

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr. Muriel Holmes; Cllr. Serena Crump; Cllr D Hadley; Cllr L Handscomb; Cllr A Russell; Cllr C Taylor; Cllr C Draper and Cllr S Keefe.

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk) and Ward Cllr D Hitchiner.

One member of the public.

Chairman welcomed those present to this the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

1.To Elect Chairman.

1.Cllr S Crump was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected as Chairman. Cllr Crump signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Chairman form.

2. Parish Councillor vacancies.

2.1 Co-option of Parish Councillor. Following the resignation of Cllr L Goldwater (and as reported at the last meeting) the Chairman was delighted to confirm that Neil Richards had put his name forward to be considered as a Parish Councillor representing Mansell Gamage Parish Council. It was unanimously agreed to accept Mr Richards's application and the Chairman welcomed Mr Richards to the Parish Council. Mr Richards signed the Acceptance of Office form and came to the table with full voting rights. The Clerk will inform the Elections Officer.

2.1. The Clerk reminded Councillors with regard to the legally required 6 month attendance rule (not 6 meetings).

3. Elect Vice Chairman. Cllr C Taylor was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman.

4. Elect Responsible Finance Officer - Lesley Hay as RFO was re-elected.

5. No Apologies for Absence were received.

6. Disclosure of Interests. Disclosable Pecuniary, Non- Disclosable, Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary interests plus written requests for dispensation – no declarations made.

6.1. All Councillors declared that there were no new or changed interests to their originally declared register.

7. Election of Council Representatives

7.1 Footpath Officers –

Proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed -
Bridge Sollars – Cllr C Taylor

Byford - Cllr M Holmes
Bishopstone - Cllr R Morgan
Mansell Gamage - Cllr N Richards
Kenchester – Cllr D Hadley

7.2 Planning Officers - as per parish

The Clerk reminded those present that notification of all Planning Applications affecting the parishes are emailed to the clerk.

As previously agreed, a Councillor - together with another Councillor (as required) - will arrange to visit all planning application sites. The site meeting will be arranged at a convenient time and will provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed plans with the applicant.

This information would then be reported back to the next Parish Council meeting for discussion and - if required - a comment submitted to the Planning Officer.

8. Ward Councillor David Hitchiner's Report - May 2025

The Ward Councillor gave a brief report.

The Planning Permission for Bishopstone Court would go to the Planning Committee because it was owned by a Councillor - he expected approval.

The Ward Councillor had been in contact with the Agent acting for the applicant at Bishon Farm who was working on changes to the plans to satisfy the Planning Officer. The Agent did not object to the proposed changes.

The cause of the flooding at Shetton Barns seemed to have been identified and remedial work undertaken.

The Ward Councillor was pleased that a Councillor had attended the Parish Summit during which a recently recruited officer had spoken about plans for improving the administration of Rights of Way and the Parish Charter had been discussed.

8.3 Open Session – no members of public present.

8.3.1 Issues were raised with regard to footpath markers in the various parishes– some broken; some missing – the clerk asked each Councillor representative to send her details and she would pass these on to D C Gardening - hopefully, he may be able to get these reinstated/repared at his next visit.

8.3.2 The new combination gate (Bristol Gate) has been erected. The Clerk confirmed that she had sent in an application for funding and which had been accepted and was being processed. However, it was agreed that the Clerk should go ahead and settle D C Gardening's invoice prior to receiving reimbursement.

8.3.3 Cllr Holmes explained that two areas in Byford would benefit from jetting - Church Lane the U90011 and the junction with Green Lane the U90012. The Clerk registered a

request with Herefordshire Council and it has been confirmed that they will add these locations to their list.

8.3.4 An email was received and circulated from the resident from Woodside Cottage explaining the recent problems with flooding. D C Gardening attended the same day – and after discussion with the residents it was agreed to arrange a meeting with Sir Harry Cottrell. The meeting took place on Monday 24th March 2025. D C Gardening prepared quotes for work to be carried out and the Clerk sent in an application to request funding via the Drainage Grant Scheme. It's now two months since the application was submitted and, despite repeated emails, there has been no acknowledgement to this application. Ward Cllr Hitchiner asked the Clerk to send him a copy of the application.

8.3.5 The Clerk confirmed that she had attended Herefordshire Council's Summit Meeting on 4th April 2025 – this meeting included 'A Charter for Herefordshire's Councils' on the agenda. The Clerk explained that a project was initiated in April 2024 to develop a new Parish Charter for Herefordshire to define how Herefordshire, Town and Parish Councils will collaborate and work together. A final draft of the charter has now been produced and paper copies were available at the meeting.

After the discussion, it was agreed to make several suggested amendments and then a draft charter would be open for review by all councils within Herefordshire and will be circulated by email in due course. Councils are encouraged to consider, review, and, if agreeable, sign up to the charter. Item to remain on the agenda.

8.4 The Chairman closed the Open session

9. The Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 12th March 2025 were agreed to be a true record and it was voted and unanimously agreed that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

9.1. Bishon Culvert. There has been emailed correspondence between the Locality Steward and [Tomas Szuketi](#) Land Drainage Technician; Balfour Beatty (emails circulated). Cllr Taylor confirmed that she remains in contact with both the Locality Steward and Tomas Szuketi with regard to this ongoing issue.

10. Finance Matters:

10.1. Schedule of Payments for April had been circulated and it was unanimously agreed to pay all outstanding invoices for April 2025.

End of year Bank Balances had been circulated together with copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/2025.

10.2 The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025 was agreed and accepted by Council. The External Audit Form was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer.

10.3 The Annual Accounts for 2024/2025 had been audited and these were agreed and accepted by Council. The External Audit form was completed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.

10.4 The Certificate of Exemption was signed and together with the Contact details will be returned to the External Auditor

The Clerk informed those present that all documentation will be submitted to the external auditor, and will be uploaded onto the website as appropriate and displayed on the village notice boards within the appropriate timescale.

10.5 The Clerk explained that Robert Taplin had kindly agreed to remain as internal auditor until September to enable the Parish Council to appoint a replacement. It was unanimously agreed to appoint Robert Taplin as interim internal auditor.

10.6 It was unanimously agreed to make a donation of £50.00 as a gift for the internal auditor – the Clerk to purchase a voucher and card of thanks.

11.Official documents: The Clerk explained that the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations have been amended since last adopted in 2024 – these had been circulated. After discussion, it was agreed to adopt the existing and revised documents.

All Councillors present agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct. Email or paper copies are available via the Clerk.

11.1The annual insurance renewal policy had been received. As the three year fixed rate had now expired – there was, as expected, an increase in the policy - from £167.44 to £252.00 per annum. After discussion, it was agreed to accept this increase and for the Clerk to settle the invoice before the 1st June 2025. However, the clerk will enquire if this a one year policy or for a fixed three year term – which would be preferred.

11.2 There was unanimous acceptance of D C Gardening's 2025-2026 Contract – which showed no increase in his hourly rate for the coming financial year. The Clerk and to confirmed receipt of his Insurance Policy for 2025-2026. Both on file.

11.3. The Chairman and Clerk signed the Contract with Herefordshire Council with regard to the Lengthsman Scheme Grant funding for 2025-2026.

11.4 The Clerk confirmed she had completed the Lengthsman's Annual Maintenance Plan for 2025-2026 (which had been circulated) and this, together with the Contract, will be forwarded to Herefordshire Council to be counter-signed.

12. Planning : None received to date.

Planning Consultation - 250688 - Bishopstone House, Bishopstone, Hereford, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of the existing northwest annex and construction of a single-storey extension with terrace. Ward Cllr Hitchiner confirmed that this planning application had been referred to the Planning Committee.

13. 'Making space for Nature in our Parish' All present expressed their thanks to Cllrs Keefe and Morgan and to Cllr Holmes for their continued efforts and that the planted/cultivated areas were a real show. Cllr Holmes reported that, following the gift of some free saplings, many of the trees were now flourishing but that she still had some to be planted out once they were more established.

14. Police Report – no report available. The Clerk confirmed that she had recently been asked by the Hereford Rural North Safer Neighbourhood Team to confirm the dates of the Parish Council meeting for the remainder of the year – this is in line with the Community Charter.

15. Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting as Wednesday 9th July 2025.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00p.m. Refreshments were served and enjoyed - with many thanks to Cllr Crump; Cllr Holmes and Cllr Birch.

Signed:

Date: