Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council held at the Pavilion, Ewyas Harold on Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7pm

Present: Councillors Malcolm Watkins (Chair), Sally Probert, Tony Ling, Sarah Eynon, Liz Overstall and Debbie Sissons.

In attendance: Emma Thomas – Clerk to the Council

Members of the public: 4

1. **To accept any apologies for absence and note the reason**
   Apologies were RECEIVED and accepted from Cllrs: Alex Culpin and Will Lloyd

2. **To record any Declarations of Interest and consider any Requests for Dispensations**
   Cllr Sally Probert DECLARED DPI's against items 8, 9.2.4, 9.3.1 and 9.6 and SIGNED the Register of Interest book
   Cllr Malcolm Watkins DECLARED NPI's against items 9.6 (toilet cleaning) and all matters relating to the football club and SIGNED the Register of Interest book.

3. **To consider approval of minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 13th January 2026**
   The minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.

Ward Cllr Matthew Engel; Cllr Lucy Sevenoaks and one member of the public joined the meeting.

4. **Open Session**
   - **4.1 To receive the views of residents on parish matters**
     The following items were RAISED:
     - Issues were related to flooding and flood alleviation were discussed.
     - Potholes – the clerk urged parishioners to either log the issue or contact her and she would do it.
   - **4.2 To receive any reports related to parish matters**
     A brief report emailed from the Safer Neighbourhood Team was NOTED.
   - **4.3 To receive a brief report from Ward Cllr Matthew Engel**
     Cllr Engel's report included the following items:
     - Recently spent time dealing with issues relating to potholes. Cllr Engel NOTED that it was felt that the system for repairing urgent repairs was no longer working. It was AGREED that the clerk would email him details of a broken manhole cover and crater in the road on School Lane to press for urgent repairs. Cllr Engel further NOTED that issues logged with the Locality Steward in December had yet to be repaired and had now significantly worsened. A letter regarding issues on Pudding Street was passed to the clerk.

5. **Kemble Centre**
   - **5.1 To consider an update from the Kemble Centre Working Group and next steps**
     It was REPORTED that the Working Group are now ready to begin to put together the consultation material to go out to all parishioners regarding the future use of the site and building.

6. **Flooding**
   - **6.1To consider an update from the Flood Working Group and next steps.**
     It was REPORTED that the Flood Working Group were still working hard on understanding who is responsible for each area of the water course and pressing for urgent maintenance works. The Lugg Internal Drainage Board are already moving ahead with this.
     Cllr Liz Overstall has been liaising with other residents regarding flooding issues and highway safety concerns in Mill Lane.

It was NOTED that the clerk remains in regular contact with both Herefordshire Council and the Environment Agency. She is also working on the Flood Plan with the volunteer flood wardens. It was NOTED that one further Warden will be needed to put out the highway closure signs at Elm Bridge. The clerk has also been collating the responses that have been received from the cost survey sent out to those properties which flooded internally on 14th November 2025. The need for property owners to become more resilient was also NOTED as crucial to the community helping themselves in flood events.
The request from Brook House to be allowed to clear a few bushes and possibly a couple of trees, as well as move a couple of storage units, on Parish Council land, at the back of their property to facilitate the building of a bund was APPROVED.
It was NOTED that Ewyas Harold Primary School will be looking at flooding during Science Week. Cllr Sally Probert AGREED to attend on behalf of the Parish Council if timing allowed.

Three members of the public and Ward Cllr Matthew Engel left the meeting

7. **Recreation Ground/Pavilion/MUGA**

7.1 To consider general maintenance works and next steps

It was NOTED that the football pitch had been vandalised over the last weekend by a quad bike being ridden over the wet grass. Threatening behaviour was directed at parishioners. The police were called – the clerk will confirm that the incident has been recorded. Signage in the area will be reviewed by the Working Group.

7.2 To consider a booking system for the MUGA

It was REPORTED that there is an issue with a small area of the surface and that the installer is meeting tomorrow to investigate. It was AGREED to defer the booking system until the next meeting.

7.3 To consider the quotes for installing CCTV on the recreation ground

It was REPORTED that a quote is expected shortly for this and can hopefully be approved at the next meeting. This will then allow for the toilet to be re-opened.

7.4 To consider quotes received to refurbish/upgrade the play area

It was REPORTED that Sovereign are putting together a variety of options for the Parish Council to consider regarding the upgrade of the play area.
It was NOTED that some dog owners are not picking up their dog mess in the area. The clerk will remind everyone to do this.
It was NOTED that the plastic covering the climbing netting/chains has perished. The lengthsman will remove this while refurbishment is looked at.

Cllr Sally Probert left the meeting

8. **Lengthsman, Footpaths and Highways**

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

It was NOTED that the lengthsman has recently completed the Drainage Grant tasks and the money reclaimed. It was REPORTED that further jetting of pipes could be undertaken on Wigga Road, the bottom of Penlan Pitch and near to Elm Green Farm. These tasks would take three days and cost £1140 + VAT. It was RESOLVED to approve this task.
As well as the above, clearing the verges on the King Street pitch would allow for water to exit the carriageway. This would take two days and cost £1520 + VAT. It was RESOLVED to approve this task.
It was also APPROVED to ask the lengthsman to clear the drain by the churchyard entrance that is blocked and preventing water returning to the brook.

Cllr Sally Probert rejoined the meeting

8.2 To receive an update on the installation of white gates and SID's in and next steps

It was REPORTED that one landowner has agreed to have the gates installed on their land. It was RESOLVED to defer a decision on this until all landowners have been asked.

