

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 9th December 2024

Present

Councillor	Mr M Huskinson	Chair
Councillor	Mr A Medcalf	
Councillor	Rvd P Hughes	Tree warden
Councillor	Mrs A Johnson	
Councillor	Mrs M Newport	
County and District Councillor		Mr T Wells
Mrs G Hollick	Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer	
Mrs Deborah Fox	CEO Malvern Hills Trust	
Mr Richard Fowler	Member of the Public and Trustee of MHT	
Mr Rob Berry	Member of the Public and Trustee of MHT	

1. **Apologies** Councillor Mr M Simpson
 Councillor Mr D Fellows
 Mr P Thomas – Chairman of Guarlford Village Hall

2. **Public Question and Answer**

There were no questions from members of the public.

3. **Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest**

Parish Councillors were reminded that, as required by the Parish Council Code of Conduct Order 2001, revised 2020, they should notify the MHDC Monitoring Officer of any changes to their Register of Interests or the receipt of any unrecorded gifts or hospitality. They should also declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any of the items of this meeting.

- a. There were no declarations of personal or prejudicial interest.

4. **The Race Relations and Crime and Disorder Acts**

Parish Councillors were reminded that all the business carried out and decisions made at this meeting must observe the requirements of the above Acts.

5. **Acceptance of the Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September had been circulated and read. There were no matters arising not already on the agenda of this meeting and it was agreed that the minutes should be signed by the Chairman.

6. **Deborah Fox CEO Malvern Hills Trust**

Deborah Fox addressed the meeting to acknowledge the response made by Guarlford Parish Council to the recent consultation on proposals to alter the Trust's governance arrangements. Deborah Fox said that all the feedback was given serious consideration following which a vote was taken to submit; the Bill was deposited on 27th November, which was the only date when Bills could be deposited. A first reading is likely to be in January 2025.

Councillor Johnson replied to Deborah Fox that she had been particularly concerned at the way members of the public had been treated by the Trust and in particular the treatment of one Trustee, Mr David Fellows, who was also a Parish Councillor for Guarlford. Councillor Johnson stated that Councillor Fellows had not been involved in any discussion on Trust matters relating to the Consultation on this Bill and had not been present during any meeting where this was discussed. Councillor Johnson added that she felt that the Trust's refusal to allow David Fellows to vote as Trustee of MHT, was insulting to Guarlford Parish Council suggesting that they were not conducting procedures appropriately. Deborah Fox responded that the Trustees had reflected on the feedback from Guarlford Parish Council but decided not to take on all of their recommendations and that they were of the opinion that David Fellows did have a conflict of interest and the decision was taken to not allow him to vote. Councillor Johnson stated that she disagreed with this decision and thought it reflected badly on MHT.

Councillor Huskinson asked Deborah Fox to explain the Trust's position on their 'General Powers'. Deborah Fox replied that the Trust was not a commercial entity but would be able to generate a small surplus within the context of its charitable objectives.

Councillor Huskinson also asked Deborah Fox to outline the Trust's position on preserving the natural aspect of the Malvern Hills. Deborah Fox responded that this was a difficult concept as currently there is no legal precedent for this and therefore difficult to enforce. It was the Trust's intention to replace this term with a more explanatory phrase.

7. Report by County and District Councillor Mr Tom Wells

Councillor Mr T Wells informed the meeting of a recent fatal road traffic accident which had taken place on the Hanley road just outside the parish of Guarlford. The junction where this accident occurred had been the site of several previous accidents over recent years and Cllr Wells said he was committed to pursuing any possible improvements to this junction to reduce the likelihood of further accidents in the future.

Councillor Wells told the meeting that he was no longer the leader of Malvern Town Council and that this position was now held by Mr John Gallagher who was a Councillor for Malvern Wells. The County elections will be held in May 2025 with district elections expected some time in 2027. Councillor Wells also told the meeting that a White Paper presented for discussion this December is likely to suggest a unitary authority to replace the current County and District levels in place in Worcestershire.

The Clerk asked Cllr Wells if he could investigate the disappearance of the white gates from Clevelode Lane which were removed earlier in the year when the carriageway improvements were carried out by WCC. The Clerk said that she had already spoken to Tanya Crake who had been unable to find out any information. Cllr Wells agreed to investigate the matter.

