



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Ordinary Meeting of the Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council held at Llanrothal Church on Thursday 10th July 2025

Minutes

Present: Councillors Sue Parkinson (Chair in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chair), Martin Barter, and Julie Francis

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

Public: 4 including Ward Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst and Yolande Watson (speaker for item 4 from 7:43pm)

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman and in accordance with Standing Order 3p councillors present agreed that Cllr Parkinson would preside at the meeting.

The meeting opened at: 7:45 pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Keith Simmons, Cllr Lissy Tomlinson and Cllr Ed Walker.

2. To receive declarations of interest and written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items

There were none.

3. To agree and sign the minutes of the Group Parish Council meetings held on 10th April 2025, 8th May 2025 and 26th June 2025.

The minutes for the 10th April 2025 and 8th May 2025 were approved and signed by the chair. The remaining minutes are to follow.

The speaker for item 4 arrived at 7:45pm

4. To consider a presentation from Yolande Watson on the CPRE Herefordshire Dark Skies Project

Members were given a presentation on the Dark Skies initiative, led by the CPRE (Council for Protection of Rural England) representative Yolande Watson:

- The initiative aims to protect rural areas from light pollution and promote dark skies for environmental benefits, energy conservation, and biodiversity support, particularly in parishes such as neighbouring Llangrove aiming for dark sky status.

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

- The project involves community engagement with local volunteers who use sky quality meters to monitor light pollution and work towards compliance with dark skies standards, as informed by Dark Skies International.
- The initiative supports local planning efforts by providing data to maintain dark skies in rural areas, enhancing tourism opportunities, and influencing planning applications to ensure compliance with environmental policies.

The council discussed two potential approaches for advancing the Dark Skies initiative:

- Empowering community volunteers who are passionate about the project to lead local efforts.
- Collaborating with neighbouring parishes to create a larger, unified area dedicated to dark skies preservation.

It was RESOLVED to explore options further for consideration with respect to the Dark Skies Initiative for the parish at a future meeting.

The Chair thanked Yolande for her presentation

The speaker, Yolande Watson, left at 8:20pm

5. Public Question Time

Designated maximum period of 15 minutes to accommodate members of the public who may wish to either raise relevant issues or ask the Parish Council questions:

There were none.

6. Reports

- 6.1. There was no Ward Councillor's report available; however, the ward councillor was present, and it reported that food waste collection bins are expected to take about 10 months to be deployed in March 2026 due to contractor mobilization.
- 6.2. To consider a report from the police community support officer (PCSO).
There was none, however it was NOTED that priorities for the parish in terms of policing for the quarter would need to be provided soon for the next quarter.

The lengthsman arrived at 7:45pm

7. Planning

- 7.1. To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
There were none.
- 7.2. To consider an update on recent planning applications considered by the council
It was NOTED that there were no significant updates since the last meeting.

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

7.3. To consider Herefordshire Council Call for Sites and next steps on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Members discussed this with input from the ward councillor, and it was NOTED that:

- The council's call for land submissions is in the early stages to meet higher housing targets (c.30,000 homes) and improve site options.
- Due to government funding cuts, parishes may need to fund their own NDPs, with costs depending on the extent of revisions.
- Planning appeals currently favour NDPs, but decisions remain uncertain amid rising housing demands.
- Parish councils are advised to consider costs (including referenda) and strategic options carefully, with plans to monitor developments over the next year.

It was RESOLVED to maintain a watching brief, pending further developments.

8. To consider an update on trees on the common

The Chair gave an update, and it was NOTED that:

- Planning permission had been granted for tree works on the common, with next steps involving potentially some works on ash dieback being undertaken by the County Council.
- Fundraising among residents and events are planned to support additional tree work, which will be carried out gradually, prioritizing higher-risk trees.
- Ecological surveys, including bat surveys, are necessary before work begins; these are scheduled for late summer or autumn.
- There were communication delays with Balfour Beatty, but escalation led to progress, and it's likely that some work on ash dieback and highway safety will be completed soon.

9. Footpaths, Lengthsman, Local Drainage Fund Works and Highways

9.1. To consider an update on public rights of way in the parish and work required

The Clerk and Cllr Tomlinson had attended a meeting with the lengthsman and the footpaths enforcement officer at LO11 at the current signposted access near Hunters Post and it was NOTED that:

- Access to the path is currently blocked by fences/sheds and there have been some instances of conflict between the landowner and walkers using the path and with members of the lengthsman team.
- The Herefordshire Council enforcement officer had looked at the historic access route which is currently not visible and overgrown and is also on a very steep slope which has previously been subject to landslip.

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

- The enforcement officer was looking to provide a short-term option to avoid this part of the walk while access is resolved and would be speaking with neighbouring landowners to facilitate this.

