

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THORNBURY GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH MAY 2025, AT 7:20 PM IN EDWYN RALPH VILLAGE HALL

Members Present: Cllrs Ashley Ede (Chair), Jim Farrant and Phil Wildig.

Also, Present: Jennifer Eva (Clerk), Ward Cllr Bruce Baker, and 5 members of the public.

The Chairman extended condolences on behalf of the Parish Council and community to Cllr Tom Edwards and his family following their recent bereavements.

25/01 ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

It was unanimously agreed to elect Cllr Ashley Ede as Chairman of the Parish Council for 2025/26 – *signed his declaration of acceptance of office.*

25/02 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Kitty Edwards, Tom Edwards, William Keown-Boyd, Henry Lewis, David Manning and Alan Pitt.

25/03 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was unanimously agreed to elect Cllr Kitty Edwards as Vice Chairman for 2025/26.

25/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Register of Interests – Members were advised to update their Register of Interests if their circumstances have changed.
2. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011. Requests for dispensations must be made in writing, addressed to the Clerk, and received as soon as possible before the meeting. Failure to register or declare a DPI may result in the commission of a criminal offence.

None.

25/05 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes for the meeting held on 24th March 2025, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25/06 OPEN SESSION

1. Ward Councillor Bruce Baker provided the following update.
 - Boundary Review: The Boundary Commission is reviewing Herefordshire again, including ward boundaries and councillor representation. The last review was in 2013.
 - Food & Garden Waste Collections: New food and garden waste collections will begin in spring 2026. Food waste will be collected in caddy bags. Garden waste will remain a £60-per-year subscription service.
 - Battery & Small Electrical Item Collections: Residents can now leave batteries in a clear, tied bag on top of bins, and place small electrical items separately for kerbside

collection to reduce fire risks.

- Crematorium Metals Recycling: A new scheme at Hereford Crematorium recycles metals from cremations (with consent), with proceeds donated to charity.
 - Road Resurfacing Investment: £13.5 million will be invested in road improvements for 2025/26 (£10 million for A and B roads, £3.5 million for smaller roads), following £8 million the previous year.
 - Hereford Transport Hub: A contractor has now been appointed to complete the transport hub near Hereford railway station.
 - Local Transport Plan (LTP) Consultation: A draft LTP for 2025–2041 is under consultation. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback via the HC website.
 - Children’s Services Improvement: Ofsted has noted improvement to timeliness in social work assessments, with further inspection of adult social care expected later in 2025.
 - Elderly Support:
HC encourages older residents to remain safely in their homes. Free assessments and support planning are available, though some services may require a financial contribution.
2. The following question was raised by parishioners in attendance.
A resident enquired about how some villages are given Conservation Area protection. The Chairman agreed to look into the criteria and provide feedback to the resident.

25/07 VILLAGE HALL UPDATE

The Village Hall AGM was held on 12th May 2025. Some changes have been made to the committee as follows.

- Chair: Stella Watkins (unchanged)
- Vice Chair: Mel Boyle
- Secretary: Elaine Hall (unchanged)
- Rosie Berry (Friends Group)
- Marie Shuck (Bookings)
- Tracy Meadows (Health & Safety)
- Ashley Ede (Treasurer)

Cllr Ede noted the Village Hall Committee is a dedicated and enthusiastic group, working hard to organise events and care for the hall. Community support would be welcomed to help sustain their efforts. Recent improvements include the replacement of the front gates, and the committee is exploring grant funding opportunities to further upgrade the facilities.

25/08 PLANNING

1. To comment on local planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council.
 - a. P250964/F - Edwyn Ralph, Hampton, Tea Room & Gardens, Ralph Court, Edwyn Ralph, Bromyard, HR7 4LU.
Extension to the approved dinosaur garden within the existing public gardens (retention of works carried out).

The Parish Council raised no objections and, as no public objections were recorded on the planning portal, members **RESOLVED** to support the application, subject to the proposed mitigation measures being implemented. These measures are intended to minimise the adverse effects of excessive noise and light on the surrounding area. Additionally, it was suggested that the applicant might consider planting a hedge as a natural screen to help further reduce noise and light pollution.

b. Grant of a premises licence at: Nozstock, Rowden Paddocks, Winslow, Bromyard, Herefordshire, HR7 4LS

Members considered an application for the grant of a premises licence at Nozstock. At the time of the meeting, the details provided were limited, and it was unclear how many events were proposed under the terms of the new licence. Members also reviewed the proposed extension to event hours.

Historically, the annual Nozstock event was held over three set days, allowing local residents—who are directly affected by increased traffic and noise—sufficient time to plan accordingly. While the Parish Council is generally supportive of local events and farming diversification, members felt strongly that a balance must be maintained.

There was significant concern about the number of hours included in the current application.

The Chairman invited members of the public present to share their views. The following key points were raised:

- This rural community has achieved a careful balance between farming, business, and residential life. The proposed changes risk undermining this balance.
- Noise from previous events, particularly from DJ announcements, has been significant, with disturbances reportedly continuing until as late as 4am, beyond agreed timings.
- Although Nozstock brings economic benefits, additional event dates—likely during the summer months—would threaten the peaceful, rural character of the area, including its tranquillity, dark skies, and natural surroundings.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the environmental impact, particularly on local bat populations. Light pollution can interfere with bats' ability to forage, navigate, and reproduce, as well as disrupt ecosystems by drawing insects away from their natural habitats and limiting access to roosts.

