reservoir and it was RESOLVED to contact Welsh Water about this.

It was NOTED that a member of the public had contacted the council about Upper Buckholt not having access to the superfast fibre and specific difficulties being experienced at the border between the Parish and Monmouthshire. Cllr Parkinson had passed on Ward Cllr Swinglehurst's contact details.

9. Reports

9.1. The Ward Councillor's report was NOTED.

Ward Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst was present and REPORTED that the new National Planning Policy Framework housing requirement for Herefordshire has increased by 43%. Also, that less weight will be given to Neighbourhood Development Plans over 5 years old.

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- 9.2. To consider a report from the police community support officer (PCSO) and local policing priorities

Councillor Parkinson had met with Simon Hall, the PCSO, and REPORTED that:

- the police and crime commissioner had set a priority around making a closer relationship between PCSOs and Parish Councils.
- To this end they are asking for each parish council to set three priorities and Cllr Parkinson had fed these back based upon previous discussions at parish council meetings and with residents:
 - Speeding on the A466
 - General concerns about crime – people would like to make homes and premises more secure.
 - Misuse of bridleways with motorised vehicles and horses.
- Smartwater community – Police and Crime Commissioner would part fund, and the Parish Council could part fund. Would like to come and present on this.
- The PCSO will do some patrols and stand by the village hall with speed guns.
- Neighbourhood Matters – encourage people to subscribe.

10. Planning

- 10.1. To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:

- 10.1.1. 242718 - Field North West of Great Hall (grid ref 512 183), Welsh Newton Common, Welsh Newton, Monmouth – Planning Permission – Retrospective planning application for the retention of 3 shipping containers for agricultural.

It was RESOLVED to support this application with the comment that a condition should be applied to prevent the property being permanently inhabited and that the appropriate management of sewage/foul water be clarified and in place especially in the light of local pond.

- 10.2. To consider an update on recent planning applications considered by the council
It was NOTED that the Forestry commission review about Land at Tump Wood clearly indicated that planning permission should have been sought for the work done and should have been based around having a woodland management plan in place.

A member of the public left the meeting.

- 10.3. To consider an update on the clerk's meeting with the Herefordshire Council Development Officer (South)

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The Clerk REPORTED back on her meeting with Simon Withers the Development Manager for South Herefordshire key points being:

- The current planning systems are due to be replaced, but at present there is no guaranteed way of ensuring that Parish Council's receive notification emails of planning consultations.
- That concerns raised at previous Parish Council meetings that a precedent had been set by the development of cabins on Mansfield Lane at Olde Shoppe Rural tourism were not founded; in that each application is considered on its own merits. However, Herefordshire Council's policy is to move towards small rural tourism and that would be a consideration for such applications in future.

11. To consider the recent flooding and storm damage across the group parish

It was NOTED that there had been significant flooding across the parish and in particular problems with run off from land at Mally Brook Farm and land at Welsh Newton Common on the road towards Great Oaks. All causing the brooks, drains and gullies to be flooded with excess water and silt. Concerns were raised about the cost of clear up operations.

It was RESOLVED that the list of offers of help in an emergency be checked and updated and that resilience plan development to address this come to a future meeting.

12. Welsh Newton Common

12.1. To consider an update on recent issues with Tree Maintenance on the Common including those resulting from the recent storm damage
Nothing further to add on earlier discussions re Storm Darragh.

12.2. To consider an update on Herefordshire Council responsibilities with respect to the Common further to the clerk's meeting with the Herefordshire Council Senior Estate Manager.

The Clerk REPORTED that:

- the Senior Estate Manager (SEM) with responsibility for Commons Registration at the council also has responsibility for the wider Herefordshire Council estate and that there is no longer budget to come out for site visits, there is no longer a Commons Officer
- the SEM would be willing to support a meeting to focus on the common and issues on the common and would encourage public engagement with a commons management plan, but also to raise awareness of commons and commoners' rights and the things that can and cannot be done on a common
- in the meantime, the SEM has agreed to write a letter about the concerns raised with respect to some of the issues raised at recent meetings and will address specific concerns directly

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- 12.3. To consider an update on the Market Bridle Path DMMO
It was NOTED that the deadline for submission of DMMOs had been changed from 1st January 2026 to 1st January 2031 and that the PRoW officer at Herefordshire Council had advised that it would not be necessary to resubmit the DMO for the Market Path at this stage.
- 12.4. To consider an update on motorcycles using Bridle Paths on the Common
It was NOTED that Cllr Parkinson had been in contact with the Public Rights of Way department of Monmouthshire Council to arrange for signage to go up at both ends of the bridal way between Welsh Newton Common and Monmouth to have the best effect.
- 12.5. To consider an update on recent issues with bin collections on the common
It was NOTED that bins were now being collected from Woodside using a small bin lorry at this issue is now resolved.

13. Footpaths

- 13.1. To consider an update on the clerk's meeting with the PRoW Volunteers development Officer (Herefordshire Council)
The Clerk fed back on the meeting, and it was NOTED that the Herefordshire Council PRoW Officer is currently on leave due to illness, but that the PRoW framework proposal had not been received well at the Parish Summit and that further work needs to be done.
- 13.2. To consider an update on footpath issues around the parish
There were no issues to report, however, a member of the public asked if there any requirements for what a style can be replaced with, and it was NOTED that the preference was to replace styles with more accessible options, e.g. self-closing gates and that Herefordshire Council would provide these kits up to a certain value.
- 13.3. To consider an update on PRoW funding
It was NOTED that the deadline for PRoW grant work had been extended.
- 13.4. To consider the appointment of a parish footpaths officer
It was RESOLVED that Andrée Mitchell be appointed as the Parish Footpaths Officer.

