

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2025

Present

Councillor	Mr M Huskinson	Chair
Councillor	Mr Mike Simpson	Vice Chairman
Councillor	Mr A Medcalf	
Councillor	Rvd P Hughes	Tree warden
Councillor	Mr D Fellows	
Councillor	Mrs A Johnson	
	Mrs G Hollick	Clerk and RFO
County Council Footpath Liaison Officer		Mr David Furlong
Member of the Public	Dr G Crisp) From Malvern
Member of the Public	Mrs K Harris) Environment Protection Group

1. Apologies

District Councillor	Mrs K Wells
Councillor	Mrs M Newport
Chairman of Guarlford Village Hall	Mr P Thomas
Councillor	Mr D Fellows
County and District councillor	(for the first part of the meeting)
	Mr T Wells
	(for the first part of the meeting)

2. Public Question and Answer

Deferred until item 11 discussed after item 5

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 previous meetings, The Annual Parish Meeting and The Parish Council Annual Meeting, held on 12th May 2025 had been circulated and read prior to this meeting.

Both sets of minutes were accepted as a true record of the meetings. There were no other matters arising not already on the agenda of this meeting and it was agreed that the minutes should be signed by the Chairman.

Item 11.1 of the agenda was then brought forward so that the Parish Council could be addressed by Dr Crisp and Mrs Harris on **11.1 ‘Update on Parliamentary Bill submitted by MHT’** To avoid the potential of any allegation of conflict of interest, Councillor Fellows absented himself from discussion on items 11.1 and 11.2

Mrs Harris told the meeting that in February 2025 there had been 50 petitions against the Bill which received its second reading in the House of Lords on 4th June. The Bill will now be referred to a House of Lords Select Committee this Autumn or next Spring. Mrs Harris said that she understood the costs incurred by MHT in pursuing this Bill stood at over £1.3 million which would ultimately have to be funded by levy payers.

Mrs Harris told the meeting that both Priory and West Malvern wards were contested and would be having elections on 18th September. She urged anyone who was eligible to vote to do so.

Dr Crisp told the meeting that the promoters of the Bill can question the opponents and they would be likely to be focusing on issues which affected individual petitioners directly rather than the general public more widely. However, he thought that they would be unlikely to make a strong challenge to individual members of the public but it was possible that all petitioners would have a chance to have a say

Item 11.2 Letter from Susan Satchell re:House of Lords Petition.

The Clerk had forwarded this letter to Councillors which set out the procedural matters stating that the Parish Council must comply with section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 if their petition opposes a private bill. This requires the Parish Council to pass a resolution before any appearance before a Select Committee. Ms Satchell asked to be informed when this would take place.

Councillor Simpson proposed that an Extra Ordinary meeting be held on Wednesday 15th October at 7.45pm in Guarlford Village Hall and that the necessary procedures specified in section 239 be complied with. This was agreed unanimously

Item 14.5 of the agenda was then brought forward so that the Parish council could be addressed by Mr Crisp and Mrs Harris on **14.5 Proposal to build 180 houses on land off Mill Lane, Guarlford.**

Mrs Harris said that she was concerned because there had been no consultation or published notice about this proposal. However, this was not a statutory requirement as this was a ‘Screening’ application. Mrs Harris said that she was concerned that there are two Grade 2 listed buildings in close proximity to this site which is also within 1 km of an AONB. She continued that a report commissioned in 2019 had stated that this site was not suitable for development as anything within 5 km of an AONB will have a negative impact and the area is also next to heritage assets and

Trust land. Mrs Harris said that this proposal is also against the local neighbourhood development plan.

District and County Councillor Tom Wells joined the meeting at 8.30 pm

District and County Councillor Tom Wells informed the meeting that the Screening process would allow the developer to check if the Local Authority required an environmental impact assessment. This is an objective assessment carried out by professional ecologists. However, Councillor Wells added that Parish Councillors were still able to make representation to the case officer should they wish to do so. Councillor Simpson suggested that further discussion on this matter should be deferred to the next meeting in December. This was seconded by Councillor Hughes and agreed unanimously.

