



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 10th April 2025 at 7.30pm

Minutes

Present: Councillors Sue Parkinson (Chair), Julie Francis, Ed Walker, Lissy Tomlinson

In attendance: Andrée Mitchell (Clerk/RFO, PFO)

Public: 3 including Ward Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst

The Chair opened the meeting at: 7:32pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Keith Simmons and Martin Barter

2. To receive declarations of interest and written dispensation requests

Cllr Tomlinson declared a pecuniary interest in items 13.2.4 and items 13.2.6 re clerk's salary and expenses as the clerk is her spouse.

3. To agree and sign the minutes of the Group Parish Council meetings held on 9th January 2025, 13th February 2025 and 13th March 2025.

The minutes for 13th March 2025 were APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

The minutes for the 9th January 2025 and 13th February 2025 are to follow.

4. Public Question Time

A member of the public raised three queries:

- A request for an update on the resubmission of the DMMO for the Market Path which still is not showing on the Herefordshire Council website.
The clerk had spoken to the PRoW lead who had said not to resubmit, but that further resource to process DMMOs is being put in place at Herefordshire Council.
- A request for an update on no motorcyclist signs on the bridleway from St Wolstan's Road towards Monmouth
Cllr. Parkinson has written to the Public Rights of Way officer at Monmouthshire Council but has not yet heard back.
- Would the council consider a presentation on the Herefordshire Dark Skies Project. Cllr. Parkinson has also discussed this with the Llangarron Parish Council Chairman, and the council would be interested.

Signed by the Chairman *Sue Parkinson*

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Item 7 was brought forward.

5. Reports

- 5.1. The Ward Councillor's report for March had been circulated to councillors and was NOTED.

Ward Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst was present and updated members on local drainage improvements and recent and upcoming road surfacing and repair.

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

Cllr Parkinson had received a report from the PCSO advising that he had been checking speeds near the village hall for a short time and that the presence of the camera had caused people to slow down.

It was RESOLVED that councillors will subscribe to the various newsletters sent by the PCSO and associated teams if they wish and that once the council transfers to a new website provider then links can be provided to the relevant information.

6. Planning

- 6.1. To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council: none.

- 6.2. To consider an update on recent planning applications considered by the council or current applications submitted to Herefordshire Council for which the council has not been consulted.

Cllr Parkinson updated members on a conversation with planning enforcement who had advised that the process for dealing with retrospective planning applications could be quite lengthy and often involved an appeal.

It was NOTED that an application for a certificate of lawfulness had been requested for a property in the parish which the council had not been asked to comment on.

- 6.3. To consider an update on Parish and Town Council Seminars re NPPF 2024 and attended by Cllrs Parkinson and Simmons

Cllr Parkinson fed back to members and key points from this and the discussion were:

- The parish and town council seminars focused on the new Herefordshire planning framework in response to changes in the national planning framework by the

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government. The outdated Neighbourhood Development Plan, being over five years old, now holds little sway in planning decisions.

- Welsh Newton Common remains classified as a location suitable for sustainable development, which makes it susceptible to speculative planning applications. Planning decisions in this area are influenced by the National Planning Policy Framework rather than the Herefordshire framework due to delays until 2028.
- There's no urgency in updating the Neighbourhood Development Plan until further guidance is available from Herefordshire County Council. The plans refresh should align with the new county-level framework, expected next year.
- Engaging community members experienced in planning and land use could be beneficial. Parish meetings may be a good platform to identify interested participants.
- Some areas are working on a design guide setting parameters for housing types and sizes. This approach could help manage local development while awaiting the updated county framework.

7. Welsh Newton Common

7.1. To receive an update on trees on the common.

The council had paid for half the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) with respect to identifying trees for pruning on the common where they were at risk of damaging the recently installed fibre network; this was further to advice from the Open Spaces Society that the parish council will not attract any responsibility or liability for further works by agreeing to pay for half of the survey.

The completed QTRA report had been circulated to councillors and NOTED as thorough and proportionate and is available on the council website.

Graham Brookes, the resident of the common who has been leading on this project on behalf of residents thanked the council for this funding on behalf of the residents and provided an update on likely next steps.

A member of the public left the meeting at 8:17pm

8. Footpaths

8.1. To consider any issues with respect to footpaths

It was NOTED that in Llanrothal parish:

- Several footpath stiles are damaged or unsafe, with some raised too high, needing improvements for better accessibility.
- There is interest in replacing certain stiles with gates, pending landowner consent, to enhance safety and ease of access.

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- Recent flooding has washed away route markers and a gate, necessitating repairs and replacements.

It was also NOTED that in Welsh Newton parish there are some quite dangerous stiles on the route down from Welsh Newton Common to Welsh Newton.

8.2. To consider an update on Public Rights of Way (PRoW) grant funded project work and the Herefordshire Council PRoW Parish Footpath Officer inductions and training and the following was discussed:

- £3,750 allocated for 10 days of work by the lengthsman team to clear and assess footpaths, with minor repairs possible.
- Funding confirmation into next year received for ongoing drainage and PROW work, allowing applications for additional support.
- It is the role of the parish footpath officer will walk and assess local paths, including routes to the church and the Monnow, to identify repairs and accessibility improvements.
- Aim to address barriers, especially for vulnerable residents like an elderly parishioner while maintaining the appropriate security for stock, etc.
- There are upcoming induction sessions and training (including first aid and PPE) for footpath officers, with opportunities for others to participate.
- Training includes practical sessions on managing equipment like brush cutters.
- Explore opportunities to use funding to improve footpath signage, stile replacements, and create more accessible routes.
- Addressing path issues is vital for local walking groups and health initiatives, especially considering flooding and damaged stiles. Local routes around the Monnow and Oaklands are popular but need updating to prevent confusion and enhance safety.

9. Lengthsman, Local Drainage Fund Works and Highways

9.1. To receive an update on the parish visit on Friday 21st March 2025 with the clerk, chair, locality steward and lengthsman and subsequent outputs

Members were updated on the site visit over key sites/issues across the parish. The following actions had been agreed:

- Record and address defects for two direction signs outside the village hall.
- Follow up on the gully issues in the road near the church, aiming for repairs soon.
- Explore installing gates as a traffic calming measure; engage with community commissioning for assistance.
- Prioritize addressing the serious damage and flooding issues near Tregate Bridge and Garne Brook, which were highlighted as urgent.

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- 9.2. To consider work undertaken and work to be carried out by the lengthsman. Routine maintenance has been carried out in Llanrothal parish and at the junction with Welsh Newton. Concerns were raised about the lack of photographs relating to work done though this is a requirement for drawing down grants from Herefordshire Council – in particular the drainage and PRow grants.

It was NOTED that there is a grit bin map for the parish and some work needs to be done on identifying and replacing damaged grit bins, e.g. the one missing near Shobdon.

- 9.3. To receive an update on current local drainage fund projects: No update.

- 9.4. To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty

It was NOTED that two verges were part of Verging on the Wild and would be marked up to not be cut. Also, that Balfour Beatty had filled some potholes near Llanrothal Church but not others, which appeared to be almost equally as big.

10. To consider an update on the Parish Summit which took place Tuesday 8th April 2025

Cllr Parkinson had attended the Parish Summit with the Clerk and REPORTED that apart from PRow, the Parish Charter had been presented with a view to improving the relationship between the Parish Council and County Council by setting clear response times. The effectiveness of this initiative will be reviewed over the next year. Concerns about consultation timelines, typically around 21 working days, were raised, given that many parishes meet roughly once a month. An agreement was made to request an additional two weeks for responses, providing more time for consultation and decision-making.

Cllr Swinglehurst left at 8:59pm

11. To consider the date and format of the Annual Parish Meetings

It was RESOLVED to hold the Annual Parish Meetings on the 8th May 2025 at 7pm at the Village Hall to be followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, and that Cllr Parkinson would confirm this with representatives from local groups who had expressed an interest in participating in the meeting.

12. To consider training for councillors

It was NOTED that the clerk was waiting for a response on training availability from HALC.

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13. Finance

- 13.1. To receive and consider the finance report and the bank reconciliation, including current balances & any transfer of funds:

The Finance Report was reviewed and NOTED.

It was NOTED that the bank balances as of the current date were:

Community Account:	£ 2,763.74
Business Bank Instant Account:	£ 7,018.00
Cambridge and Counties Bond:	£ 10,501.37
Total:	£ 20,283.11

- 13.2. It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:
- 13.2.1. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Llanrothal Parish – Routine Maintenance Day 13/03/2025 – £559.20 (incl. £93.20 VAT)
 - 13.2.2. Autela Payroll Services Limited – Payroll December 2024 to March 2025 – £110.17 (incl. £18.36 VAT)
 - 13.2.3. AAT Tree Services Consultancy – Half of cost of Tree Safety Survey and reporting – Welsh Newton Common – £420 (incl. £70 VAT)
 - 13.2.4. Clerk's salary according to agreed contract for April 2025
 - 13.2.5. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's salary for April 2025
 - 13.2.6. Clerk's mileage and expenses for April 2024 to March 2025 of £44.55 mileage and £54.80 (incl. £9.13 VAT), but excluding electricity meter payments
- 13.3. It was NOTED that the following payments had been made between meetings
- 13.3.1. Lloyds Bank – Bank Service Charges – £4.25
- 13.4. It was NOTED that the following income had been received:
- 13.4.1. Lloyds Bank – Interest on Instant Access Account – March £5.38; April – £5.77
- 13.5. The following contractual/regular payments were approved to be made between meetings: none.
- 13.6. To receive an update on audit and internal control for year ending 2024/25: no update.

14. To consider correspondence between meetings – not already covered under agenda items:

None.

15. Communications – to consider the website, newsletter, and social media, including any updates: No update.

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16. To consider items for the next meeting

Minimal agenda apart from essentials for Annual Meeting of the Parish Council due to Annual Parish Meeting taking place on the same evening.

17. Date of next meeting – Thursday 8th May 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall.

The meeting closed at: 9:28pm

Signed by the Chairman *Sue Parkinson*

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