



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Ordinary Meeting of the Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council held at Welsh Newton Village Hall on Thursday 11th September 2025

Minutes

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

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

Public: 2 including the ward Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst

The meeting opened at: 7:00pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

There were none.

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

Cllr Tomlinson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 16.

3. To agree and sign the minutes of the Group Parish Council meetings held on 26th June 2025, 10th July 2025 and 31st July 2025.

The minutes for the above meetings were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. 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.

Graham Brookes, the local resident leading on the pruning of trees on the common gave an update on the work which has now been largely completed. The Chair thanked Graham for leading on this work on behalf of the community and NOTED the letter thanking the council (Appendix A)

A query was raised about getting hedges trimmed where they impacted on road safety, in this case the hedges running from Gwenherrion Farm towards the council noticeboard by the phone box. It was explained that this is the responsibility of the landowners, however the clerk is in contact with the Locality Steward on a few issues and will raise this with him.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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5. Reports

5.1. To receive the Ward Councillor's report

Cllr Swinglehurst had not prepared a written report for August, however she spoke about the current budget planning process and issues and reported that:

- There are budget challenges due to potential reductions in central government funding and rising costs.
- A council tax increase is likely, and councils are expected to apply the maximum 4.99% increase (including adult social care precept) to meet their obligations.
- The council has no plans to pursue a referendum to enable the tax cap to be exceeded.
- The focus is on fiscal prudence: prioritizing essential services and cost efficiency while balancing community needs.

5.2. To receive a report from the police community support officer (PCSO)

No officer was present; however, it was NOTED that signs warning against hare coursing been put up in various parts of the parish.

It was RESOLVED that the top three priorities for the parish continue to be: speeding on the A466; general concerns about crime (people would like to make homes and premises more secure); and misuse of bridleways with motorised vehicles and horses.

A member of the public left at 7:49pm

6. Planning

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

6.1.1. **Planning consultation P252352/U** - The Hill Farm Llancloudy Hereford Herefordshire HR2 8QP

Application Type: Certificate of Lawfulness (CLEUD)

Description: Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the erection of an existing building used as an office and ancillary accommodation in relation to the host dwelling at Hill Farm.

It was NOTED that this application followed on from the application for retrospective planning permission application for the same property (241913) which was considered by the parish council 12th September 2025 (item 6.1.2) and was refused by Herefordshire Council at the time.

It was NOTED that the statutory window for enforcement action in this case had been missed by Herefordshire Council under the 4-year rule after the refusal of the retrospective planning application and the council had no plans to request an extension/appeal.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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It was also NOTED that there are other retrospective applications in progress for some time in the parish which remain undetermined and there is a risk that these may be similarly affected by delays in enforcement.

Concerns were also raised about liability for council tax for the new property in this case; the impact on public confidence in the planning system; health and safety risks in relation to developments without planning permission and possibly a lack of other safety measures, e.g. building control.

It was RESOLVED that the clerk draft a letter to be sent to Herefordshire Council Planning Enforcement to voice the council's disappointment and concerns with respect to this failure of enforcement and ask for an explanation; to query liability with respect to council tax and to register concerns about systemic enforcement failures and ask for action to be taken to address these.

- 6.2. To consider an update on recent planning applications considered by the council. It was NOTED that the application 251782 had been approved with conditions. This was for the land lying west of Lower Cwm Farm, Llanrothal, Hereford, Herefordshire NP25 5RW – Proposed provision of track for access and prevention of soil erosion (Retrospective). And that the conditions had addressed the concerns raised by the parish council further to consideration of the application at the meeting in June (item 7.1.2).

7. Footpaths, Lengthsman, Local Drainage Fund Grants and Highways

- 7.1. To consider an update on public rights of way in the parish and work required and to consider initial schemes for the Public Rights of Way grants 2025/26

It was NOTED that the PRow grant applications for installation of the gates purchased under the previous year's PRow funding would be prepared following the preparation and submission of the drainage grant funding and that these would cover at a minimum:

- The installation of kissing gates on the path from Welsh Newton Common (by Newton House) down to the church at Welsh Newton (WNN2, WNN1 & WNN9).
- The replacement/installation of two stiles in Llanrothal (paths LO4 and LO5).