It was **RESOLVED** to object to the application based on insufficient information being available at the time of the meeting. The Chairman will attend the Herefordshire Council Licensing Committee Meeting.

Residents present felt they had not been adequately consulted by Herefordshire Council and have resolved to organise their own public meeting to raise awareness within the community before the consultation closes on 16th June 2025.

25/09 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CHARTER FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

Members considered signing the new Charter for Herefordshire Councils, which sets out how Herefordshire Council, City Council, and Town and Parish Councils will work together in partnership. The Charter supports stronger joint working, improves local democracy, and provides clearer channels for collaboration and community-led action.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council will sign the Charter.

Cllr Baker left the meeting at 8:07pm.

25/10 FINANCE

1. To receive and note an end-of-year report for the year ending 31st March 2025.
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the EOY finance report.
2. To receive and note a finance report from April – May 2025 (inc. bank statement totals, spend to date and bank reconciliations).
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the April – May 2025 finance report.
3. To review bank signatories.
It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item until after the resolution to item 10.4 and reconsider at a future meeting.
4. To consider closing the current and reserves account with NatWest and opening two new accounts with Lloyds Bank.
It was **RESOLVED** to close the current and reserve accounts with NatWest and move to Lloyds bank as soon as possible.
5. To approve the following payments made between meetings.

Payee	Goods / Services	VAT	Total
Zurich Insurance	Annual Insurance		£379.62
FreeThought	Website – additional storage		£15.05
DefibWarehouse	2x sets of pads for the defibrillator outside the Village Hall	£138.00	£165.60
HMRC	PAYE month 1		£73.20
J Eva	April Salary		

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the above payments made between meetings.

6. To approve invoices for payment via online transfer.

Payee	Goods / Services	VAT	Total
Ruth Mullett	Internal Audit 2024/25		£200.00
HMRC	PAYE month 2		£73.40
J Eva	May Salary		

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payments.

7. End of Year Finance Report and Bank Statements – to consider and approve the report.
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the EOY Finance Report and Statements.
8. Internal Audit – to receive the report from the Internal Auditor and consider and approve any actions required.
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to receive and note the Internal Audit report for 2024/25.
9. AGAR Governance Statement – to consider and approve the statement.
Councillors considered the Annual Governance Statement and responded 'YES' to each

of the first eight assertions, N/A' to the ninth assertion. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chairman and Clerk sign.

10. AGAR Accounting Statements – to consider and approve the Statements.
Councillors reviewed the Accounting Statements 2024/25 which had been circulated as part of the agenda. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Chair and Clerk/RFO sign.

11. Period for the Exercise of Public Rights – to agree the dates for commencement.
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the dates for the Public Inspection of the Accounts commencing on 18th June to 29th July 2025. The Clerk to place a copy on the noticeboards and website.

12. Certificate of Exemption – as the Council's higher gross income did not exceed £25,000.00 in the year to 31st March 2025 to RESOLVE to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities Regulations 2015).

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to certify the Parish Council exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit regs, as the Council's gross income and expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year to 31st March 2025.

25/11 HIGHWAYS / FOOTPATHS / TRAFFIC

1. To consider any issues to report to Herefordshire Council or the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT).
 - Speeding: residents expressed concern at the ongoing speeding through Edwyn Ralph. The Chairman will raise this matter again with SNT at the next '*Coffee with a Cop*' session in the village hall.
 - Roadside drainage – HC / landowners need to maintain the ditches to prevent further destruction to the road surface.
 - Several parish footpaths, crossing arable land, are sometimes difficult to use due to their narrowness caused by nearby planting. Councillor Ede agreed to meet with the resident to identify the affected areas on a map.
2. Lengthsman Scheme 2025/26 – to consider participating in the scheme.
The Chairman provided members with a brief overview of Herefordshire Council's Lengthsman Scheme and its requirements, including the parish council's anticipated commitment in terms of match funding. He explained that he had been in contact with a neighbouring parish councillor to enquire how they manage particular tasks such as grass cutting, vegetation clearance, sign cleaning, gritting, and minor repairs.

The Chairman noted that there are certain tasks within the parish that would be beneficial to address, particularly following adverse weather – such as checking salt bins and clearing gullies. He suggested that the parish council should explore all available options and seek clarification from Herefordshire Council as to whether the parish would be permitted to engage its own contractor to undertake basic maintenance tasks on 'B' roads.

It was **RESOLVED** to explore the possibility of employing a contractor to carry out minor maintenance works on behalf of the parish council, for the benefit of residents, subject to approval from Herefordshire Council.

25/12 INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCE

Members noted the following information and correspondence received.

- a. Talk Community Newsletters
- b. MPs Public Meeting with WM Railway notification.
- c. Locality Stewards' weekly updates.

25/13 DATE OF THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

Members noted that the next ordinary meeting is scheduled for 28th July 2025.

With no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:35pm.

Signed by Cllr Ashley Ede Dated