



Yarkhill Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on
Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 7.00pm
At Yarkhill Village Hall, Yarkhill, Herefordshire, HR1 3ST**

Present: Cllr I Carr – Chair
Cllrs L Alfrey, S Kirby and J Snell (joined at 7.20pm)

In attendance: E. M. Greenfield - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
(joined at 7.15pm)

Members of the Public: There were 2 members of the public

1. **TO CONSIDER A RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA ITEM 2**
RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from Agenda Item 2 (Employment Matters) pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the business.

2. **EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**
2.1 To consider employment of a new Clerk/RFO and terms of Contract

2.1.1 Employment Commencement Date
2.1.2 Core hours per week + additional project hours
2.1.3 Salary Scale

RESOLVED: To appoint Earl Michael Greenfield as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, with a commencement date of 2 April 2026, under the terms set out in the contract of employment.

The Clerk joined the meeting at 7.15pm

3. **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Cllr N Higham
Cllr J Lester (Ward Councillor) report as attached was NOTED.
4. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WRITTEN DISPENSATION REQUESTS**
None received

5. **TO CO-OPT A LOCAL RESIDENT TO FILL A PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY**

The Chair introduced the local resident and provided a summary of his background.

RESOLVED: That James Snell be co-opted onto the council.
Following the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office,
witnessed by the Clerk, Cllr Snell joined the meeting at 7.20pm.

6. **TO CONSIDER MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2026**

It was proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th February 2026 be accepted as read and correct.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th February 2026 be accepted as read and correct.
The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

7. **FINANCE**

7.1 To note the bank balance

Cllr Kirby presented the bank statement as of 01.04.2026.

The balance was £17,845.39.

This balance includes £3,620.00 from Herefordshire Council for the Lengthsman Grant.

The Chair thanked Herefordshire Council for the grant.

NOTED

7.2 AUDIT 2024/25

7.2.1 Internal Audit

Members considered the Internal Audit Report, dated 25 February 2026, prepared by the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC).

The report identified several governance and financial concerns, which have impacted the submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2024/25 financial year to the external auditor.

It was noted that a plan will be required to address the recommendations made by HALC and the external auditor, to ensure future compliance.

Members further noted that there may be ongoing compliance considerations for the 2025/26 financial year. Accordingly, it was agreed that Cllr Kirby and the Clerk will liaise with the external auditor to address these matters.

It was also agreed that the HALC Internal Audit Report would be published on the Council's website.



RESOLVED:

- That Cllr Kirby and the Clerk will liaise with the external auditor regarding compliance requirements.
- That an Action Plan will be developed based on the recommendations from HALC.
- That the HALC Internal Audit Report would be published on the Council's website.

7.2.2 Governance Statement

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 be approved.

7.2.3 Statement of Accounts

Members reviewed the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25

RESOLVED:

- That the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 be approved.
- That the Explanations to Negative responses on the 2024/25 AGAR be approved.
- That the Explanation of Variances 2024/25 be approved, subject to Box 9 being amended to £718.00 for that year.
- That the External Auditor's costs be approved.

7.2.4 Dates for Exercise of Public Rights

The Chair advised that it would be suitable to have one meeting date for 2024/25 & 2025/26 to undertake the Exercise of Public Rights.

This would provide the public with the opportunity to review the council's accounts, for those periods, on the same day.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Kirby and the Clerk liaise with the External Auditor to ascertain suitable dates for the Exercise of Public Rights.

7.3 TO CONSIDER OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS INCLUDING

7.3.1 Hall Hire £18.00

RESOLVED: That the payment of £18.00 for Hall Hire be approved.

7.3.2 HALC Internal Audit £275 and two meeting covers @£275 each total £825+VAT

RESOLVED: That the payment of £825+VAT for HALC be approved.



8. **LENGTHSMAN**

8.1 Invoice for General Lengthsman duties – March 2026 £620+VAT

RESOLVED: That the payment of £620 + VAT for general Lengthsman duties be approved.

8.2 Drainage Grants from Herefordshire Council

8.2.1 Invoice for work undertaken by Lengthsman £3,000 + VAT

RESOLVED: That the payment of £3,000+VAT for works undertaken by the Lengthsman be approved.

8.2.2 To receive an update on grant application for works undertaken during 2025/26

The Chair updated Council on a forthcoming meeting at Plough Lane, the purpose of which is to identify the works required for the current financial year and to clarify the applicable criteria.

It was noted that discussions with the Lengthsman have highlighted several key issues and questions that will need to be addressed at this meeting.

