

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 24th June 2026.

Present: David Taylor (Chair), Helen Tanser, Graham Darby, Sarah James, Peter Gorbing, Jason Horne, and one member of the public.

Apologies: Catherine MacDonald, Paul and Pamela Cumming.

Overview

The Parish Council Meeting began with David welcoming attendees. The meeting opened with Declarations of Interest and an invitation for public comments.

Concerns were raised about the maintenance of a public footpath near Astley Cross, which has become overgrown and impassable. After discussion, it was determined that responsibility likely falls to the County Council, and Graham agreed to report the issue. Further discussion of blocked paths particularly near Dick Brook, clarified that footpaths on private land are usually the responsibility of the landowner but this has been complicated by the death of the previous landowner. The council agreed to monitor the situation and consider writing to the new landowner if necessary.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved, with David noting that the use of AI has allowed for more detailed minutes

David updated the council on District and County matters, highlighting that the Malvern Hills planning department has been placed in special measures due to a high rate of appeals, which could allow planning applications to bypass local review. This prompted discussion about the need for a neighbourhood plan to give the parish more control over local development. Jason and Peter supported the idea, emphasizing the importance of planning for appropriate housing types and considering the potential impact of changes to local government structure. David offered to seek recommendations for planning consultants. The council discussed ongoing planning issues, noting that objections to increased housing units remain unresolved due to delays in the planning department.

Pam provided planning updates, including news that the installation of an electric vehicle charger had been approved at Astley Towne Barn M/26/00313/LB. A planning enforcement site visit had been made to Larford Lakes. The caravans are being replaced but the total number will remain the same and the new vans will be painted brown as agreed in the original approval. 13/00677 (ENF/26/0120).

On roads and traffic, the council celebrated the installation of new 30 mph signs and discussed the need to instal the new speed indication devices. Police have conducted recent speed checks, but concerns remain about speeding, especially near the memorial and new housing developments. The council agreed to invite a police representative to a future meeting to discuss this and other priority issues (antisocial behaviour and fly tipping) further. There has been no progress on a parking area near the school so it was agreed that this item should be dropped from the agenda.

Graham reported on Rights of Way, noting a lack of resources and staff for maintenance and training. The council acknowledged the challenge and agreed to continue monitoring the situation. Graham proposed purchasing a battery-powered strimmer for small maintenance tasks around the parish, which was approved with a budget of up to £200. The council

discussed the need to co-ordinate with the Lengthsman for larger maintenance jobs and agreed to compile a list of tasks for approval

David announced that the Section 106 funding agreement had finally been received, securing £66,810 for local improvements.

The summer fete was reviewed as a great success, raising over £1,000 and providing a fun day for the community. Plans for the Christmas event were discussed, with ideas for a more family-friendly celebration, including music, games, and involvement from local children.

The next newsletter is planned for September and it was confirmed that Richard Thornley has volunteered to write it. Contributions will be needed from council members and the community.

The council discussed the replacement of the sign at Lanes End and ongoing issues with the notice board supplier. Actions are ongoing

Fly-tipping and the use of CCTV were briefly addressed but with cameras in place there is nothing more the council can do.

Grants for the churchyard and burial ground were approved as well as requests for equipment for the school's forest school programme.

The meeting concluded with a review of financial management and audit procedures, and a note that the Coronation tree had died and would need to be replaced in the Autumn. With no further questions, David closed the meeting at 20 10.

Action Items

- Graham – Follow up blocked path with County Council
- David Taylor - Ask his son, who is a town planner, for recommendations of suitable planning/consultancy firms that could help the parish develop a neighbourhood plan, and bring recommendations back to the parish council.
- Pam - Speak with Abigail Partridge to find out when a replacement for Lee Durrant will be appointed and to understand the future provision of roads and traffic liaison for the parish.
- Jason - Chase highway regarding camera posts and the invoice for the cameras.
- Graham - Arrange for the parish to purchase a battery-powered strimmer (within an agreed budget of around £200) and ensure it is stored and maintained at Graham's house for use on small remedial works in the parish.
- Arrange for a replacement Coronation tree to be planted in the village in September or October, once the dead tree has been removed.
- Progressing neighbourhood plan considerations to protect local planning interests.
- Delivering S106-funded improvements now funding agreement signed.
- Road safety: monitor 30mph signage, deploy speed devices, obtain speed data for county.
- Rights of way and footpath maintenance prioritised, listing jobs for lengthsman approval.

- Events planning: Explore Christmas event options for the August meeting.
- Peter/David – Replace sign at Lanes End. Pam – chase notice board one last time.