14. Lengthsman

- 14.1. To consider an update on work carried out to date by the lengthsman and the status of the lengthsman contract and lengthsman scheme
It was NOTED that the Purchase Order had been received for the lengthsman grant.

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It was NOTED that there had been two days of work on Llanrothal and one day on Welsh Newton and that the Lengthsman had been instructed to remove the fallen tree on the road at Pembridge Castle should that be necessary.

14.2. To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman including Public Rights of Way
It was RESOLVED to confirm with the lengthsman that the work on the road to Great Hall should go ahead further to the additional flooding and damage; that the grips in Llanrothal should be cleared.

14.3. To consider the submitted Local Drainage Fund project applications – no update.

15. Highways

15.1. To consider an update from the Clerk's meeting with the Head of Highways and Traffic Management (Herefordshire Council)

It was NOTED that normal jetting and ditching work would be approved, but that more complex work would need to be assessed prior to any approval.

It was NOTED that the priority for Llanrothal Parish is the gully erosion taking place on the U71219 at Garns Brook.

It was NOTED that a new Locality Steward had been appointed for the area and would be in post at the start of January.

15.2. To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty and the status of current road issue reports

The signage on the A466 is in a poor state of repair, and the Welsh Newton sign is missing and the post for Llanrothal is also missing, and this will be raised with the new locality steward.

15.3. To consider an update on the Speed Indicator Devices

It was NOTED that the manufactures of the SIDs had advised that a two-yearly service interval would be appropriate based upon traffic usage. Also, that the Head of Highways and Traffic Management had provided an email address for his road safety team for traffic calming.

15.4. To consider the bad weather action plan

It was NOTED that the bad weather action plan needed some updating, and it would be circulated to members for update and consideration.

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16. Noticeboards

It was NOTED that all the noticeboards were operational and in use and that the noticeboard at the Nunnery could be relocated by the lengthsman once the location near the access to the St John the Baptist church has been confirmed.

The last member of the public left

17. Defibrillators

It was NOTED that the defibrillator pads at the Village Hall had reached their expiry date, and it was RESOLVED to purchase these at a cost of approximately £160 (inc. VAT) and to automatically renew expiring items, such as pads, for the parish defibrillators as required based on best terms and to allow for this in the budget.

It was NOTED that the Village Life Community Project in Whitecastle Community Council had contacted the clerk to advise that there is a known problem with non-US batteries for the defibrillators failing early. Also that they had included the Llanrothal Defibrillator at the Parsonage on their list of local defibrillators for those residents near Tregate Bridge.

18. Finance

18.1. To receive and consider the finance report – no update

18.2. Excluding the Cambridge and Counties Account it was NOTED that the bank balances as of the current date in the Lloyds Account were:

Treasurer's Account:	£11,016.03
Business bank instant account:	£7,000.53
Total:	£18,016.56

In addition, it was NOTED that the money deposited in the Cambridge & Counties fixed term bond is **£10,501.34**.

18.3. It was RESOLVED to add Cllr Francis as an authorised signatory/electronic payment authoriser for the Lloyd's accounts.

18.4. It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:

18.4.1. Autela – Payroll for August 24 to November 24 – £62.54 + VAT

18.4.2. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Welsh Newton Parish – Routine Maintenance Day 16/10/2024 – £466 + VAT

18.4.3. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Llanrothal Parish – Routine Maintenance Day 12/11/2024 – £466 + VAT

18.4.4. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Llanrothal Parish – Routine Maintenance Day 21/11/2024 – £466 + VAT

18.4.5. Clerk's November and December salaries as per agreed contract

18.4.6. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's November and December salaries

18.5. It was NOTED that no payments made between meetings

18.6. It was NOTED that no contractual payments had been made between meetings due to insufficient available signatories, shortly to be resolved with Cllr Parkinson recently having received the necessary documentation from Lloyds Bank.

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18.7. It was NOTED that the following income had been received:

18.7.1. Lloyds Bank – Interest on Instant Access Account – November 2024 – £6.32

18.7.2. Lloyds Bank – Interest on Instant Access Account – December 2024 – £5.37

18.8. Internal audit

The contract for the appointed internal auditor, Theresa Goss, was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk at a cost of £200 and it was RESOLVED to consider an early start to the audit following the completion of the budget process and setting of the precept.

18.9. There were no grant requests for consideration.

18.10. It was NOTED that the clerk had been in contact with the Corporate Finance Accountant at Herefordshire Council and that the precept for 2024/25 could be set latest at the February meeting provided she was notified about it immediately following the meeting.

The council RESOLVED not to respond to the Herefordshire Council 2025/26 budget consultation.

19. Communications

19.1. To consider an update on the newsletter

It was RESOLVED to delay the publication of the newsletter to coincide with the run up to an Annual Parish meeting in March or April with a view to bringing together the community including contributions from local groups and about areas of interest for residents.

19.2. To consider an update on the website and social media

It was RESOLVED to consider options for the provision of the website once the current contract expires at the end of the financial year and to focus on improving the website as the core offering and getting this to a high standard.

It was NOTED that the Facebook page details had been provided to the clerk, but that the focus for now would be on the website.

20. To consider items for the next meeting – No discussion

It was NOTED that the agenda had been long due to the recent changes to council composition and the updates on various items since the last meeting in October, and it was RESOLVED to streamline the agenda aiming to keep meetings to no more than two hours.

21. Date of next meeting – Thursday 13th February 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall; and to consider future meeting dates and locations for the next year.

It was RESOLVED to continue to hold meetings on the second Thursday of each month except for August and for December. Also, that the meetings will continue to be held at Welsh Newton Village Hall except for the June and July meetings which will be held at Llanrothal Church.

The meeting closed at: 9:57 pm

Signed by the Chairman *Sue Parkinson*

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