2025/10

MINUTES
DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

https://defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Defford & Besford Parish Council held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 in Defford Village Hall at 7pm

PRESENT: Chairman I Stephens, Vice Chairman S Rees, Cllrs: J Robinson and I Spiers and District Cllr P Middlebrough

1. **APOLOGIES** were received from Cllr D Lamont and County Cllr A Hardman

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
   - a) *Cllrs are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.*
   - b) *To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
   - c) *To declare Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature*
   - d) *Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the clerk at least 4 clear days prior to a meeting.*

   Cllrs who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items.

   None Declared

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: ***No one in attendance***

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** from meeting 21st May 2025 – proposed approval Cllr Rees, seconded Cllr Stephens – all in favour

4. **FINANCE / GOVERANCE:**

   a) Approval of receipts and payments to 8th July 2025 (made since last meeting)
   Payments for authorisation:

Lengthsman - April	240.00
Clerks Expenses	24.64
Service Charge	6.00
Lengthsman - May	240.00
Hall Hire	25.00
Clerks PAYE	284.80
Clerks NICS	26.04
MG - Repairs	1050.00
Clerks Expenses	15.00
Clerks Salary	379.88
Service Charge	6.00
Grass Cutting	700.00

Receipts:

Lengthsman April	240.00
VAT reclaimed	289.04
Lengthsman May	240.00

b) Account Balances:
Unity Trust Current Account: £4,176.86
Unity Trust Savings Account: £25,591.12

Approval of accounts proposed Cllr Spiers, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

A question was raised regarding whether Besford Church was a 'closed' churchyard – Clerk to research

Defford Church Wall: Quotes had been sourced but only one received from the same company that carried out the previous works (Creative Landscapes) – the parish council were all in agreement to instruct and get works scheduled – cost of £3,120 plus VAT – clerk to check there was no increase in price since their quote from April 2025.

5. COUNTY & DISTRICT CLLR REPORTS –

- County Council Report – report received from County Cllr A Hardman (in his absence):
  - WCC now governed by Reform party
  - Plans for a new 'special' school for autism students in Malvern have been cancelled
  - Plans for a new high school in Worcester have also been cancelled
  - A proposal to close the 'personal replacement care centre' in Pershore has been put forward
  - 20mph – Cllr Hardman asked for support from Defford & Besford to 'table' a proposal from his parishes to progress with the 20's Plenty initiative. This was well received by the parish council and fully supported.
  - Road Works / Closures – Cllr Hardman mindful of the disruption these have caused but seemingly now all done, other than any utility works (to which he has no control over)
  - Public Transport –An 'On Demand' public transport scheme to be rolled out in Wychavon in the coming weeks although full details are still awaited
- District Council Report – Cllr Middlebrough's report had been shared with Cllrs and annexed to these Minutes

6. HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

a) Public Rights of Way – Cllr Marshall had given apologies for his absence. Cllrs Rees and Lamont had both reported PRoW issues

b) Traffic Calming – A letter was received from a resident regarding concerns over speeding traffic, Upper Street in particular. The parish council agreed to support Cllr Hardman progressing with 20's Plenty and to continue liaising with WCC Highways to see what other traffic calming measures can be implemented in Defford, Besford and Woodmancote. The second VAS sign is soon to be installed. Cler would reply to the residents communication
The clerk to report faded line markings.

7. REPORTS:

a) Lengthsman – Cllr Lamont was not at the meeting, but it was evident around the villages that he continues to work well.

8. PUBLIC TRANSPORT / BUS SERVICE – communication was received from Cllr Boatright (Pershore Town Council) and Julian Palfrey (Chair of Vale Bus and Rail) which was shared with Cllrs. The parish council would reply offering support. This coincided by the reports from Cllrs Hardman and Middlebrough on the roll out of 'on demand' bus transport throughout Wychavon – further details to follow once received.

9. MILLENNIUM GREEN – it was reported that there is a need for some levelling out at MG. Cllr. Robinson came back advised that she may have some available soil that could be moved to MG in September for levelling.