8. Report on local footpath issues

8.1 There was no report as Mr Furlong was not present.

9. Report from Tree Warden Cllr Rvd Peter Hughes.

9.1 Cllr Hughes told the meeting that plans for a community orchard would remain on hold until a suitable patch of land was identified.

10. Report from Guarlford Village Hall

Mr Phil Thomas, Chair of the village hall Trustees had submitted this report.

Report from Phil Thomas, Chairman, Guarlford Village Hall.

“ The village hall enjoyed a very well attended re-opening event on 28th September and the Trustees would all like to thank Mike Huskinson for officially cutting the ribbon and his kind supportive words to the committee and many supporters. The Trustees were also very pleased to welcome Harriett Baldwin, our MP, to the event as well as Richard Timney from the Village Halls Network.

Since September, the hall has held several fundraising activities to generate funds towards the cost of a new heating system for the hall. Grant funding applications are also being pursued towards the next goal of £50,000 which will cover the cost of refurbishment to the Peter Mayner room, a new heating system throughout the building, window blinds for the main hall and additional tables and chairs.

Currently the hall is used by a Yoga group, a Soundbath group, Tai Chi, Dancefit, table tennis, W I and the Parish Council. These groups alone are insufficient to cover running costs and a regular fundraising programme of activities is necessary to ensure insurance and energy costs are met.

While fundraising events are an enjoyable use of the village hall which will continue into the future, the Trustees are very keen to encourage more lets from both regular groups and occasional hirers for specific events. Now that the hall is an attractive well-appointed space, the Trustees would be grateful for any promotion of the building that Councillors feel able to make to any of their contacts who might be interested.

The Trustees are keen to continue to work with the Parish Council to organise joint events for the benefit of the community and the recent Emergency Response training requested by Councillors was well attended and exit evaluations indicated that it had been very much appreciated by everyone.

Our village hall is central to our community providing a central focus for everyone to come together. I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued and ongoing support which is crucial to the future of Guarlford Village Hall

Phil Thomas,
Chairman

Guarlford Village Hall

Councillors asked the Clerk to thank Phil Thomas for his report.

11. Malvern Hills Trust Report

This item had been discussed at item 6.

12. Local Traffic Management Sub group update (Highways)

12.1 VAS Camera. The Clerk told the meeting that she had received a permit from WCC for a post to be placed on the B4211 close to 'Danefield' for traffic heading towards the village from the Rhydd. A response was still awaited from Johnathan Bills regarding a post to be positioned in Clevelode Lane. The Clerk confirmed that she would follow this up again. The Clerk also confirmed that she had applied to the Commissioners Community Fund to finance the purchase of a VAS camera and in spite of following this up, a response was still awaited. The Clerk agreed to look for an alternative contact to pursue this request.

13. Parish Environment

13.1 Lengthsman: The Clerk read out a letter which had been received from Mrs Caroll Murphy of The Heriots Farmhouse Clevelode Lane. Following receipt of this letter the Clerk had asked Jeremy Moore, Lengthsman, to cut the necessary gully grips opposite her property. This was carried out promptly. Councillor Newport had also identified various other locations along the lane where gully grips were required and the Lengthsman had also attended to these. The Clerk confirmed that where the ditches became overfull, it was the responsibility of the land owner to clear these but if any specific problem areas were identified she would either ask the Lengthsman to speak to the land owner or write to them herself.

13.2 Defibrillator: The Defibrillator workshop, led by Heartstart, had been very well attended with positive exit evaluations. However, it was identified at the session that the battery on Guarlford's defibrillator was in need of replacement. The Clerk had obtained a quote for this at £242.75 including VAT and postage costs. Parish Councillors voted unanimously for this to be purchased and the Clerk was asked to order a replacement battery and ensure it was installed.

13.3 Bus Shelter: The Clerk told the meeting that Cora Weaver, editor, and Sheelagh Thorne, treasurer of The Grapevine were hoping to donate £1,000 to Guarlford for what-ever would make the most impact for the people of the village. Suggestions were repair of the bus shelter, blinds for the village hall or a contribution towards the new boiler for the village hall. The Clerk had been asked to obtain quotes for each project and submit them to Cora and Sheelagh for consideration. Following discussion on the condition of the bus shelter Cllr Hughes suggested that the best course of action would be to remove it. Councillors asked Deborah Fox if the Trust would remove the concrete slab which the bus stop stood on. Deborah Fox replied that the slab would be considered part of the bus stop installation and therefore the responsibility of the Parish Council. She added that the Trust would not be opposed to the removal of

the shelter and a replacement installed or a return of the land to the Common. Various ideas were discussed including siting a bench on the concrete slab. Councillors agreed to leave further discussion until Cllr Simpson returned from his holidays at which point Cllr Hughes would liaise further with him and report back at the next meeting.

