

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 7.00p.m.
in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

Web site address: <https://bishopstonegroup-herefordshire-pc.gov.uk>

PRESENT: Cllr S. Crump (Chairman) Cllr M Holmes; Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr. L Handscomb; Cllr A Russell; Cllr C Taylor; Cllr N Richards and Cllr D Hadley.

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk); Ward Cllr David Hitchiner. One member of the public.

Chairman welcomed those present to the July meeting.

1. Apologies for absence. Cllr S Keefe and Cllr C Draper.

2. To receive declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations. None declared.

3. To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 (circulated). It was agreed that these were a true record, and it was unanimously voted by the Councillors in attendance that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Report

Thank you everyone for coming this evening.

Having had to address flooding issues in the past meetings, we are now facing an extremely hot dry period when it is hard to imagine the rain of last winter! These issues are still at the forefront of our minds though as we head through the year. Apart from what is on the agenda, there has not been anything significant to report. I thank Lesley for keeping us all extremely well informed and up to date with all correspondence received and the progress of ongoing tasks.

5. Ward Councillor David Hitchiner's Report

Parish Matters

Planning - Bishon Farm. Significantly amended layout. (See PC comment item 8.1)

County Council matters

Annual Meeting - Council met to reappoint a Leader and appoint chairs of committees on 23 May. I remain as Chair of Audit & Governance.

Local Transport Plan consultation - The draft LTP has been completed. I have submitted some comments which Lesley has circulated.

Local Plan – call for sites - I attended a Council Briefing on this subject. Many Councillors are unhappy with the number of houses the Government are requiring to be built. The

officer responses to these concerns were supportive in that officers have been trying to push back.

Land to the West of Hereford is likely to be a favoured area if the current administration have their way.

Council Finances - The reported outturn for the last financial year is a surplus of £500,000, This is after taking advantage of the amendment to the Budget proposed by the Independents for Herefordshire which was accepted and resulted in an additional £2.3m, a transfer from Reserves of £4m and interest received by not in the Budget (c£1.5m). Notwithstanding this the Council's finances are much better than many Councils.

Southern Relief Road and the Western Bypass - Cabinet will consider the method by which contractors for the building of the SRR to start in 2026. The Independents for Herefordshire are pressing for a more complete Business Case to be put forward rather than the two page document which includes benefits from the Western Bypass, which it should not do.

Herefordshire Histories Festival - A great success. 104 events and between 2,500 and 3,000 visitors. To be repeated next year.

Road resurfacing - Resurfacing of the B4352 taking place between Eaton Bishop and Madley.

5.1 Open Session

A resident attended the meeting to express his concerns with regard to the increase volume of traffic turning off the A438 to Bridge Sollers - using the C1098 – as a cut through to Madley; Kingstone and access to the A49.

Previously there have been 'hot spots' during the day associated with work and school traffic but recently there has been a huge increase in numbers using this very narrow C road. During discussion - it was agreed that due to the road being so narrow with sharp unsighted bends - it is totally unsuitable to cope with this volume for traffic and a serious accident is inevitable.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Ian Connolly Traffic Management Advisor West Mercia Police Road Safety Team – with a view to discussing possible solutions i.e. introducing a speed limit; weight restrictions and/or changes to the lay out of the road signage to encourage drivers to slow down – maybe even encourage drivers to take the longer but safer route along the A and B roads. Item to remain on the agenda.

5.2 Close Open session

6. Finance: Schedule of payment sheet and current accounts sheet circulated.

6.1 It was unanimously agreed to pay the of June invoices.

7. Highways and Environmental Matters:

7.1 Loud vehicles and high speed driving in Bishopstone. Cllr Taylor explained that she had received several complaints with regard to vehicles – including go karts and quadbikes –

nosily racing through Bishopstone. After discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would approach the local Police and request a visit – hopefully to the September Meeting – when various issues could be raised and discussed.

7.2 Mansell Gamage – Woodside Cottage. The Clerk confirmed that the funding for this project had been approved and that she will liaise with D C Gardening to book a date to get this work completed before the Autumn. The Clerk will also liaise with Cllrs Holmes and Richards when a date has been confirmed.

7.3 Consider drainage works for 2025-2026; lengthsman and PRow funding. The Clerk explained that allowing for the drainage work at Mansel Gamage; the lengthsman funding and any possible small PRow expense – there would be approximately £15,000.00 available to invest in future drainage work. Councillors were asked to bring their suggestions regarding future drainage/maintenance work to the next meeting and the Clerk will submit application forms.

