

YAC

4/2026

YARKHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on
Thursday 26th February 2026 at 19.00 in Yarkhill Village Hall

Present

Councillors: Ian Carr, Steve Kirby and Nicholas Higham.

In attendance

Lynda Wilcox ... Meeting Cover from HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils).
Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester, Seven members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence ...** There were none – all councillors present.
2. **Declarations of interest and written dispensation requests ...** There were none.
3. **HALC meeting cover @ £275.00.**
 - 3.1 It was RESOLVED to access HALC meeting cover for the meeting.
4. **Co-option to fill a current vacancy.**
 - 4.1 Having moved into the parish three years' ago, Lucy Allfrey informed the meeting that she had grown up surrounded by parish council business and felt that it was time she became involved herself.
It was unanimously RESOLVED to co-opt Lucy Allfrey, who signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took her place at the table.
5. **Minutes of parish council meetings held on 15.1.26 and 22.9.25.**
 - 5.1 It was RESOLVED to adopt the above minutes as true records of the meetings held.
6. **Finance ...** The Bank balance was noted as £20,354.46.
 - 6.1 Internal Audit Report 2024/25 ... As the report had only just been finalised, it was RESOLVED to consider it at the March meeting, to enable councillors to be fully au fait with its contents.
 - 6.2 Outstanding payments ... It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:
 - 6.2.1 Newsletter printing - £60.

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Original Internal Audit fee - £100. The Acting RFO commented that although the cost of the original audit had not been known or authorised by Council, the outgoing Clerk had given the instruction and the recipient would have assumed it was a Council request, therefore the payment was being honoured.
Hall Hire £50.

6.3 Draft 2026/7 budget precept for 2026/2027.

6.3.1 Members considered the budget prepared by the Acting RFO who gave a brief summary of anticipated expenditure.

6.3.2 It was unanimously RESOLVED to set a precept of £9,000.00.

7. **Lengthsman ...** Appointment of new Lengthsman for 2026/7:

It was unanimously RESOLVED to appoint Dave Campbell of DC Gardening as the Parish Lengthsman for 2026/7.

7.1 It was further agreed to accept DC Gardening's quote for general work at £25 per hour and drainage work within grant monies for 2025/2026.

7.2 The Lengthsman would be asked to look at a problem with a pipe at the top of Watery Lane, which might be a matter for Herefordshire Council.

8. **Open Session**

8.1 Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester gave a brief verbal report including:

8.1.1 A further £5m had been allocated to deal with road maintenance.

8.1.2 Although during 2024 government had agreed to fund a new school for children with special needs, only £3.8m was now available to adapt main stream schools, even though Herefordshire had already undertaken such adaptations.
The cost of building a new school would have been cheaper than the ongoing cost of bussing children with special needs outside the county.

8.1.3 35 out of the 53 Herefordshire Ward Councillors had voted for the capital budget and 48 had voted in favour of the revenue budget.

8.1.4 The Fairer Funding Review favoured urban areas and had 'robbed' Herefordshire of £17m.

8.1.5 The 4.99% council tax increase for the next 3 years would lead to a £30m gap.

8.1.6 Worcestershire had borrowed £30m from government last year and will be borrowing £72m this year – therefore £100m over the last 2 years.

8.1.7 Shropshire was around £300m in debt.

8.1.8 A three county model was under discussion for the proposed devolution deal.

8.1.9 On 1st June 2026, MGroup would be taking over the service contract previously delivered by Balfour Beatty.

8.1.10 Locality Stewards would be taken in house by Herefordshire Council.

8.1.11 The next Parish Summit for councillors and clerks would be held on Tuesday 3rd March.

8.2 Views of residents on parish matters included:

8.2.1 A local resident thanked the councillors for their efforts.

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9. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

- 9.1 It was RESOLVED that a review of the NDP would be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting which would be held prior to 1st June 2026.

10. Updates and considered action:

- 10.1 The new .gov website was up and running but it would take time to populate it with information due to the original parish council website having been taken down without permission.
- 10.2 A response from the Information Commissioner concerning a reported data breach, was awaited.

11. Proposed meeting dates for 2026 subject to hall availability:

2nd April, 7th May, 4th June, 2nd July, 3rd September, 1st October, 5th November.

12. Resolution to exclude the public from the following confidential item.

- 12.1 It was RESOLVED to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the following confidential employment matter.

Members of the public and the Ward Councillor left the meeting.

13. Employment Matters

- 13.1 Retrieval of all parish council property: Update and considered action.
It was RESOLVED to take all appropriate action to retrieve parish council property from the outgoing clerk.
- 13.2 Update and considered action on recruitment process.
As yet, there were no applications for the post of Clerk/RFO.

The Chair closed the meeting at 20.10

SIGNED

John Can

DATE

2nd April 2026