8.2.3 To consider applying for a drainage grant during financial year 2026/27

The Chair noted that an additional grant of £2,236.90 had previously been available to the Council from Herefordshire Council under the 2025/26 Drainage Grant (Lengthsman Scheme for ditching works). However, the application was not progressed, and the Council had instead benefitted from an earlier grant from the County.

The Chair advised that establishing clear criteria and parish priorities will be essential to effectively progressing the Lengthsman Scheme within Yarkhill.

8.3 Locality Steward Tour

The Chair updated Council on the role of the Locality Steward. It was noted that Herefordshire Council employs Locality Stewards to visit local areas, monitor the condition of the public realm and associated assets, and report identified issues.

Members were advised that the current Locality Steward, Mike Brookes, has visited the parish and met with the Chair and Cllr Kirby. Several locations have been provided to him, based on the Lengthsman Report and councillor observations, with the aim of arranging for drains to be jet washed and cleared.

The Chair reported that, from May 2026, Balfour Beatty will no longer hold the public realm contract with Herefordshire Council. Responsibility for the Locality Steward function will transfer directly to Herefordshire Council, with Mike Brooks remaining in post. It is anticipated that this change may improve response times to issues raised by residents and councillors.



9. **OPEN SESSION**

9.1 To receive a brief verbal report from Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester
The Chair reported Cllr Lester's apologies and commented that a Parish Council Briefing Note had been provided.

The Chair thanked Cllr Lester, in his absence, for the Briefing Note.

9.2 To receive views of residents on parish matters

- a) Members of the public commented on the parish owned notice boards and that a few of them had condensation, seemed mouldy, had damaged lock and doors (due to vandalism), and required updating or replacing.

It was commented that the Monkhide Noticeboard may need replacing and another may need securing to a solid wall.

RESOLVED: That Members visit the noticeboard locations and report to Full Council on possible follow-up actions.

- b) Residents raised queries regarding the use of the parish noticeboards and the permissions required.

The Clerk advised that, as the noticeboards are Council assets, permission must be obtained from the Council prior to displaying any literature, posters, or advertisements. Approval for such material is at the Council's discretion, and any items displayed without prior permission may be removed.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk issues guidance to the public confirming that prior permission must be obtained from the Council before any material is displayed on parish noticeboards.

- c) The Annual Parish Assembly was discussed, including the opportunity for local charities to present information about their work, including their Annual Reports, to the community.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk writes to appropriate local charities, including Yarkhill Village Hall, to extend the invitation to the Parish Assembly.

- d) A Councillor commented on a monthly newsletter that he had received and enquired whether it would be a good place to advertise for the parish council.

The publication 'The Hop Parishes News' was available in paper copy and had the contact details of various businesses, parish councils and articles.

It was suggested that another parish may also be interested in advertising in the publication.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Snell research and investigate media opportunities and reports to Full Council with the findings.



10. **DEVOLUTION**

To consider lobbying MP on New Neighbourhood Governance issues
The Chair summarised the devolution process, as outlined by West Midland Combined Association of Local Councils.

"The UK Government's emerging agenda for neighbourhood governance, set out through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment (EDCE) Bill signals a shift toward more localised community level decision making.

However, despite new duties placed on unitary councils the government has not yet provided a clear formal definition or detailed guidance on what neighbourhood governance should look like. There is yet to be any role for parish/town councils in these new structures".

Following debate, the council resolved the following.

RESOLVED:

To call on our local Member of Parliament to press the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to:

- **Ensure parish and town councils are formally recognised as key partners within the emerging neighbourhood governance framework.**
- **Guarantee that the forthcoming regulations and guidance clearly set out how parish and town councils will be integrated into neighbourhood governance structures.**
- **Provide assurance that new neighbourhood governance arrangements will not duplicate functions or undermine the democratic legitimacy of parish and town councils.**
- **That the Clerk write to the MP requesting advocacy on the role of the parish council in relation to Neighbourhood Governance Reforms.**
- **That the Neighbourhood Governance Pack be published on the website.**

11. **TO CONSIDER SETTING UP WORKING GROUPS**

11.1 Finance Working Group

RESOLVED: That the Finance Working Group be established.

11.2 Planning Working Group

RESOLVED: That the Planning Working Group be established.



12. **FOOTPATHS**

To consider applying for a Public Rights of Way Grant 2026/27
Members commented on the state of various footpaths in the parish.
They commented that using 'What 3 Words' is the best way for Herefordshire Council to identify locations of concern.

