

MATHON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 9th SEPTEMBER 2025 at 7.30 pm in Mathon Parish Hall

Minutes of the Meeting are draft until approved at the next Council Meeting

Present:- Cllr S Harte, Cllr M Malsbury, Cllr P Davies, Cllr K Perkins, Cllr C Green

In attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mr David Baldwin & Mr Chris Rouse (MHT)

Apologies for absence : Cllr M Meir

DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI) or other DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct – No Declarations made.

Written Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) - No requests had been received by the Clerk relating to any items on the present Agenda

The Chairman adjourned the Meeting for Public Question Time/Participation.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- (a) **Public questions** – none
- (b) **Malvern Hills Trust** – The Clerk had e-mailed a report to Cllrs from Malvern Hills Trust (sent via Mr D Baldwin) covering the visit to the hills recently of Steve Mackay, the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner. A range of rural topics was covered during this visit including: dogs worrying sheep – fly tipping – littering – illegal mountain biking. Graziers are faced with regular worrying of livestock by dogs and have to deal with numerous injuries and a number of stock fatalities every year. The Trust looks to the Police to take action under the Dogs Protection of Livestock Act (1953) which makes it an offence to allow a dog to worry livestock. Dog owners can be fined up to £1,000. New legislation via the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill aims to strengthen penalties and police powers for livestock worrying. The Trust's Parliamentary Bill seeks the ability for the Trust to apply fixed penalty notices for breaching its byelaws and require people to give the Trust their name and address. It also seeks to enable the Trust to license business uses, like commercial dog walking. Chris Rouse voiced his ongoing criticism of the amount of money being spent on the Parliamentary Bill by MHT. A more detailed report re MHT would be available for the next PC meeting after a Trust Board Meeting had been held.
- (c) **Herefordshire Ward Councillor** - No Report
- (d) **CSO/West Mercia Police** – No crime to report

The Chairman re-opened the Meeting

49/25 FOOTPATHS

- (a) **Kissing Gate on footpath CW4 (in Mathon)** - The Chairman had visited the site of the Kissing Gate on footpath CW4, but he could not see any sign of an obstruction (as reported to the meeting on 8th July)
- (b) **Two tumbledown stiles in a dangerous state. Grid Ref: 756452.** – One of these stiles has been fixed and the other one is okay.

50/25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th July 2025 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr K Perkins and seconded by Cllr P Davies.

51/25 MATHON PARISH HALL - nothing to report

52/25 NEW ASSERTIONS re GDPR/YEAR END AUDIT

The Clerk reported on the meeting held at the HALC offices in August re the above. It would appear that the focus would be on transparency, legal compliance and governance of Parish Councils. A further Clerks meeting would be held later in the Autumn once detailed requirements were known.

- (a) **Setting up of dotgov website /e-mail.** - as previously reported, Councils are going to be required to have a dotgov website, ideally by the end of the current 2025/26 year (31/03/26). The Clerk had made enquiries, and HALC had proposed a Herefordshire based website company to set up this new website for us. There are only a dozen or so website production companies who are allowed by the government to set up a dotgov website. The fee for the website creation/migration would be £650.00 plus £100 p/a maintenance fee. However, as the Council is a HALC member, the first 10 months of maintenance is free. Hosting charge will be £50 p/a. The Clerk needs to contact HALC to obtain a domain name – approx cost £120.00. The Clerk reported that Cllr M Meir had now been granted Administrator status by our current website company so that (together with the Clerk) he could re-organise the structure of our present website to make an easier migration to the new one. After some discussion, the Council agreed that the new website should start by the end February/early March 2026.
- (b) **The Clerks Meeting** (as above) revealed that many small Parish Councils (similar to Mathon) held only core policy/procedures. Additional policies were, therefore, proposed for adoption/approval by the Council to ensure transparency, legal compliance and effective governance as noted above.
 - (i) Freedom of Information Policy (FOI) – model publication scheme
 - (ii) Complaints Procedure
 - (iii) Equality & Diversity Policy
 - (iv) Delegation Scheme
 - (v) Handling FOI requests
 - (vi) Filming/photographing/audio recording & Social Media Reporting of Council & Committee Meetings

All the above six policies/procedures were approved and adopted by the Council. Proposed by Cllr C Green and seconded by Cllr M Malsbury.

53/25 GRANTS/DONATIONS

- (a) The Council approved the payment of the second half grant of £700.00 to PCC Mathon towards the maintenance of the church graveyard. Proposed by Cllr S Harte and seconded by Cllr P Davies.

54/25 FINANCE

The following payment of Accounts as per cheque list signed by the Chairman (attached to the Minutes) was approved. Proposed by Cllr K Perkins and seconded by Cllr M Malsbury :-

- (a) D W Taylor - Clerk's Salary - August/September 2025 - (PAYE deducted and to include backdated pay rise from April 2025) – £835.80 (August £430.00/September £405.80)
- (b) D W Taylor – Clerks Office – April – September 2025 - £70.00
- (c) Second half year grant to PCC Mathon for graveyard maintenance) - £700.00

- (d) HMRC – PAYE – July/August/September 2025 - £334.40
- (e) For information – Lloyds Bank Charges – 10 May – 9 July 2025 - £11.00

55/25 HIGHWAYS

The Clerk had managed to get some *updates* from Balfour Beatty as follows :-

- (a) Blocked Culvert along West Malvern Road – (Ref FS Case 595345623) - still very silted up. *Still in the system – planned for drainage technician to attend. There are still outstanding jetting issues.*
- (b) Flooding across the road near to Brook House – the Clerk had reported this to Highways Ref: FS Case 658097597. *This is still in the system. Two blocked gully jobs raised – jetting issues still outstanding*
- (c) Water hanging on the road off the B4214 – 3-400 metres from its junction with the B4220.. This has been reported to Highways – Ref FS Case 663290311 - *This had been signed off as work was unable to proceed at the time due to flooding. BB had suggested the Clerk resubmit, but the Council agreed to wait and see for the moment.*
- (d) Blocked culvert - Ham Green to Burford Farm House water running down the road continuously during wet weather. Ref: FS682937800. *This Job has now been completed.*
- (e) Tree cutting at Badgers – *this to be deleted as no longer relevant.*
- (f) Clerk had sent in a request to Highways for a warning sign needed re the sharp right hand bend at the end of the drive to Ferny Cottage. Motorists miscalculating the bend are damaging gate posts. Ref: FS 722313783. *Locality Steward Neil James had visited the site and reported to BB that there were numerous other bends in Mathon/Cradley area – some worse than this one - and that if a sign was put up for this bend, it would set a precedent for many others. Therefore no sign would be put in place.* The Clerk was asked to contact the hedge owner asking him to cut back the hedge in this area.
- (g) Cllr C Green raised a question relating to the resurfacing works on the B4220. The Mathon part of this road had not been touched. The Chairman to liaise with the Clerk re exact location.
- (h) The Chairman reported that the oak tree behind the bench on the land/verge near to the Church had split, with some of the branches now overhanging the bench (which belonged to the Parish Council). After some discussion re the ownership of the land, the Council agreed that the Chairman should approach Ron Hadley for a quote to remove the overhanging branches. Cllr P Davies insisted that the Council should also get a written report on the safety of the tree as it could pose a danger to the public and might have to be removed entirely.

56/25 CLIFFE ARMS

Nothing to report at the moment

57/25 CORRESPONDENCE – all relevant correspondence had been e-mailed to Cllrs

58/25 NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday 4th November 2025 at 7.30 pm. in Mathon Parish Hall

Future Meeting dates 6th January 2026 – 3rd March 2026.

..... (Chairman) Date