7.4 Update on recent works on Bishon Common. Cllr Taylor confirmed that she had recently received the following email from Tomas Szuketi - Land Drainage Technician at Balfour Beatty.

Just to let you know I visited this issue with my crew yesterday.

We jetted the piped ditch coming from the village toward Bishon Common and cleared the surround of the gully feeding it. We reopened the ditch coming from the properties to the culvert crossing and we dug out the grips. We jetted all pipes and dug out the first 2 metres of the outfall ditch to let the water run.

We ran into a few issues. Utilities put their fibre optic in the verge alongside the ditch so we had to be very careful.

We could not create a grip to allow the water to drain from the road past the lip above the culvert because utilities installed power cable at surface level just by that concrete lip. Instead, we cleared those 2 ironworks that cross the road and jetted the pipe toward the ditch.

Did you speak with anyone regarding the outfall ditch or shall I engage with the Duchy estate? It will be a lot of work from them but they have to do it. The pipe crossing is large enough as long as the ditch is clear.

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Chairman would approach local residents and landowners with view to arranging an informal site meeting to discuss the associated flooding issues. Item to remain on the agenda.

7.5 The Clerk was asked to liaise with the lengthsman with regard to :

- (a) Repairing the Wye Valley Walk sign at the Bishopstone Crossroad.
- (b) Carrying out some routine work on the U73025 ditches in Kenchester

It was noted by Cllr Hadley that over the last couple of years the pipes/culverts under this road in the vicinity of "Anne Croft" , the church road , and under the field entrance adjacent to KT1 footpath have been water-jetted and put into reasonable order. However, the run of

ditching on the East side of the road (facing the Royal Mail letterbox) has been badly damaged by delivery and contractors' vehicles over the past year . All grips including that by KT1 need attending to. In the first instance, the Clerk will liaise with the lengthsman and arrange for D C Gardening to liaise with Cllr Hadley prior to a visit.

(c) To liaise with Cllr Holmes with regard to general maintenance work on the new stretch of road in Byford.

8. Planning:

8.1 Re-consultation – 242840 – Land at Bishon Farm – Amended application for proposed erection of 8 dwellings.

During discussion it was acknowledged that the new plans that have been submitted have taken concerns into consideration. The issue of the street line has been clarified and the surface drainage expanded upon.

However, the consensus of opinion is that the Councillors do not believe the issue of the sewerage has been adequately resolved. There are conflicting reports from Welsh Water and Matt Tompkins.

Cllr Hadley highlighted concerns as to the vulnerability of the Yazor Brook - also raising concerns as to the final, approved , choice of sewerage system since Welsh Water are suggesting that a new direct line to Kenchester may be needed - which would surely not be at an acceptable cost to the developer. It was noted that the present system in Bishopstone is already inadequate and the suggested alternative at Kenchester is unsuitable.

The roads through Bishopstone are narrow and unsuitable for heavy goods lorries. Therefore there needs to be a stipulation when planning is granted that lorries delivering materials should enter the village from the Garnons end and the time is restricted as to when the road through the village can be used

Ward Councillor Hitchiner offered to take these points forward to the Planning Officer.

8.2 Planning Consultation – 251156 – 2 Cambria Cottage, Bishopstone.
Planning application refused.

9. HALC – To discuss items outlined within Information Corner (Circulated)

(a) LENGTHSMEN CONTACT DETAILS Herefordshire Council has recently requested full contact details of PC Lengthsmen. As with their similar request for contact details of all Footpaths Officers (FPOs) parish/town councils should check with their volunteer/contractor prior to handing over such details.

I am obviously aware and compliant with the Lengthsman/FPOs contracts/insurance etc.

(b) NEW AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025/2026 AGAR During the autumn, HALC will be offering guidance/training on the changes, including the new assertion about compliance with GDPR.

I have already attended a Zoom meeting on this subject - but will be attending any training/guidance offered in the future by HALC.

(c) GOVERNMENT BACKS REMOTE COUNCIL MEETINGS Government has announced plans to amend legislation to allow parish/town councils to hold remote and hybrid meetings.

The remote meetings - hopefully this will get Government backing - I will keep you posted.

(d) LOSS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NDP) FUNDING - details circulated.

10. Items for the Next Agenda (no discussion).

Apologies received from Cllr L Handscomb.

11. Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting : Wednesday 10th September 2025

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30p.m.

Signed:

Date: