

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19th MAY 2026 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Mark Smith (Chairman), Penny Green, Giles Steiger, Margaret Herbert & Ian Wilson (Members) and the Clerk & Ann Smith (Special advisor)

1) ELECTION OF CHAIR

Penny proposed Mark, Ian seconded the proposal, which was agreed by all. Mark signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office form, specified under Section 51 of the local Government Act 2000.

Vice- Chair, Penny proposed Ian, Giles seconded the proposal, which was agreed by all.

2) APOLOGIES

District Councillor Jeremy Owenson, Tom Goodwin, Charlotte Bloomfield (Members) & Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden)

It was noted that County Councillor Martin Allen had delivered his report in the Annual Parish meeting that preceded this meeting.

3) REGISTRATION AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- (i) The Clerk advised members that they should ensure their Registration of Interest forms are kept up to date and any changes notified to the monitoring officer of the Malvern Hills District Council Standards Committee.
- (ii) No declarations were declared.

4) TO NOTE THE CODE OF CONDUCT, STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Code of Conduct for Members, which had been adopted by the Council in May 2022, and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which had also been adopted by the Council in 2024 and the Councils IT policy adopted October 2025 were noted

5) PUBLIC:

It was agreed to retain Malcolm Tomkins and Ann Smith as special advisors to the Parish Council, with permission to contribute to meetings with no voting powers.

6) DELEGATION OF PLANNING AND OTHER MATTERS

- (a) It was agreed by all members that the function of responding to the Local Planning Authority be delegated to the Clerk.
- (b) It was agreed by all to re-adopt the terms of reference for the Staffing Committee, including delegated powers for recruitment, performance reviews and disciplinary & grievance procedures.

7) REPRESENTATIVES TO BE APPOINTED

Those present reviewed the delegated responsibilities and they were reviewed as follows:

The Commons - Tom, Margaret and Giles

Playing Field – Penny & Ann

Highways (including flooding and drainage) – Tom & Margaret

Planning Team – Mark, Ian, Margaret & Giles

Staffing Committee – The Chair + Penny & Charlotte

SWDPR Monitoring – Planning Team

Website – The Clerk with Ian monitoring

Social media – Tom

Defibrillator (Including phone box) – Charlotte

8) LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND CONTRACTS

All legal documents regarding the ownership of the Village Hall and Playing Field are kept with Whatley Recordon, Solicitors in Malvern.

It was noted that the historical minutes books and cash books have now been deposited to the Archive Department at the Hive.

The contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide a Parish Lengthsman is effective until 31 March 2027. Tim Hughes provides this service and Malcolm is complimentary of the work completed.

The Chairman advised members that the insurance renewal was tabled under finance and would be renewed and in place until June 2027.

9) MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2026 were proposed by Penny, seconded by Ian, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

10) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Martin Allen had delivered his Annual report in the Annual Parish Meeting

No report from Jeremy Owenson.

11) HIGHWAYS MATTERS- VAS

The VAS was to be sent to Wescotec for assessment. Update in July meeting.

The spoil that had been created by the Emblem Villa ditch clearance would be addressed by Tom, the letter to the resident regarding this was agreed and the clerk was asked to send this.

12) PARISH PATHS

Malcolm has advised that the proactive strimming by WCC has started.

It was also noted that the Dunstall Path Bridge had been repaired/replaced by WCC.

Malcolm also advised he could put up more dog fouling signage, Penny would send Malcolm the location at North Quay.

13) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

Malcolm had asked that the signage in and around the village be 'cut out' and the path to the Crucifix be cut. The clerk would pass these tasks to the lengthsman.

14) BUS SHELTER

The condition report and quote from S Coldbreath had only been received today, this was circulated and members were asked to review the options and it would be tabled for more discussion in the September meeting, when hopefully more input from Malcolm would be available. The clerk was asked to approach the managers at the Yorkshire Grey to see if they had any insight on the usage of the bus shelter.

15) DEFIBRILLATOR

Charlotte confirmed all ok and she would order the required pads in the autumn.

16) COMMONS

a) Smithmoor

Margaret confirmed the registration of the Commons had been submitted to the Land Registry and It was now a case of waiting for the Land Registry to process the registration.

Margaret had attended a meeting on obtaining grants.

Margaret had done some research and many of the grants that Julia Wylie had suggested were not accessible unless the Commons were registered and even once they are registered many were not available to local authorities.

