



# 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 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.30pm

# Minutes

**Present:** Councillors Martin Barter (Chair), Keith Simmons, Julie Francis, Ed Walker

**In attendance:** Andrée Mitchell (Clerk)

**Public:** 4

**Cllr Parkinson (Vice chair) opened the meeting at: 7:30pm**

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

There were none.

**2. To receive declarations of interest and written dispensation requests**

There were none.

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

There was one applicant for one of the vacant posts for Welsh Newton Parish who had been resident in the Parish for three-years.

It was RESOLVED to co-opt Elisabeth Tomlinson onto the Parish Council, by unanimous vote and she was invited to join members where she signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**4. To agree and sign the minutes of the Group Parish Council meeting held on 19th December 2024 and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.**

The minutes were not yet available and would be brought to a future meeting pending finance work.

**5. Public Question Time**

The secretary for the Village Hall Committee was present and briefed members on work being taken to raise funds to update the hall:

- Applying for up to £250,000 (Community Spaces Capital Grant) for heating improvements and possibly an extension—requires three quotes per contractor: deadline March 6th, 2025.
- “WOW” Grant application: £1,500 for free annual community event.

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

Dated *26<sup>th</sup> June 2025*



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- Looking to enable better use of the hall and more services for local residents, e.g. potentially GP surgery visits, subject to NHS participation.
- Support requested from Parish Council (in-principle, not monetary).

*It was RESOLVED to bring item 9 forward.*

## 6. Reports

### 6.1. To consider the Ward Councillor's report

The Ward Councillor was not present, and the report was NOTED. The Chair highlighted the fact the Welsh Newton Common had been reclassified as an RD2 "non-sustainable location," reducing likelihood of development approvals.

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

There was no new report from PCSO. However, Cllr Parkinson had left an update for the meeting re Smartwater:

- Aim: Mark valuables for theft prevention.
- Requirement: 80% household sign-up, £9 per participating property.

It was RESOLVED to investigate the costs and potential for combining event with another community gathering.

## 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. Clerk circulated current list of applications/decisions since April. It was NOTED that the application [P241913](#) re the ancillary building at Hill Farm, Llancloudy, has been refused.

Members agreed to wait for the next updates from Herefordshire Council.

## 8. Welsh Newton Common

Graham Brookes, briefed councillors on the consultation undertaken re the pruning of trees on the common affecting fibre infrastructure. He reported that:

- The meeting in early February had been well attended and constructive and a walk round had been arranged for this Saturday with a small cross-section of representative people including residents and commoners.
- A variety of community engagement methods had been used to engage with residents including WhatsApp group, notice boxes in public locations for offline responses, and hand delivery of notes. This had resulted in views from representatives of half of the properties across a broad spectrum.

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- Engaged with Openreach – unhelpful. They will only come out when the network is broken.
- Tree maintenance near power lines is DNO's (Distribution Network Operator) responsibility.
- Surveys/Ecology: Village's own trained ecologists have offered to survey for protected species (bats, dormice, etc.).

It was NOTED that the Ward Cllr had asked for clarification on the status of the TPO at Welsh Newton and the process around dealing with the tree pruning for protection of utilities. Tree Preservation Order (TPO): Applies to area (since 1970); all works require formal permission. The Ward Cllr had asked planning for clarification on this.

## 9. **Footpaths** – to consider any issues with respect to footpaths and receive an update on PRoW

Cllr Francis raised a concern about way markers and re-routing of the public footpath near Llanrothal Barns and that new way markers were being put up as walkers were getting stuck.

It was NOTED that the lead on the PRoW at Herefordshire Council is on long term leave and this has delayed the footpaths programme and associated training.

## 10. **Lengthsman** – to consider work undertaken and work to be carried out by the lengthsman No update.

## 11. **Local Drainage Fund** – to receive an update on local drainage grant fund applications and next steps.

It was NOTED that the deadline for completion of works has now formally been moved to the end of June 2025. The lengthsman was not present so an update on projects was not available.

Repeated ditch blockages and road ice on the pitch by the Nunnery, caused by spring runoff; need to inspect culverts and manage field runoff. To be discussed with the Lengthsman and Locality steward.

## 12. **Highways**

### 12.1. To receive an update on the annual plan presentations from Herefordshire Council/Balfour Beatty.

The presentations had been circulated to councillors, and it was NOTED that similar levels of funding were due to continue with the lengthsman scheme and PRoW and drainage grants.

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

It was NOTED that the clerk had been contacted by a Llanrothal resident about the damaged and dirty signage on the A466 through Welsh Newton. Also, about potholes near the Nunnery and Lower Skenchill Farm. The clerk had requested a site meeting

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with the new Locality Steward to cover this and a variety of other issues around the parish.

## 12.3. To receive an update on gritting and bad weather actions

It was also NOTED that the Welsh Newton/Llangrove road is a secondary gritting route because it is a school route and should regularly be gritted.

It was NOTED that there didn't appear to be evidence of grit being taken from bins for personal use recently.

## 13. Finance

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

The up-to-date transaction statements and report were shared with councillors, and it was NOTED that the bank balances as of the current date in the Lloyds Account were:

Treasurer's Account:	£7,317.14
Business bank instant account:	£7,112.62
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£14,329.76</b>

In addition, it was NOTED that the money deposited in the Cambridge & Counties fixed term bond is **£10,501.34** (matures June 2025), total funds £24,831.13.

It was NOTED that the major grants of £ 3,276.00 (Lengthsman), £ 3,750.00 (PRoW, pending PO) and £ 12,250.00 (drainage fund) that had been applied for and awarded totalled £ 19,276.00, though this would not be claimed until the new financial year and once work was completed due to the extension on grants for PRoW and Drainage. Also, that such high levels of grant funding and the associated expenditure would likely tip the council over the £25k income/expenditure level for a limited assurance review in 2025/26.

It was NOTED that to date £1,320.46 VAT which was mainly paid on lengthsman, and professional fees would be reclaimable, and this would be done in the new financial year.

### 13.2. It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:

- 13.2.1. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Welsh Newton Parish – Routine Maintenance Day December 2024 – £559.20 (incl. £93.20 VAT)
- 13.2.2. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Urgent Task – Jet and flush out blocked drainage network and clearance of Silt U71223 (Road to Great Hall from Telephone Box on WN Common) 2024 – £420 (incl. £70 VAT)
- 13.2.3. Terry Griffiths Contracts – Llanrothal Parish – Routine Maintenance Day 06/01/2025 – £559.20 (incl. £93.20 VAT)
- 13.2.4. Parish Online Mapping Software annual subscription – £48 (incl. £8 VAT)
- 13.2.5. Clerk's February salary as per agreed contract

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- 13.2.6. HMRC – PAYE for clerk's February salary
- 13.3. To note payments made between meetings: There were none.
- 13.3.1. Information Commissioners Office – Annual payment – £35 (no VAT)
- 13.4. To confirm monies received:
- 13.4.1. Lloyds Bank – Interest on Instant Access Account – January 2025 – £5.95
- 13.5. To consider the budget for 2025/26 and set the precept

The clerk presented the budget monitor to date, the anticipated position at the end of the year and the workings and rationale for the projected requirements and options.

The clerk provided three draft budget scenarios:

- Option 1: Keep precept at £13,900.
- Option 2: Increase precept in line with new tax base, to £14,456.50 (keeping the cost per Band D property\* the same at £88.47).
- Option 3: Higher figure (£18,250) showing effect of raising per-household contribution to balance the budget

(\*Band D "equivalent" is the local authority's measure for average property for tax distribution.)

It was NOTED that the precept had remained the same since at least 2021/22 and that since that time the number of Band D equivalent properties had increased by 10% and had increased by 4% since last year. It was NOTED that by holding precept flat, but with rising inflation and more properties in the parish, the council's precept per property has reduced from £93 to £85 per Band D equivalent property over several years reducing funds available to deliver parish services while prices increase.

It was NOTED that the parish still has good reserves and councillors supported a continued cautious approach; hold the per-Band D household precept at £88.47 (as now), increasing the overall precept amount from £13,900 to £14,456.50. This keeps the parish precept stable on a per-household basis, a benefit for cost-of-living. It was RESOLVED to approve the draft budget (option 2) and to set the precept at £14,456.50. The budget as agreed is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

## 14. To consider correspondence between meetings

Key items covered in agenda.

## 15. Communications

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Tomlinson will come to the next meeting with recommendations re the website and future useability as this is an area of expertise.

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**16. To consider items for the next meeting**

Lengthsman, reserves, possibly resilience/fire risk planning.

**17. To consider a resolution 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.**

It was NOTED that the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024/25 had been published and it was RESOLVED to approve the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024/25 and back date it to 1st April 2024.

**18. Date of next meeting** – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Welsh Newton Village Hall.

**The meeting closed at: 9:35 pm**

Signed by the Chairman *Ed Walker*

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