Councillor Mr David Fellows joined the meeting at 8.35pm

6. Report from District and County Councillor Tom Wells

Councillor Tom Wells told the meeting that he had spoken to the District Council about concerns relating to the parked boat in Penny Close. A note had been attached to the boat requesting its removal. However, the Council did not have any enforcement powers in this matter. The Clerk reported that the boat had now been moved around the corner and was positioned on the pavement outside the owner's own property. Since then she had not received any further complaints.

In relation to the County Council reorganisation, Councillor Wells told the meeting that voting across the County had now taken place and 5 authorities had declared a wish for 2 unitary authorities post re-organisation while 2 authorities have stated a preference for 1 unitary authority. A proposal will be submitted to the Government for approval by November 2025. Elections will be held in May 2027 for a shadow authority to oversee the period before the new authority takes over in April 2028.

7. Report on local footpath issues

7.1 Giant Hogweed. Mr Furlong had written to Councillor Simpson about Giant Hogweed which was growing on the north side of the Pool Brook. This has now been dealt with and Councillor Simpson agreed to continue to monitor the situation should it re-seed.

7.2 Access gates footpath 519(B) Mr Furlong told the meeting that he had made some repairs to one of the gates to prevent it swinging back too far. Councillor Fellows confirmed that he had the D rings which had been removed from the gates, possibly through vandalism. Mr Furlong agreed to review the gates again.

7.3 Bridge by the steps at Clevelode Mr Furlong confirmed that a notification for work had been submitted but to date there was no progress

7.4 Hornets nest 505(C) Councillor Fellows had been informed that there was a hornets nest along this path. Mr Furlong had inspected the nest which was found to be 3 metres off the ground in a hollow of a tree. It did not appear to be causing problems to local residents but Mr Furlong had attached a warning sign nearby.

8. Report from Tree Warden Cllr Rvd Peter Hughes.

Councillor Hughes reported that there were no specific issues to report but he would continue to have discussions with Mr Peter Donovan from Guarlford Court about the possibility of a community orchard.

9. Report from Guarlford Village Hall

Mr Phil Thomas, Chairman of the village hall Trustees had submitted his report.

Report from Phil Thomas, Chairman, Guarlford Village Hall.

In June Guarlford Village Hall held its Annual general Meeting which was attended by several members of our local community. At this meeting two new residents were elected to the management group of Trustees for the Village Hall. Julia Talbot-Cooper from Penny Close and Bob Newport from Clevelode Lane were both welcomed as new Trustees.

I was re-elected to the position of Chairman and Gill Hollick and Heather Clarke were re-elected to the positions of Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The committee brings a diverse range of skills to the village hall and will help to move forward our current project of renovating the Peter Mayner room. Over the summer we have held several events to raise funds for this goal including a folk evening in May, a barn dance in June, another successful summer community event in July and a quiz in August. My thanks to Guarlford Parish Council for supporting our summer event in July which was very much appreciated by the local community and a good example of the Parish Council and local community working together for the health and well-being of its residents.

We are now into our autumn programme of activities which began on Saturday with a book sale and coffee morning and will continue with a talk by Madresfield's head gardener on 20th September and a harvest supper and charity auction on 4th October. All of these events will raise further funds towards our goal of £23,000 to complete the refurbishment of the Peter Mayner room. In addition to fundraising events we have also applied for the Community Facilities grant towards this project and a decision is expected later this month.

The hall's installation of solar panels and battery storage has been completed and we are now waiting for delivery of new infra-red heating panels which will be secured to the slope of the ceiling in the main hall. This will provide instant and controllable heat and together with the increased insulation, which has already been installed, this will provide an energy efficient system to ensure the hall is comfortable throughout the year.

The next purchase for the hall will be some pro-sound acoustic panels which will reduce the echo in the room and make it more comfortable for visitors with hearing difficulties. Money has already been allocated for this and it is hoped that they will be installed in the next few weeks.

The hall is now used regularly by a Yoga group, Dancefit and table tennis as well as WI once a month. The Trustees are also considering a separate monthly drop-in table tennis group for local residents as well as more regular mid-week drop in coffee mornings to meet local need.

The lead up to Christmas will see various festive events at the village hall throughout November and December and the Trustees are grateful to Parish Councillors for their ongoing support of all the events which are held.