10. WEBSITE – the clerk reported that the current website administrator was stepping down for personal reasons but would continue to assist where possible. This was timely as a recent NALC notification advised that parish and town councils should have a .gov.uk email and website address / domain. Whilst up til now this had been managed by a Cllr / Clerk it was agreed that a reputable website administration company should take over this responsibility due to the time that this can often take. The clerk has reached out to several companies, of which 2 with quotes. The parish council agreed to go with https://www.parishcouncilwebsites.co.uk/ offering a full support package (for both emails and website) at a competitive rate of £25 per month (after the 'purchase' of new domains = £300 per annum. Current budget being £200 per annum with the PC doing all the admin), proposed approval Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Rees – all in favour

11. CORRESPONDENCE / EMAILS:

- Communication noted from parishioner concerned that the PIP (25/00854/PIP) was approved - a 'PIP' application is often likely to be approved until it is turned into a 'full' planning application. Should this PIP application be approved, a request be made to Cllr Middlebrough for it to be taken to 'full' planning committee.
- WHP Telecoms Ltd - Proposed base station upgrade at Orchard Cottage Farm, Railway Field, Croome Road, Defford – *Content noted*

10. OTHER MATTERS FOR INFORMATION / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Notice Boards – to look at condition

11. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Wednesday 17th September at Defford Village Hall

Future Meeting Dates - All to Start at 7pm except May 20th at Besford bring 6.30pm:
September 17th 2025 – Defford
November 19th 2025 – Defford
January 21st 2026 – Defford
March 18th 2026 – Defford
May 20th 2026 – Besford (to include Besford APM) with a 6.30pm start
July 15th 2026 – Defford Note: wrong date currently on website but I have asked for it to be changed
September 16th 2026 – Defford
November 18th 2026 – Defford
January 20th 2027 - Defford

MEETING July 2025

Wychavon District Council Report

Key issues for Besford & Defford Residents

Armed Forces Day

Cllr Mark Goodge, Chairman of Wychavon District Council, raised the Armed Forces Day flag high above the Civic Centre in Pershore as a visible show of support of Armed Forces Day.

Armed Forces Day is an opportunity to thank the Armed Forces community, which encompasses service personnel, service families, veterans, reservists, cadets, and volunteers, for all that they do.

Across the world, the country's armed forces are busy promoting peace, delivering aid, tackling drug smugglers, providing security, and fighting terrorism.

The ceremony provided an opportunity to reflect on their contributions and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Reorganisation of Local Government

On 23rd June a well attended presentation was given on the implication of the 2028 local government reorganisation on town and parish council councils. From experiences of parish councils where unitary authorities are well established the role and workload of parishes and our unpaid parish councillors is going to increase. This will present a real challenge for individuals and communities.

The council continues to engage with the public and staff and other organisations using Mutual Ventures to independently assess views.

Initial analysis of the public survey results reveals:

- **48%** backed creating two unitary councils
- **29%** supported one unitary council for the county
- **19%** didn't support any reorganisation of local councils in Worcestershire

Wychavon Council will meet on September3rd to submit its views to the government.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Government had pulled some of the money with regard to neighbourhood plans but Wychavon had included within its promises to put money forward to continue to support neighbourhood plans as the Council felt that they played a significant role in the Local Government Review to support local areas and this will continue.

Recent Council Meetings

Civic Centre in Pershore

The former police station is being revamped by refurbishing into offices suitable for future use. Further solar photovoltaic are being put on the roof which will achieve payback in under six years.

Financial Performance 2024/25

The council's finances remain in a sound and health condition. Balances at the end of 2024/25 increased from £15.119m to £17.930 million.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Update

The total UKSPF budget for Wychavon District for April 2022 to March 2025 was £4m, with £2.8m of the total in 2024/25. All allocated funding was reported as spent. The total REPF budget for Wychavon District for the period of April 2023 to March 2025 was £819k, with £753k of the total in 20245/25.

Section 106 contributions

The following schemes were approved

Honeybourne Parish Council up to £65,085.00 to fund the improvement of drainage to the sports fields at the Sports and Recreation Ground, Honeybourne.

Bredon Parish Council up to £4,556.48 to fund the installation of an outdoor table tennis table at Bredon playing Fields.

Sporting Club Inkberrow Ltd up to £31,021.00 to fund the installation of two permanent two lane fully enclosed cricket net structures on land at Sands Road, Inkberrow.

Pershore Riverside Centre up to £81,222.66 to enable the Riverside Centre to install new windows and flooring together with associated decorative works at the Pershore Riverside Centre.

Pinvin Parish Council up to £165,385.02 to enable Pinvin Parish Council to fund the construction of extensions to the changing rooms and kitchen together with general refurbishment of Pinvin Memorial Hall.

Saleway Parish Council up to £3,415.87 be allocated to fund the purchase and installation of two pieces of play equipment at the recreation ground located adjacent to the Cricket Club.

This serve as a reminder to parishes to make sure any section 106 money isallocated assoon as practical in the light of reorganisation.

Enough for now !!

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