



WELSH NEWTON LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Ordinary Meeting of the Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council held at Welsh Newton Village Hall on Thursday 10th October 2025

Minutes

Present: Cllrs Keith Simmons (Chair), Martin Barter, Julie Francis, Sue Parkinson (from 7:32pm) and Lissy Tomlinson

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

Public: none

The meeting opened at: 7:30pm

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr 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 meeting held on 9th September 2025.

It was RESOLVED to approve the draft minutes for the above meeting and they were signed by the meeting 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.

Cllr Francis raised a concern about multiple road closures which had affected residents of Llanrothal. The signs had been removed by the day of the meeting, but the residents had effectively been “shut in” for a week with no advance notice.

5. Reports

5.1. To receive the Ward Councillor’s report

Cllr Swinglehurst was not present, but her September report was NOTED and the Chair highlighted the primary issues in the report which largely related to the funding challenges facing Herefordshire Council.

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

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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No officer was present; however, information re speeding had been circulated to councillors and it was NOTED that local speed monitoring sessions were continuing, conducted by the PCSO.

6. Planning

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

6.1.1. Planning consultation 252412 - Land at Pyefinch Wood, Welsh Newton, Monmouth, Herefordshire NP25 5RL

Application Type: Works to trees covered by TPO

Description: Numerous diseased and dangerous ash trees within falling reach of the public right of way. Intend to fell all ash within section 17a (on map) and the immediate vicinity of the path and then replant with the species listed in the management plan

It was NOTED that it was necessary to deal with ash dieback and it was RESOLVED to SUPPORT the application.

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 application had been submitted for drainage scheme grants to Herefordshire Council by the required deadline and additional information was being provided
- Scheme is over-subscribed this year
- An email had been received from Henry Snell regarding drainage grant applications and confirming no funding available for updating drainage asset database
- Council will be contacted within next few weeks regarding outcomes
- Two delayed projects from previous years included in application
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) applications to follow once drainage grants have been awarded

7.2. To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman during the next month
It was RESOLVED that the Clerk order a Remembrance Day wreath (approximately £25) and that the Lengthsman be asked to put in more gravel and tidy up the area.

7.3. To consider any issues to be reported to Balfour Beatty
It was RESOLVED to follow up with the locality steward on the following issues:

- Road surface from Pleck to edge of Parish - Pembridge Castle Pitch area - road surface broken down

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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- Mount Pleasant area issues (road damaged on Manson Lane opposite Buckholt Wood access)

8. Finance

- 8.1. To receive and consider the finance report for month ending 31st September 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:	£ 14,438.24
Business Bank Instant Account:	£ 17,045.66
Total:	£ 31,483.90

It was NOTED that:

- There has been limited financial activity since the last meeting following the fund transfer agreed at the previous meeting.
- The village hall had been booked for the following Thursday for council training to be conducted by HALC and that this would cost £18.00.
- VAT claims are to be submitted which will be done by the clerk further to clarity on the handling of some items of expenditure.
- A shared banking retail service had been opened in Monmouth and that Lloyds is participating in this along with other retail banks following the local branch closures.

- 8.2. The following payments were approved:

8.2.1. Clerk's salary according to agreed contract for October 2025

8.2.2. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's salary for October 2025

It was NOTED that payment of the clerk's salary was due on the 25th of each month and that payroll reports were normally published after the month's meetings. It was RESOLVED that the clerk will check with the payroll provider how this process might be automated/streamlined to ensure timely payment.

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

8.3.1. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Inv. TGC3479 – PRoW Maintenance and Repair – WNN10 – £300 (incl. £50 VAT)

8.3.2. Lloyds Bank – Service Charges for September 2025 – £4.25 (0% VAT)

- 8.4. The following monies received were NOTED:

8.4.1. Herefordshire Council – second tranche of 2025/26 precept – £ 7,228.25

8.4.2. Lloyds Bank – interest on reserve account – September 2025 – £3.90

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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9. To consider procurement of the lengthsman service

The clerk had sought advice on the procurement process from HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils), and it was NOTED that Herefordshire Council had identified at the parish summit, that there is a shortage of lengthsman across Herefordshire which makes procurement more complex.