Deborah Fox left the meeting at this point

13.4 Village Pond at the junction of Rhydd Road and Blakes Lane. There had been no further correspondence on this issue. It was agreed to review again at the next meeting.

14. Planning

14.1 Application M/24/00606/FUL A J Gammond amendment – this is still pending Councillor Johnson told the meeting that she had spoken to various local residents about their concerns relating to heavy vehicles but had explained that the Parish Council had a responsibility to support local business where ever possible. Councillor Simpson and Councillor Johnson had both made responses to MHDC relating to this application. Councillor Hughes added that he felt the recent applications from Gammonds had been very unclear.

Councillors discussed their procedure for considering planning applications. Councillor Wells suggested that the Parish Council may wish to consider holding monthly planning meetings of the planning sub-committee which would be open to members of the public. The Clerk agreed to consult CALC for advice and report back to Councillors.

15. Other administration and liaison with other bodies

15.1 Meeting in St Mary's Church on 2nd November. The Clerk reported that this meeting had been attended by members of the local community and the PCC. Alison Maddocks had outlined the concerns of preserving the church building from a historical interest perspective as well as a place for the community to come together. Subsequently Cllr Fellows, acting as Church Warden, had produced a short report calling for people to submit their ideas and suggestions for the future support of St Mary's Church. The Clerk informed Councillors that the previous legal impediment which had prevented Parish Councils from giving money in support of churchyards has now been removed and she had allowed an amount for this in the draft budget for the next financial year. Councillors unanimously agreed that the precept should be increased sufficiently to allow for £500 to be paid to support the upkeep of the churchyard.

15.2 Roadside verges survey. The Clerk had received this from Rebecca Lashley from WCC. This was completed stating that Parish Councillors did not feel that they had the capacity within the Parish to carry out management of verges although they would like to see verges managed with more bio-diversity.

15.3 Chairman's meeting with Marilyn Birks, Mayor of Malvern. Councillor Huskinson told the meeting that this meeting had been attended by four parish councils and that he had found this meeting to be interesting and informative. Topics discussed were planning, traffic and MHT. The Clerk told the meeting that the next Chairman's meeting with the Mayor would be on 20th January. Councillor Huskinson agreed to inform the Clerk if he would be able to attend so that she could respond on his behalf

15.4 GPC / Village web site Councillors present provided their photographs to the Clerk so that these could be added to the website.

16.1 and 16.2 Finance

The Clerk informed the meeting that Lloyds bank have now introduced banking charges so she had allowed an amount for this on the draft budget. The Parish Council bank accounts can now be managed on-line which is much easier and will incur fewer bank charges going forward. The Clerk requests authorisation from either the Chairman, Cllr Huskinson, or Vice-Chairman, Cllr Simpson, for all payments in advance of processing these, and keeps a record of this for audit purposes.

Financial Statement

Cheques Paid out since last meeting of GPC

Date of cheque	Chq no	Payee	Amount
11.10.24	687	J Moore Lengthsman September 24	288.00
11.10.24	688	G Hollick Clerks Wages October 24	253.86
11.10.24	689	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages for October 24	63.60

BACS payments paid out since last meeting of GPC

Date	Authorised by	Payee	Amount
8.11.24	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks Wages November 24	254.06
8.11.24	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages for November 24	63.40
11.11.24	Mike Simpson	J Moore Lengthsman for October 24	144.00
2.12.24	Mike Simpson	J Moore Lengthsman for November 24	144.00

Payments awaiting authorisation

Date	Payee	Amount
9.12.24	G Hollick Clerks Wages for December	253.86
9.12.24	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages for December	63.60
9.12.24	Guarlford Village Hall room hire	210.00
9.12.24	Guarlford Village Hall Expenses Community gathering	77.07
9.12.24	G Hollick - Admin costs	19.19

18 Date of Next Meetings: -

Monday 17th March 2025

Monday 12th May 2025 Parish Annual Meeting *and* Parish Council Annual Meeting

Monday 8th September 2025

Monday 8th December 2025

Signed

Cllr Michael Simpson
Vice Chairman

Date