

MINUTES OF YARKHILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT YARKHILL VILLAGE HALL
ON TUESDAY 25th March 2025

Present: Councillor Jeff Hughes, Councillor Sarah Daw, Councillor Chrissie Dobson, Councillor Ian Carr, Councillor Steve Kirby, Councillor Peter Durnan and Clerk Sallyanne Lees. Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester. There were 20 Members of the Public present.

1. Apologies for Absence received from Ann & Geoffrey. (Dex/Phillips)
2. There were no Declarations of Interest or Written Requests for Dispensation.

Councillor Jeff Hughes (Chairman) started the meeting by welcoming and thanking all those in attendance. He reminded those present that the Meeting would be recorded to ensure accuracy of the minutes. It was noted that the meeting would also be recorded by Mrs Catherine Snell.

3. The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 17th December were approved by Cllrs Hughes, Daw, Dobson & Durnan with Cllrs Kirby & Carr refusing to approve.

4. 4.1. Ward Councillor Jonahan Lester made his report. Jonathan Lester's report will be published in the Newsletter once received from his office.

- 4.2 The Chairman made his report as follows:

With regard to planning there are two applications awaiting an outcome. The Biodigester at Whitwick Manor. The changes made by the applicant in the reconsultation are of a technical nature and the public are advised to make their feelings known via the Herefordshire Council planning portal. The other is the Solar Farm on the Stokebridge Road which is currently the subject of a dormouse survey. As always, if and when any information is received about these and any other planning matters, the residents of Yarkhill will be informed.

The Chairman and Councillor Durnan took part in a meeting about Herefordshire Councils Local Plan and the impact it could have on Yarkhill and our Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). HC is clearly still finding its way around the new directives from the

Government. There is a substantial increase in the number of houses required to be provided. At the last Parish Meeting it was understood that Yarkhill would be designated green belt; that has now changed and new plans are to be developed by HC in circa 2027 and the Parish will be updated as and when information is made available. We will definitely need to review our NDP at some stage. This subject will be covered in more depth at a future PC Meeting.

4.3 Clerk Update. The Clerk advised the meeting that in her capacity of Proper Officer she was informing the Parish that the Monitoring Officer has received a complaint about a Parish Councillor.

The Clerk commented on the work done by the Lengthsman and also confirmed that she had almost finished the PROW Survey which would be forwarded to the Parish Council and the Lengthsman shortly.

4.4 The Tree Warden praised the removal of the dense overgrowth from Hyde Cottage to the Grove. It has opened up the bend and has had a positive effect on the speed of vehicles. Peter suggested we arrange for a warning sign for DEER to be installed on the stretch of the A4103 behind the village hall. The Clerk will address this. Ownership of the small parcel of land between the A3103 along towards the VH to be confirmed.

4.5 Councillor Daw updated the meeting on behalf of the Village Hall Committee of which she is a member. Following the generous donation from Yarkhill Charity there is now a defibrillator at the VH. There will be a training session on the 10th May at 7.30pm. at the VH. The Produce Show has been pencilled in for the 26th July. A Spring Clean for the VH has been scheduled for 13th May at 2pm. Work is ongoing on the School House.

5. Councillor Hughes confirmed that the External Auditor delivered her report to YPC on the 20th February. There is no requirement for a public report but the external auditor has made 10 recommendations that she has asked us to consider. In agreement with her an Action Plan has been drawn up which needs to be approved, voted upon and adopted. After a somewhat heated discussion Councillors Carr & Kirby refused to approve the Action Plan until it had been viewed by the parishioners despite the Clerk reiterating the External Auditor's instruction that the Action Plan should be posted to the Parishioners after approval and adoption by the Parish Council. The Plan remained unapproved and at that time the Clerk thought a unanimous vote was required. The item was postponed to an extra ordinary meeting to be arranged as soon as possible.

After the failure to convey the auditor's instructions to Cllrs Carr & Kirby the audience (apart from 3 persons) supported the remaining Parish Councillors and the Chairman in no uncertain terms and expressed their dissatisfaction with Carr & Kirby

6. After a brief discussion Cllrs Hughes, Daw, Dobson & Durnan voted against renewing the HALC membership for the coming year. Cllrs Carr & Kirby voted to renew the membership.

7. Following the recent Freedom Of Information request from a member of the public the Chair made the public aware of negative, personal and totally inaccurate comments made by a Councillor to the external auditor. The Chairman and the Clerk apologised to Mr Higham for not disclosing an item which he requested under a Freedom of Information request some time ago. It was a genuine oversight.

8. Following the requirement to regularly review our bank mandate and in the interests of good governance, a vote was approved to suspend Cllr Carr as a signatory following his unauthorised use of internet banking and to appoint Cllr Durnan in his place. The vote was approved by Cllrs Hughes, Daw, Dobson & Durnan and opposed by Cllrs Carr & Kirby.

9. Under the circumstances the discussion regarding the Civility & Respect Pledge to be postponed to a future meeting.

10. Finance.

10.1 Monitoring of income & expenditure and reconciliation of bank balance.

10.2 2025/26 Budget update.

Items 10.1 and 10.2 unanimously approved.

11. Cllr Kirby & Mr Snell invited any interested party to talk to them about their complaints to the External Auditor.

12. Payments approved:

Clerk Salary	£ 343.59
HMRC	£ 53.00
Autela Payroll Svcs	£ 102.33
Terry Griffiths Contracts Ltd	£4598.40
PKF Littlejohn (ext. Auditor)	£7753.20

13. Date of next meeting to be confirmed.