It was NOTED that further grant applications for the PRow network would be dependent on the funds available further to the drainage grant applications.

It was NOTED that the Parish Footpaths Officer will be visiting paths in the parish to establish where other work maybe required, but that footpaths LO14 from Buckholt Woods down to The Old Shop and LO11 from The Old Shop to Hunters Post are likely to require work. It was also NOTED that LO11 has been closed by Herefordshire Council enforcement at the Hunters Post end.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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- 7.2. To consider work carried out by the lengthsman and any tasks to be carried out and to consider schemes for the Local Drainage Fund Grant Scheme projects for 2025/26

It was NOTED that the Lengthsman had been instructed to clear the Market Path from Myrtle Cottage to Newton Lodge (part of footpath WNN10) due to overgrowth of shrubs. This work had been completed to a high standard, and the path was clear. It was NOTED that an invoice had been received for payment for this work after the agenda had been published and it was RESOLVED to make this payment and report it at the next meeting.

It was NOTED that initial drainage assessments had been done as a part of the site visit with the Locality Steward and Lengthsman and these included:

- Newton Lodge to Great Oaks silt removal and concreting of grips – delayed from last year at the request of Herefordshire Council/Balfour Beatty to be resubmitted
- Tregate Castle pipe replacement – delayed from last year at the request of Herefordshire Council/Balfour Beatty
- Possible projects related to water pooling at Welsh Newton by the Noticeboard and near the Nunnery.
- Various ditching projects up to £4,000 grant

It was NOTED that the deadline for grant application for drainage projects to be submitted to Herefordshire Council is 28th September 2025.

- 7.3. To consider an update on highways and any issues to be reported to Balfour Beatty including an update on the collapsing culvert at Garn Brook and the site visit with the Locality Steward on 5th September 2025

It was NOTED that Cllrs Walker and Parkinson had met with the Clerk, the Lengthsman and the new Locality Steward to visit various sites around the parish related to drainage projects (see item 7.2). The meeting had been positive and constructive.

Attendees visited the collapsing culvert at Garn Brook where major repairs are required, and barriers and cones have been installed. The Locality Steward had forwarded the drainage engineer's report following this visit, which was NOTED, and he would escalate the project with Balfour Beatty.

It was RESOLVED that the clerk would contact the Locality Steward to obtain an update on status on Garn Brook and the outcome of escalation, also to highlight that there is some cracking to Tregate Bridge on the Herefordshire side. It was also RESOLVED that Cllr Francis would check if there were any issues with the coping stones on the bridge.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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- 7.4. To consider gritting and other measures for the autumn/winter seasons.
It was NOTED that the lengthsman has three bags of grit remaining for refilling bins where Herefordshire Council do not do so and it was RESOLVED that the clerk contact Herefordshire Council to establish the process for obtaining additional grit.

8. Finance

- 8.1. To receive and consider the finance report for month ending 31st August 2025 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:	£ 18,550.66
Business Bank Instant Account:	£ 7,045.66
Cambridge and Counties Bond:	£ 0.00 (Account closed)
Total:	£ 25,596.32

It was NOTED that funds had stabilised after a period of low liquidity (reported at the previous meeting) due to the need to pay invoices for work carried out on drainage and PRow projects prior to reimbursement by Herefordshire Council and that the matured 1-year fixed interest Cambridge and Counties fixed interest bond.

It was NOTED that a transfer of funds would be required further to discussion under item 8.5.