It was also NOTED that:

- There is a need to ensure proper procurement process with multiple choices
- A multi-parish procurement approach could be considered perhaps partnering with neighbouring parishes
- The current lengthsman has a very in-depth knowledge of the parish and it is important to capture this information and also map the information onto the Herefordshire Council and the parish council's own database.

It was RESOLVED that the council consider funding some additional time for the clerk to create an up-to-date asset database before any contractor changes and that the matter of procurement be raised with HALC at the parish council training session the following week.

10. To receive an update from Cllr Parkinson on the Herefordshire Parish Summit held 7th September 2025

Cllr Parkinson REPORTED on the following key items:

- **Parish Charter:** Partnership agreement between Herefordshire Council and parishes; defines relationship expectations and response timeframes; includes 21-day response targets
- **Strategic Planning:** Update on neighbourhood development plans; recent government commitment to continue funding for neighbourhood planning; letter received from Chief Planner at MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) during the summit confirming funding commitment; more positive outlook than initial presentation suggested
- **Devolution and Boundary Commission:** potential three-county mayoral authority combining Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire; not expected to affect Herefordshire significantly in near term; Herefordshire expected to maintain distinct identity
- **Highways and Drainage Update (Councillor Dan Hurle):** Statistics: £178,000 spent on 550 PRoW assets last year; no set deadline for PRoW applications; discussion of clearing footpaths and BOATs (Byways open to all traffic)
- **Housing Requirements:** Mandatory target: 27,216 new houses for Herefordshire; Parishes can request their nominal allocation based on parish type and connectivity

It was RESOLVED that the council request the housing numbers allocated to this parish from Herefordshire Council.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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11. 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

Cllr Francis REPORTED that:

- **Meeting Context:** Hosted by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) local officer; CCT cannot afford necessary work beyond structural essentials; No contributions received from community; Challenge posed: "What is the community going to do?"
- **Major Work Required: Church Porch** - roof dip, gap between ridge tiles and roof - most urgent; **Altar Area** - further damage requiring attention; **Exterior Degradation** - wrong paint used previously, community responsible for repainting cost estimated at £8,500
- **CCT Actions:** Will undertake work to stop roof falling in; Will try to fund the two roof repair sections
- **Community Actions:** WhatsApp group set up for volunteering; Parish church plan will be updated; Visitor donation rate currently approximately 16p per person
- **Responsibility for the churchyard:** this does not fall to the CCT but to the diocese and members from St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) who accept that there is some responsibility for churchyard
- **Insurance:** CCT has insured the building; Events and volunteer work can be covered if CCT notified in advance
- **Clerk's Actions:** In touch with diocese regarding responsibilities and what can/cannot happen

12. To consider the locations and bookings required for future parish council meetings

It was NOTED that HALC have advised the council that that Council meetings should not take place at the St John the Baptist Church in Llanrothal or in its churchyard which are still consecrated but also has accessibility issues and no bathroom facilities.

It was RESOLVED to hold the future summer meetings at the Welsh Newton Village Hall and that ordinary full council meetings will continue to take place on the second Thursday of each month (excluding August and December) and that the clerk will book the Welsh Newton Village Hall for meetings through to the end of the financial year (March 2026).

13. To consider correspondence between meetings

There was no additional correspondence for discussion.

14. To consider items for inclusion on the website/social media

It was NOTED that:

- Website migration to new provider now complete
- Clerk updating content when time permits but that there is quite a lot of work to do
- More secure email system now in place

Signed by the Chairman

Dated



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- Improved ability to manage content and structure
- Plans to add news items, maps, historical information
- Councillor photographs and biographies needed

It was RESOLVED that all councillors will provide up to date photographs and brief biographies to the clerk for inclusion on the website.

It was NOTED that a Christmas Fayre is due to take place at the village hall on 13th December and that this could be an opportunity to connect with residents and highlight opportunities to get involved, also Dark Skies information, for example and that Cllr Parkinson will look at the possibility of doing this.

15. To consider items for the next meeting

- Draft budget for 2025/26 - will include budget monitoring to date
- Herefordshire Parish Charter - consideration of adoption
- Lengthsman way forward - procurement approach

16. Date of next meeting – Thursday 13th November 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall.

The meeting closed at: 9:21 pm

Signed by the Chairman

Dated