Giles advised there was a lot of over growth to the right of the access gate.

- b) **Dunstall** – The ditch damaged in the maize harvest over a year ago had been addressed by Malcolm who had also dug out some more to close a gap used by hare coursers to access the Common. – Members recorded their thanks to Malcolm.

Margaret and Ann noted there were a wonderful bloom of orchids at Dunstall Common.

- a) **Marsh** – The National Grid had written to the Council for permission to upgrade the pylon on Marsh Common, the clerk had signed and returned the paperwork, there would be a small increase in the Wayleave due to the additional stays.

I have a note saying query SSI registered, as far as I am aware it is not SSI registered, Margaret were you going to see if I could be registered or what was this in reference too?

The clerk had done some research regarding replacing all the Commons signs and has ascertained that the cost of cleaning to use adhesive would likely be more than just replacing the signs, there are 7 signs and she suggested that once the website and logo was in place the Parish Council should look to replace the signs with ECPC signs, using the logo, bullet point the main by-laws and link to the new ECPC website which can show the full by-laws, members thought this was a good idea and Marin Allen/Jeremy could be approached for a grant towards this.

17) PLANNING

M/26/00211/PIP Bluebell Farm, Permission in principle for 1-3 dwellings – REFUSED

It was noted that there were more hard standing being created for static homes at Baughton View, the clerk was asked to check with enforcement that the correct planning permissions were in place for the works.

18) FINANCE

- a) The monthly bank reconciliation for March & April 2025 had been checked and confirmed by Charlotte & Penny.
- b) It was noted that following a recommendation from CALC the clerk had been moved to salary point SCP 28.
- c) The internal audit report for year ending 31st March 2026, was accepted with no advisories
- d) Following a review of the draft accounts, it was agreed by all that the draft accounts and annual bank reconciliation should be signed by the Chair and Clerk and adopted as the Council's annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026.
- e) Following a review of the AGAR exemption document, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman & The Clerk to sign the exemption certificate and return it to the external auditor.
- f) Following a review of section 1 of the Council's annual return for year ending 31 March 2026, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to sign section 1 of the Council's annual return for the year ending 31 March 2026.
- g) Following a review of Section 2 of the Council's Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2026, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to sign Section 2 of the Council's Annual Return for year ending 31st March 2026
- h) Insurance Renewal – the insurance renewal had been received the annual cost was £426.91, members agreed to renew.
- i) Consideration of Churchyard grant request – the Church treasurer had sent an extensive report that members had reviewed, it was proposed by Penny and seconded by Ian to grant £175 the usual annual grant as included in the budget.

Payments made since last meeting were noted as follows:

Mr T Hughes – lengthsman services – March	£180.00
J Marklew – playing field grass cutting	£40.00
Lloyds Bank – service charge	£4.75
Worcestershire CALC- Membership fee	£186.21
J Marklew – playing field grass cutting	£40.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- April (S/O)	£316.83
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance April (S/O)	£20.00

It was proposed by Margaret and seconded by Penny to authorize the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – May (S/O)	£316.83
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance May (S/O)	£20.00
c) Mrs N Nicholson OPE	£TBC
d) Earls Croome Village Hall – annual room hire	£100.00
e) Tim Hughes – lengthsman payment – May	£TBC
f) CAS Ltd – Annual Insurance premium	£426.91
g) Tim Hughes – lengthsman payment – June	£TBC

Remittance:

MHDC Precept payment: £2915.00

WCC Lengthsman reimburse Jan/Feb & March: £627.00

18. ECPC Website

The clerk advised that the website had been ordered from HugoFox as agreed and HugoFox were looking to create a ECPC LOGO using a Dunstall Castle photograph. She would follow this up with a view to going 'live' following the July meeting and in plenty of time for the discontinuation of the Parish Pages on 22nd September.

19. CORRESPONDANCE

It was noted that Stablemates had responded to the letter regarding horses at Marsh Common and had requested a litter bin, but the location was in Strensham Parish and the request had been sent to the Strensham Parish clerk.

20. INFORMATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st July 2026 at 7.30 pm at Earls Croome Village Hall

Minutes of last months and previous meetings and other relevant information can be found at:

[My Parish \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](http://My Parish (worcestershire.gov.uk))

Meeting Closed 8.45pm.