- 8.2. The following payments were approved:
- 8.2.1. Parish Online – Inv. 00GA221-0005 – Website Service – £378.00 (incl. £63.00 VAT)
 - 8.2.2. Autela Payroll Servies Limited – Inv. 16040 – Payroll charges April 2025 to August 2025 – £84.00 (incl. £14.00 VAT)
 - 8.2.3. Clerk's salary according to agreed contract for September 2025
 - 8.2.4. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's salary for September 2025
- 8.3. The following payments made between meetings were NOTED:
- 8.3.1. Open Spaces Society – Inv. 78989/25 – £45.00 (no VAT)
 - 8.3.2. Lloyds Bank – Service Charges for July and August 2025 – £4.25 and £4.25 (no VAT)
- 8.4. The following monies received were NOTED:
- 8.4.1. Herefordshire Council – reimbursement of drainage grant fund expenditure – £9,600.00
 - 8.4.2. Herefordshire council – reimbursement of PRow grant expenditure – £3,693.00
 - 8.4.3. Lloyds Bank – interest on reserve account – July 2025 and August 2025 – £4.05 and £4.45

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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- 8.5. It was NOTED that there had been a receipt of £11,047.44 from the Cambridge & Counties 1-year fixed interest bond which had been paid into the current account upon maturity.

It was RESOLVED to transfer £10,000 from the current account to the savings account.

- 8.6. To consider establishing a finance working group

It was RESOLVED to establish a finance working group to streamline budget processes and governance. It was RESOLVED that members of the group be Cllr Walker, Cllr Simmons and the clerk/RFO and that the initial focus will be on 2025/26 budget planning, internal controls and simplifying financial reporting.

9. To consider attendance at the Herefordshire Tree Wardens Anniversary Event 18th September 2025

There were no councillors available to attend on that date.

10. To receive an update on the powers and duties with respect to churchyards and burial grounds and consider attendance at a meeting on 17th September 2025 about the future of the church at Llanrothal

It was NOTED that:

- The church building is registered in the name of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).
- Current upkeep of the church and surrounding church yard relies on local volunteers and the PCC.
- The parish council (or county council) cannot legally assume responsibility for the churchyard unless it has been formally "closed".
- Legislation has recently been introduced to enable Local Councils to donate to the upkeep of Anglican churches/church yards if they wish to do so.

There is a meeting on the 17th September re the plan for the church which will be run by the CCT and Cllr Francis will be in attendance.

11. To consider the maintenance of the Speed Indicator Devices

It was RESOLVED that the clerk arrange for the service of the Speed Indicator Devices which it had been agreed would be two-yearly based on usage.

12. To consider the status of the defibrillators and approve the refresh of consumables as needed

It was RESOLVED that the clerk check and document the defibrillator status identifying when new pads/parts will be needed and arrange for the procurement and replacement of those parts as needed.

Signed by the Chairman

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13. To consider next steps for the parish further to the CPRE Herefordshire Dark Skies presentation at the parish council meeting in July 2025

It was RESOLVED to consider joining the dark skies initiative collaborating with neighbouring parishes which have already achieved Dark Skies status, sharing details via the new website and noticeboards and strengthening policies to limit light pollution in new developments.

Cllr Parkinson volunteered to liaise with the village hall with a view to booking a stall at an event, the Christmas Fayre, if possible and raising awareness with residents.

14. To consider correspondence between meetings

Correspondence from National Highways re road closures for repairs to A40 (following the Landslip) and HALC were NOTED.

15. To consider items for the next meeting

Drainage/PRoW Grants

Procurement of the lengthsman service and succession planning

A resolution was passed to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to consider a confidential employment matter.

Ward Cllr Swinglehurst and Cllr Lissy Tomlinson left the meeting at 9:01pm

16. Employment matters

It was RESOLVED to award the NALC approved national pay award backdated to 1st April 2025.

It was RESOLVED that, further to internal audit recommendations and advice from HALC, the clerk will investigate the options and costs re provision the home working allowance and pension.

17. Date of next meeting – Thursday 9th October 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall.

The meeting closed at: 9:10 pm

Signed by the Chairman

Dated