The Chair advised that residents can contact him directly, identifying the locations and he will escalate these issues accordingly.

The Chair will, if required, undertake site visits with Cllr Snell.

There is also the opportunity of work by Highways in September 2026, subject to engaging the Lengthsman.

13. **TREE/POND OFFICER (volunteer)**

To receive a report and consider action

The Tree/Pond Officer (volunteer) provided a verbal report.

There are trees that are situated near the highway that are causing concern.

These trees are primarily on private land, and it is the responsibility of the landowners to take any corrective action.

RESOLVED: That the Tree/Pond Officer (volunteer) liaise with the Locality Steward on this matter and report the locations to Herefordshire Council, using their website.

14. **NEW PARISH WEBSITE AND .GOV EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR COUNCILLORS**

14.1 To note that the new Clerk will be populating the website with relevant documents

NOTED

14.2 To consider name format for councillor .gov email addresses

RESOLVED: That councillor emails be formatted as:

'Cllr.(initial)(surname)@yarkhillparishcouncil.gov.uk'

15. **TO RAISE MATTERS FOR NEXT MEETING- NO DISCUSSING**

15.1 Commencement of policy adoption: Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, IT Policy

NOTED

16. **TO SET A DATE FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

RESOLVED: Thursday 7th May 2026

Time: 7.00pm - 7.30pm

Venue: Yarkhill Village Hall, Yarkhill, Herefordshire, HR1 3ST



17. **TO NOTE REMAINING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR 2026**

- All Meetings are on a Thursday
- 7 May, 4 June, 2 July, 3 September, 1 October and 5 November.
- All meetings start at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated on the Council Summons
- Venue: Yarkhill Village Hall, Yarkhill, Herefordshire, HR1 3ST

Signed:.....

Jan Con

Date:.....

7th May 2026

Chairman

Herefordshire Council

Parish Council Briefing Note

I'm pleased to share this short update highlighting some of the key developments across Herefordshire Council. It's been a busy and productive period, and I hope this briefing provides a clear overview of progress that may be of interest to you and your communities.

Budget and Council Tax

Full Council has approved the 2026/27 capital and revenue budgets, addressing the national funding gap while continuing to invest in the county's priorities. A 4.99% Council Tax increase has been agreed to help safeguard essential services and deliver major projects including highways improvements, emergency accommodation and heritage investment. A 220m savings programme is being delivered through service transformation and efficiency measures.

Children's Services

Ofsted has judged Herefordshire's Children's Services to be Good overall, with Outstanding leadership—a significant improvement from the inadequate rating in 2022 and an important milestone for the county. Thanks go to everyone involved in this transformation-

Support for Young People and Adults

More than 300 young people have now benefitted from the Youth Employment Hub's first year, and the first Apprenticeship Awards celebrated local ambition and talent. Adult services continue to be strengthened through the re-procurement of the Independent Adult Advocacy Service and the continued delivery of a 24/7 safeguarding response through the Emergency Duty Team.

Housing and Growth

A £10m capital programme will support the development of more social housing, homes for large families, accessible homes and temporary accommodation to meet growing demand. Since 2023, 731 new dwellings have been delivered in partnership with Registered Providers. The new Invest in Herefordshire campaign and website also launched recently, aimed at attracting further business investment.

Economy, Parking and Business Support

Hereford BID has secured its third term, bringing more than £1.9m of investment into the city centre. To support local businesses and residents, Cabinet has approved the extension of 30-minute free parking to on-street bays in the city centre from April.

Infrastructure and Environment

Major projects continue to progress well, including construction of the Merton Meadow flood alleviation scheme and the next stage of the Hereford Transport Hub. Work on the Hereford Bypass is moving forward with approval of the necessary land-assembly orders. Environmental work is also accelerating through the new Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation, and phosphate-mitigation initiatives supporting new housing.

Highways and Pothole Repairs

Highways teams have completed more than 3,000 pothole repairs since January, with daily inspections and up to 150 repairs undertaken each day. Significant investment includes resurfacing, surface dressing, drainage upgrades and an additional £3.5m to support road network improvements. Residents are encouraged to report defects using the Report It app.

Parish Engagement

The Parish Summit on 3 March has now taken place and was a great success. Attendance was high both in person and online, and parish representatives engaged positively throughout the event. The sessions covering the Councils' Charter, Child Friendly Herefordshire, Public Realm and Parish Grants generated valuable discussion and constructive feedback. The marketplace element was also well received, giving parish councillors and clerks the opportunity to speak directly with council service teams.