Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council held at the Pavilion, Ewyas Harold on Friday 2nd May 2025 at 6.40pm

Present: Councillors Malcolm Watkins (Chair), Sally Probert, Sarah Eynon, Tony Ling, Lucy Sevenoaks and Will Lloyd.

In attendance: Emma Thomas – Clerk to the Council

Members of the public: 0

1. **To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive Chairman's signature on Declaration of Acceptance of Office form**
   It was RESOLVED that Cllr Malcolm Watkins would continue as Chair for a further year. He signed the Acceptance of Office form. It was RESOLVED that as of 2026 both roles of Chair and Vice-Chair would be rotated on a two year basis amongst all Cllrs.

2. **To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council**
   It was RESOLVED that Cllr Sally Probert continue as Vice-Chair for a further year.

3. **To accept any apologies for absence and note the reason**
   Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Cllr Liz Overstall - personal; Alex Culpin – work and Debbie Sissons - work

4. **To record any Declarations of Interest and consider any Requests for Dispensations**
   Cllr Sally Probert DECLARED DPI's against items 10.13.4; 10.16.1 and 13 and a NPI against item 12.3
   Cllr Malcolm Watkins DECLARED an NPI against any matter relating to the Football Club.
   Cllr Lucy Sevenoaks DECLARED a NPI against item 12.3.
   All Cllrs signed the Register of Interest book.

5. **To remind Councillors to review their Register of Interests forms and make Herefordshire Council aware of any alterations.**
   The clerk reminded all Cllrs of the need to keep their Register of Interest forms updated with Herefordshire Council.

6. **To consider approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 8th April 2025 including the confidential minutes**
   Both sets of minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.

7. **Open Session - To receive the views of residents on parish matters**
   None

8. **To review committee structures, areas of responsibility, and to appoint members to serve as required: -**
   - **8.1 To note the Cllr meetings attendance record for 2024-25**
     NOTED
   - **8.2 Cllr who undertakes finance check / bank reconciliation** – Cllr Lucy Sevenoaks
   - **8.3 Bank Signatories** – Cllrs: Malcolm Watkins; Sally Probert; Sarah Eynon; Tony Ling; Lucy Sevenoaks; Will Lloyd; Debbie Sissons; Alex Culpin
   - **8.4 Parish Footpaths Officer** – Katrina Kalkwarf
   - **8.5 Parish Tree Warden** – Mark Chester
   - **8.6 Finance Working Group** – Cllrs: Malcolm Watkins; Sally Probert; Lucy Sevenoaks; Sarah Eynon and Tony Ling

8.7 Highways Working Group – Cllrs: Tony Ling; Will Lloyd
8.8 Kemble Centre Working Group – Cllrs Sally Probert; Alex Culpin; Tony Ling; Liz Overstall; Sarah Eynon and Lucy Sevenoaks.

The above roles and responsibilities were AGREED as listed above.

9. To review the Group Parish Council policies and (re)adopt

9.1 Standing Orders – Appendix 1
It was RESOLVED to adopt the recently updated Orders from NALC.

9.2 Code of Conduct – Appendix 2
It was RESOLVED that Cllrs would continue to comply with the Code of Conduct.

9.3 Financial Regulations – Appendix 3
It was RESOLVED to adopt the 2024 Financial Regulations including giving the clerk delegated authority to make contracted and within budget payments between meetings up to £1500.

9.4 Risk Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls – Appendix 4
The risk schedule and internal controls were considered. It was RESOLVED that the risks faced by the Parish Council had been adequately considered and mitigations put in place as necessary.

9.5 Risk Management Policy – Appendix 5
It was RESOLVED that the Risk Management policy was suitable for the risks faced by the Parish Council and was adopted.

9.6 Publication Scheme – Appendix 6
It was RESOLVED to adopt the Publication Scheme as per the requirements of the Transparency Code.

9.7 Asset Register – Appendix 7
It was AGREED that the Asset Register was an accurate reflection of the assets owned by the Parish Council. It was NOTED that the recently purchased gym equipment has been included.

9.8 Reserves Policy – Appendix 8
The Reserves Policy was reviewed and readopted.

9.9 Equality Policy – Appendix 9
It was RESOLVED to adopt the Equality Policy.

9.10To consider agreement to continue to comply with the Transparency Code
It was RESOLVED to continue to comply with the Transparency Code.

9.11To remind councillors of self-disqualification law
Cllrs were REMINDED of the need to attend at least one meeting every six months to remain as a Councillor

9.12 To confirm eligibility to act under the General Power of Competence and confirm intention to do so.
The clerk CONFIRMED that as two thirds of Cllrs had been elected at the last relevant election and they now had a qualified clerk they were able to act under The General Power of Competence if they chose to. It was RESOLVED to do so.

10. Finance:

10.1 To consider the End of Year 2024-25 finance report and bank statement– Appendix 10
The End of Year finance report was NOTED. It was REPORTED that on the 31st March 2025 the current account held £9705.61 and the Reserve account £71,397.27. The report was SIGNED as evidence of bank reconciliation.

10.2 To consider and approve Internal Audit report – Appendix 11
The internal audit report was CONSIDERED. The areas of non-compliance were NOTED. It was AGREED that now a qualified clerk was in post, these issues would be rectified.

10.3 To consider and approve the Annual Return Governance Statement – Appendix 12
The Governance Statements were CONSIDERED. It was RESOLVED to agree with the Internal Audit findings. The clerk REPORTED that the reasons behind the non-compliance would be sent to the external auditor along with the other paperwork. The clerk expressed confidence that all issues raised could be rectified quickly. The statement was SIGNED by the Chair.

10.4To consider and approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements – Appendix 13
The Accounting Statements were CONSIDERED and APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair.

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10.5 To confirm the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights
It was RESOLVED that the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights would be Tuesday 3rd June – Monday 14th July inclusive

10.6 To review the parish council insurance policy and decide on any amendments required
It was RESOLVED that the insurance policy still covered the needs of the Parish Council. This will be revisited again upon renewal in the Autumn.

10.7 To consider the internal auditor for 2025-26
It was RESOLVED to use HALC Internal Audit Service for the coming year.

10.8 To consider continuing to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method for 2025-26 and the use of BACS payments
It was RESOLVED to keep using the receipt and payments method of accounting for the coming year and to continue to pay invoices by BACS or direct debit.

10.9 To consider the clerks delegated authority to make payments of up to £1500 between meetings as required
Cllrs RESOLVED that the clerk have this authority.

10.10 To confirm the following variable direct debits for continued payment this coming year
10.10.1 Herefordshire Council Waste Collection – quarterly payments
10.10.2 NEST pension – monthly payments
10.10.3 ICO – annual fee
10.10.4 Welsh Water – quarterly payments
10.10.5 SSE – quarterly electricity payments for the Pavilion and Kamble Centre
10.10.6 PWLB – loan repayment – bi-annually
The above direct debits were NOTED as remaining active for the coming year.

10.11 To confirm the banking arrangements are suitably secure to manage any financial risk to the Council
The financial risks and internal controls were CONSIDERED. It was RESOLVED that Unity Trust Bank Ltd continue to provide an excellent level of security to mitigate any risk to the Council – with the clerk submitting payments and two signatories authorising each payment.

10.12 To note the VAT returns for December 2024 £484.95 due back and March 2025 £2528.77 due back and consider deregistering for VAT.
The VAT returns were NOTED. It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council should deregister for VAT as soon as possible as they are entitled to reclaim all VAT charged to them without this.

10.13 To consider the following payments to be made:
10.13.1 Clerks May Salary
10.13.2 Clerks May Expenses £95.15 – Previously circulated
10.13.3 HMRC PAYE £TBC
10.13.4 J M Probert – LM tasks; bin-emptying April 2025 and PRoW tasks - £1486.76
10.13.5 HALC – Internal Audit fee £330.00
The above invoices were APPROVED for payment by BACS with the exception of HMRC which has yet to be confirmed. This will be paid under clerk's delegated authority and noted at the June meeting.

10.14 To note payment made between meetings
10.14.1 PWLB Loan £1542.00
10.14.2 SSE Energy D/D £431.09
10.14.3 SSE Energy D/D £211.57
NOTED

10.15 To note receipts received.
10.15.1 Herefordshire Council Precept 1 £26,914.50
10.15.2 HMRC VAT Return £3014.00
10.15.3 EH Football Club £60.00
10.16.4 2024-25 reissued Wayleave cheque £31.20
The above receipts were NOTED

10.16 To consider any grant requests received

10.16.1 School PTA - Minibus

It was RESOLVED to defer this item as the requested information had yet to be received.

11. Kemble Centre

11.1 To consider an update from the Kemble Centre Working Group and next steps

It was NOTED that the clerk had instructed CDB Planning and Architecture to undertake the feasibility study on the site. No further detail has been received at present.

11.2 To consider allowing the Scarecrow Festival to use the grounds during the event.

It was RESOLVED that the festival could use the site and the electricity supply for the event on the 26th May 2025.

12. Recreation Ground/Pavilion

12.1To consider general maintenance works to the Pavilion and next steps

The following items were REPORTED:

- There is a damaged picnic bench that needs repairing by the Lengthsman.
- Railings by the pavilion are being repaired FOC.
- The mowing contract is going well.
- The cross trainer has a bolt that has worked loose. Sovereign have been informed and asked to repair is as soon as possible. The Lengthsman has taped the equipment off.
- The Brisland wooden bench needs removing by the Lengthsman while Cllr Eynon contacts the family about repairing it.
- A gate to the grounds longer closes. It was AGREED that the Lengthsman would speak to the landowner about the installation of a gate.

12.2 To consider an update on the MUGA (Multi-use Games Area) and next steps

None received.

12.3To consider installing a sign acknowledging investment in gym equipment by Parish Council and She Wolves

It was RESOLVED to defer this item until June.

13. Lengthsman

13.1 To consider the lengthsman's report and agree any work to be carried out

The photos of recent PRoW tasks undertaken were NOTED. It was RESOLVED that the clerk could pay the invoice for the drainage grant tasks when it arrives between meetings and reclaim the grant between meetings.

13.2 To consider signing the Lengthsman contract and maintenance plan with Herefordshire Council for 2025-26 and note the grant monies of £4761 available to be reclaimed.

It was RESOLVED to sign the contract alongside the maintenance plan.

14. Footpaths: to consider an update on footpaths and the PRoW grant and next steps

It was REPORTED that all PRoW items requested on the grant form last year have been received. It was further REPORTED that the clerk has submitted the claim for the costs of the Bristol gate £318.00.

15. Highways: To consider an update from the Highways working group and next steps

It was REPORTED that a meeting has been set up with Herefordshire Council on 15th May 2025 at 9am to discuss a complete highway safety package for the parishes. Cllrs Will Lloyd and Tony Ling will attend this meeting.

16. To consider an update on the website, email and social media

The clerk REPORTED that she was chasing up.gov emails for all Cllrs to use.

It was AGREED that information on dog and farm equipment thefts should go out on social media along with photos of recent tasks undertaken by the Lengthsman.

17. **Correspondence:** To consider correspondence received between meetings
    - Invoice from Connexus - NOTED
    - HALC Information Corner – NOTED
    - Police – Parishioners are urged to keep pets and farm equipment safe as there has been a spate of dog and farm equipment thefts. If anyone notices marks on their property and they have a dog they should contact the police immediately.

18. **To consider items for the next meeting (no discussion)**
    Data Protection Suite of Policies; Parish Council Community WhatsApp Group; Key safe; Weekly Playground Inspections.

19. **To note the date of the next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 10th June 2025, at 7pm at Ewyas Harold Pavilion**
    NOTED

The meeting closed at 19.31

Signed: [redacted] Dated: 10-6-25