It was NOTED that cars are parked on the corner by the Temple Inn. The yellow lines need re-doing to make the exclusion zone clearer. The clerk will log this. It was also NOTED that the PRoW access from the nature reserve on DU9 has been locked. Cllr Liz Overstall is working on getting this reopened.

9. Finance:

9.1 To consider the February finance report, summary and bank statements. – App 1a & 1b

It was REPORTED that the clerk had managed to reset up the VAT 126 claim process and that the first claim of 4827.82 had been received. It was NOTED that the budget heading for the Recreation Ground is now overspent by £1727.10. The report was APPROVED and signed as evidence of budget monitoring and bank reconciliation by Cllr Lucy Sevenoaks.

9.2 To consider the following payments to be made:

9.2.1. Clerks February Salary
9.2.2. Clerks February Expenses £138.53 – Previously circulated
9.2.3. HMRC PAYE £320.63
9.2.4. J M Probert – Lengthsman tasks; bin-emptying; Play Area checks and Lengthsman tasks and Drainage grant works Jan 2026 £3695.28
9.2.5. Collins Design and Build Ltd – Kemble Centre feasibility study as agreed £1500.00
9.2.6 HALC 2026-27 subscription fee – incl NALC fee. £1131.04

The above invoices were APPROVED for payment by BACS

9.3 To note the following payments made between meetings under clerk's delegated authority

9.3.1 Sally Probert - Highway signs as agreed in January £182.95

NOTED

9.4 To note the following direct debits:

9.4 1 Nest – Pension - £76.04
9.4.2 Bank Charge – Unity Trust - £6.00
9.4.3 SSE Energy – Electricity - £382.68
9.4.4 Herefordshire Council – Waste Collection - £197.60

NOTED

9.5 To note the following receipts:

9.5.1 Football Club – January £50
9.5.2 VAT Claim - £4827.82

NOTED

Cllr Sally Probert left the meeting

9.6 To consider the following tenders received for contracts for the coming financial year:

- Lengthsman

It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert to the position of Lengthsman for the year 2026-27.

- Mowing

It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint J. & D Sanders for the mowing contract for the year 2026-27.

- Toilet Cleaning

It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. & Mrs B. Chance for the toilet cleaning contract for the year 2026-27.

- MUGA Maintenance

It was NOTED that two tenders had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert for the MUGA maintenance contract for the years 2026-28.

- Legionella Checks

It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert for the legionella contract for the year 2026-27.

- Play Area Checks

It was NOTED that, in light of the resolution under the MUGA maintenance contract, one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert for the play area and gym equipment checks contract for the year 2026-27.

- **Bin emptying – Recreation Ground**
  It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert for the bin emptying – recreation ground contract for the year 2026-27.
- **Bin emptying – general**
  It was NOTED that one tender had been received. It was RESOLVED to appoint Mr. J. Probert for the bin emptying – general contract for the year 2026-27.

Cllr Sally Probert re-joined the meeting

9.7 To consider the draft budget and precept figure for 2026-27. – Appendix 2
The draft budget and precept figure was considered. It was RESOLVED to increase the clerk's hours to fifteen a week due to the extra work being done on flooding matters and the forthcoming Kemble consultation. The budget heading was therefore raised to £19,500. It was further RESOLVED to increase the Kemble Centre budget heading to £20,000 to allow for funds to undertake any outcome and works needed following the public consultation detailed under item 5. The budget was then APPROVED with a precept figure of £91,000 being agreed for the year 2026-27. This amounts to £188.53 per annum per average Band D household. This is an increase of £1.41 per week on the 2025-26 figure. This increase was CONSIDERED very carefully but deemed necessary if the Parish Council is to continue supporting the community by funding Lengthsman tasks; Public Rights of Way improvements; drainage improvements; upkeep of the Recreation Ground and Pavilion including the new MUGA and gym equipment; refurbish the heavily used play area; empty the bins in the parishes; improve the Kemble Centre area for the benefit of the community; press for flooding alleviation measures and water way improvements/maintenance to name just some of the tasks undertaken. It was NOTED while making this decision that the unallocated reserves are well below the recommended figure and all but two of the allocated pots of funds are due to be utilised in the coming year. With the likely decrease in grant funding available from Herefordshire Council in the coming years the Council felt unable to make any decision other than to increase the precept or stop undertaking many of the tasks listed above.

9.8 To consider the following grant application
9.8.1 Way markers for The Pilgrims Way – Abbey Dore Deanery Diocese of Hereford - £150
It was RESOLVED to support this application.

10. Correspondence: To consider correspondence received between meetings
- Dangerous road edge opposite Golden Grove – Wern Ddu
- Food For Families – update on numbers assisted.
- Break in at St Michaels Church – 14th January 2026
- HALC – 10 Things you need to know in January 2026
- Herefordshire Council – Parish Summit – 3rd March 2026
- Herefordshire Council – Public Realm Annual Plan Briefing – 12/02/26 1-3pm – Thorn Depot
- Safer Neighbourhood Team – January newsletter
- Herefordshire Council - Small Business Rate Relief

NOTED

11. To consider items for the next meeting (no discussion)
IT Policy; audit matters; Dore Community Transport Grant application

12. To note the date of the next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 10th March 2026, at 7pm at Ewyas Harold Pavilion
NOTED
The meeting closed at 8.38pm

Signed: [redacted] Dated: 10-3-26