It was RESOLVED that:

- The council will pursue officially reinstating and legally establishing the longstanding permissive path that has been used by the community for over 30 years, rather than the costly and steep original path.
- The council will coordinate with enforcement officers to ensure the path remains open and accessible.
- The clerk will liaise with the Herefordshire Council enforcement officer to ensure that any works are carried out with the duty of care for visitors, residents and contractors in mind.

It was NOTED that evidence and witness statements from residents need to be collected to support the case for the permissive path's legal recognition and a member of the public present at the meeting volunteered to do this.

- 9.2. To consider work carried out by the lengthsman and any tasks to be carried out
It was NOTED that the council is awaiting photographs and some final invoice and worksheet information for work undertaken and that, once this is received, the invoice and application for reimbursement of the local drainage grant will be completed and submitted.
It was RESOLVED that the clerk investigate the responsibility for clearing the Welsh Newton Bus Stop (by the village hall) and grass in that area due concerns about safety due to its location.
- 9.3. To consider an update on highways and any issues to be reported to Balfour Beatty
No significant highway works are scheduled now, except for resurfacing planned for the A466 through the village, which is in the two-year plan.
- 9.4. To consider initial schemes for the Public Rights of Way and Local Drainage Fund Grant Scheme projects for 2025/26
The lengthsman was not present and it was NOTED that the drainage schemes which had not been delivered in 2025/26 by request of Herefordshire Council/Balfour Beatty would be resubmitted further to the necessary updated information being available.
It was NOTED that the deadline for the drainage project applications is 28th September 2025. PRoW projects can be submitted throughout the year so the focus should be on the drainage projects initially.

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

10. Finance

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

The finance report and bank reconciliation was reviewed.

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

Community Account:	£ 3,978.20
Business Bank Instant Account:	£ 7,037.31
Cambridge and Counties Bond:	£ 10,501.37
Total:	£ 21,516.88

It was NOTED that the anticipated outgoings exceeded the amount available in the community account due to the amounts due for the recently completed drainage projects and that there would be a lead time before the reimbursement of the associated grant funding.

It was NOTED that a transfer of funds would be required further to discussion under item 10.5.

- 10.2. The following payments were APPROVED with any payments to the lengthsman being subject to the necessary photographic evidence and documentation being provided to enable the application for grant reimbursement to be done:

- 10.2.1. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3374 – Llanrothal Parish – LDF Project 004 – U71218 from C1247 to The Parsonage – £2,880 (incl. £480 VAT)
- 10.2.2. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3375 – Llanrothal Parish – LDF Project 005 – C1247 from The Nunnery to U71218 – £1,920 (incl. £320 VAT)
- 10.2.3. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3376 – Llanrothal Parish – LDF Project 009 – U71220/ U71221 Moyles Cross area; Lower Buckholt Farm area – £1,440 (incl. £240 VAT)
- 10.2.4. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3377 – Llanrothal Parish – LDF Project 002 – U71218 Llanrothal Bridge area – £960 (incl. £160 VAT)
- 10.2.5. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3394 – Welsh Newton Parish – LDF Project 001 – U71222 – Tremahaid area - £960.00 (incl. £160.00 VAT)
- 10.2.6. WTG Consultants Ltd – Inv. TG/54/25 Internal Audit 2024/25 – £200 (no VAT)
- 10.2.7. Clerk's salary according to agreed contract for July and August 2025
- 10.2.8. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's salary for July and August 2025
- 10.2.9. Clerk's expenses for Quarter 1 2025/26

Ward Cllr Swinglehurst and a member of the public left the meeting at 9:17pm.

- 10.3. The following payments made between meetings were NOTED:

- 10.3.1. Lloyds Bank – Bank Service Charges – £4.25

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

10.4. The following monies received were NOTED:

10.4.1. Lloyds Bank – Interest on Instant Access Account of £4.05

10.5. To consider reserves including the Cambridge & Counties fixed interest 1-year bond due to mature

It was NOTED that the Cambridge & Counties fixed interest one year bond was due to mature shortly, and it was RESOLVED that the bond would be allowed to mature and that the account would be closed with proceeds, including interest to be transferred to the Community Account. It was RESOLVED to reconsider the investment strategy later in the year should liquidity requirements change.

10.6. To consider a donation in relation to the use of Llanrothal Church for June and July parish council meetings

It was RESOLVED to donate £36.00 to the Churches Conservation Trust under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972, based upon £18.00 per month for the use of the churchyard at St John the Baptist Church, Llanrothal for the parish council meeting.

10.7. To consider the appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2025/26

Following confirmation of value for money, it was RESOLVED to appoint Theresa Goss as internal auditor for 2025/26.

10.8. To consider the procurement of the lengthsman contract for 2025/26 and 2026/27

It was RESOLVED to consider this at a future meeting due to the failing light and reduced number of councillors present.

11. To consider correspondence between meetings – not already covered

There was none.

12. To consider items for the next meeting

Procurement of lengthsman services

13. Date of next meeting – Thursday 11th September 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall.

The meeting closed at: 9:35pm

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *11th September 2025*