Phil Thomas,
Chairman
Guarlford Village Hall

10. Report from Church Warden Cllr Fellows

Councillor Fellows told the meeting that the church had employed a new arboriculturist and instructed him to make an application to MHDC to fell the cedar tree. There are also 3 trees alongside the neighbouring property which are a cause for concern and a request is being made to the PCC to agree to their removal.

11. Malvern Hills Trust Report

Previously dealt with prior to item 6

12. Local Traffic Management sub-group update (Highways)

12.1 VAS Camera. The Clerk told the meeting that she had received £1,250 from the Police and Crime Commissioners Community Fund which was 50% of the cost of a new VAS. Councillor Wells confirmed that he would liaise with Tanya Crake from Highways to ensure that his pledge of the remaining 50% of the purchase cost would be transferred into the Parish Council account as soon as possible. The Clerk agreed to order the camera as soon as the money was received.

13. Parish Environment

13.1 Lengthsman The Clerk confirmed that the Lengthsman had now carried out the work on the footpaths as requested. The County Council Footpaths officer had asked for this to be delayed until later in the season to avoid nesting birds.

13.2 Bus Shelter Councillor Hughes told the meeting that he had met with the Clerk to discuss the plans for the replacement bus shelter and had now produced a drawing of his design which he presented to the meeting. The new shelter would be very similar visually to the existing shelter but would be far sturdier.

Councillor Wells advised the Clerk to discuss matters with Tanya Crake from Highways as the shelter bordered the public footpath and also to inform MHT as the concrete plinth on which the shelter will be replaced, is on land managed by The Trust. The Clerk told the meeting that on inspection of the plinth she had identified a potential hazard as there was a drop on either side of the concrete to the verge below. A new shelter might attract more people to the shelter thereby increasing the level of potential risk of slips and falls. The Clerk advised installing a safety rail on either side of the entrance to reduce the level of risk. Councillor Hughes agreed that this could be done and would be useful for people to rest bikes against.

Councillor Fellows proposed that he should ask a structural engineer to review the drawings for the bus shelter. This was agreed unanimously by the meeting.

Councillor Fellows agreed to liaise with Councillor Hughes about this. Councillor Huskinson stated that whilst the Parish Council were most grateful to Councillor Hughes for undertaking the work involved with replacement of the bus shelter, it was important to make sure that the shelter as re-constructed complied with all relevant Building Regulations.

13.3 Village Pond. The Clerk told the meeting that she had received communication from Andy Pearce at MHT concerning the pond by the Plough and Harrow. This pond is scheduled for work this month to remove some of the reedmace. The Clerk had passed this information on to Mr Vivian who had raised the issue initially.

14. Planning

14.1 Election of Planning Committee This had been carried forward from the previous meeting as Councillor Hughes had not been present.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman are ‘ex officio’ members of the Planning Committee. Councillor Hughes and Councillor Johnson both indicated that they were prepared to stand again as members of the Planning Committee. This was proposed by Councillor Simpson, seconded by Councillor Fellows and agreed unanimously.

14.2 Application M/25/00760/FUL proposed development at ‘The Homestead’
This was approved on 26th August 2025

14.3 Application M/25/00561/PIP Permission in principle for development of land bordering Rectory Lane

This was refused on 17th June 2025

14.4 M/25/00600/PIP Permission in principle for erection of 9 houses on land between Chance Lane and Hall Green

This was still ‘pending’

14.5 M/25/01219/SCR Proposal to build 180 houses on land off Mill Lane.

Previously discussed prior to item 6 and agreed to defer to next meeting.

15. Other administration and liaison with other bodies

15.1 Email from Councillor Mike Johnson, Chair of Madresfield PC

The Clerk read out an email she had received from Councillor Johnson of Madresfield Parish Council. As Councillor Mike Johnson was the husband of Guarlford Parish Councillor Ann Johnson, it was agreed that in all circumstances, whilst she could remain present during consideration of this item, she should not speak or vote on it.

Councillor Mike Johnson explained that Madresfield Parish Council were only 3 in number including the Clerk, Mr Sharp, who had indicated his wish to retire in the near future. Councillor Johnson wondered if Guarlford Parish Councillors would be prepared to consider the potential for a merging of both Parish Councils.

The Clerk had also received an email from Madresfield’s Clerk, Mr David Sharp, outlining the difficulties experienced by a small Parish Council working alone and suggesting that a merger might be to the benefit of both communities.

The Clerk reported to the meeting that she had been in touch with CALC to ask about the procedure should a merger be considered. This was outlined in brief but the timescale for this would be roughly 18 months from the outset of any agreement being reached between Madresfield and Guarlford

Councillors discussed the various potential pros and cons of a merger between the Parish Councils but felt unable to reach a conclusion without further debate.

Councillor Simpson proposed that the Clerk should invite Councillor Johnson to the next meeting of GPC so that a proposed merger could be discussed further. This was agreed unanimously by all Councillors.

15.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategy The Clerk had sent this to all Councillors prior to the meeting. There were no comments or actions

15.3 WM Police Town and Parish Council Survey. Councillor Simpson proposed that the Clerk should complete this on behalf of the Parish Council. This was seconded by Councillor Fellows and agreed unanimously.

15.4 Parish Council .gov domain The Clerk confirmed that this was now in place and all written communication relating to Parish Council matters should be directed through the new email address. The Clerk explained that she would forward correspondence on to the intended recipient. This was to comply with digital security and to meet public sector standards and legal obligations. This will also maintain a professional and trustworthy online presence and ensure the continuity and security of parish council records.

16. Finance

16.1 Account balances

Current :- £7825.66

Deposit:- £ 696.29

Charity:- £ 111.57

Total Worth:- £8633.52

Money ring fenced for VAS £1250 (grant from Commissioners Community Fund)

Money ring fenced for bus shelter £1054.19 (grant from The Grapevine)

Available funds from all accounts £6329.33

Awaiting credit from Lengthsman scheme £590.00 (3 payments)

16.2 Approval of payments since last meeting

Date	Authorised by	Payee	Amount
19.5.25		Bank charges	4.25
22.5.25	GPC 12.24	Madresfield and Guarlford churchyard	500.00
30.5.25	Mike Huskinson	Lengthsman May 25	160.00
12.6.25	Mike Simpson	Netwise	160.80

17.6.25		Bankcharges	4.25
7.7.25	Mike Simpson	Lengthsman June 25	160.00
7.7.25	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks wages June 25	267.30
7.7.25	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages June 25	66.80
7.7.25	Mike Simpson	G Hollick Clerks wages July 25	267.30
7.7.25	Mike Simpson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages July 25	66.80
18.7.25		Bank charges	4.25
18.8.25		Bank charges	4.25
21.8.25	Mike Huskinson	G Hollick Clerks wages August 25	267.30
21.8.25	Mike Huskinson	HMRC PAYE on Clerks wages August 25	66.80
21.8.25	Mike Huskinson	Lengthsman July 25	160.00
21.8.25	Mike Huskinson	Atkinson and Co Accountants (April-July)	76.80
2.9.25	Mike Simpson	Lengthsman August 25	210.00

The Clerk asked Councillors for approval of the payments 19th May 2025– 2nd September 2025. This was proposed by Councillor Simpson, seconded by Councillor Fellows and agreed unanimously

16.3 Charity Account The Chairman told the meeting that he had asked the Clerk to delay closing this account with a payment to CAB (as previously discussed at the meeting in March 2025 until he had time to investigate further. He confirmed that he would do so before the next meeting in December.

17. Any other business

The Clerk told the meeting that the CALC AGM would be held on 13th November in Kidderminster. Attendance is either in person or by ZOOM. Any Councillors wishing to attend should book their place through the Clerk

18. Items for the next meeting -

Councillor Fellows proposed that Parish Council meetings should start earlier as meetings were very full and ran on for a long time. Councillor Johnson suggested reducing the time spent on items 3 and 4 by sending this out by email in advance of the meeting. Councillor Hughes suggested that the meetings could be more concise. The Clerk offered to amend the running order of the Agenda and allocate time scales for each item in an attempt to complete the business of the meeting in a more concise time frame. This was proposed by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Huskinson and agreed unanimously.

19. Date of Next Meetings

Wednesday 15th October 7.45 pm Monday 8th December 2025 7.30 pm

Signed Date.....

Cllr Michael Huskinson **Chairman**