MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF RUSHWICK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2026 AT 7.30 PM AT RUSHWICK VILLAGE HALL

Present: Cllr Lowe (Chair), Cllr Staff, Cllr Haywood and Cllr Hemsworth.

In Attendance: Mrs Sharon Dunn (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) plus one member of the public and prospective new councillor Martin Lewis

1. Apologies: Cllr Jenkins (Personal), Cllr Dovey (Personal) and Cllr Williams (Personal) - Accepted.

2. Co-option of councillor vacancy - Martin Lewis attended the meeting seeking co-option to the Parish Council. He introduced himself and explained his reason for wishing to join. The Clerk confirmed that eligibility requirements had been checked and thar Mr. Lewis qualified for appointment.
   RESOLVED: Martin Lewis was successfully co-opted onto Rushwick Parish Council and his Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed.

3. Declarations of Interest
   1. Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interest.
   2. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None
   3. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None

4. To Consider written requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of The Localism Act 2011) written requests to be with the Clerk prior to the meeting - None

Public Question Time

Some general discussion took place regarding footpath works associated with Lioncourt Housing Development involving the temporary closure of the existing footpath at the side of the Whitehall Inn and future route connections. Members welcomed the improvements to the pathway network but agreed further clarification from the developer would be beneficial regarding current works, future pathway arrangements plus any available plans.

Report from County/District Councillor Chris McSweeney - No reports available

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District Councillor Sarah Rouse - A written report had been received and circulated to members.

5. Minutes: Having been previously circulated the minutes of The Parish Council meeting of 13.05.2026 were signed as a true and correct record.

6. Progress Reports: No matters arising from previous minutes.
   The Action Plan was reviewed and updated.
   - It materialized that the contact that Cllr Dovey knows, appears to be the same contact that Cllr McSweeney has been pursuing, regarding the request for the introduction of double yellow lines at the junction of Minett Avenue and yellow hatch marking at the bus stop located on the Bransford Road. Unfortunately, there is no progress to report, and the matter is still ongoing.
   - Two new litter bins have arrived and have been installed in Christine Avenue and Claphill Lane.
   - A new Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sign has been purchased and installed in Claphill Lane.
   - Cllr Jenkins continues to pursue WCC Highways matters and Claphill Lane. Members discussed proposed changes to Claphill Lane, the roundabout arrangements, traffic implications and lack of clarity from WCC Highways.

- The possibility of a mural in the underpass continues to be investigated with members discussing local artists and examples of successful mural projects elsewhere with the benefits of reducing graffiti.
- The Clerk advised that she would review the new model standing orders over the summer period and bring them back to council in the autumn.

7. Parish Lengthsman Scheme:
This month the Lengthsman has been busy clearing, siding out and cutting back verges in Crown East, Claphill Lane, Upper Wick and along the Bransford Road.
Areas identified for action included: -
Housing Association properties near the school
Claphill Lane – Both sides of the road
Approach to the Village from the bypass.
The Lengthsman continues to undertake maintenance work, although available capacity remains limited.

8. Finance
   1. The payment of accounts as per schedule were authorised.
   2. Monthly Bank Reconciliation Statement - Reviewed and approved. Current balances remain healthy.

9. Website - Progress Update: Cllr Jenkins
   a. **RESOLVED:** The Parish Council agreed the additional costs for:
      - WCAG 2.2 Accessibility Compliance - £750
      - Councillor Information Page - £125
      - Policies Page - £125

   The Planning Section is yet to be decided. Two options are available:-
   1. Advanced planning module
   2. Simplified version with links to the District Council planning portal.
      Members requested further information before making a final decision.
      Clerk to obtain examples from the website developer.
      Members were asked to provide photographs for councillor profiles. Clerk to submit.

10. Reports from representatives: The following updates were received: -

    1. Report from Village Hall Committee: Cllr Dovey - The Clerk reported the Parish Council needs to instruct a solicitor to proceed with the first registration process. Agenda item to feature in July.

    2. Footpath Officer's report: Position Vacant
       Cllr Lewis volunteered to assist the Public Rights of Way footpaths. He is to liaise with Cllr Williams.

       a. Proposal to accept quotations to purchase new noticeboards - Members discussed replacement noticeboards, solar lighting, and incorporating the new parish logo. Options considered included triple/double/single side noticeboards. **ITEM DEFFERED** whilst Cllr Staff seeks further quotes to bring back to the next meeting.
          He will also inspect the wooden seat benches to see if any need repairing or replacing and will try to establish ownership. He will update at the July meeting.

    3. Report on Play Area: Cllr Hemsworth
       The following were reported: -
       - Vegetation requires cutting back.
       - Boundary maintenance is needed.
       - The entrance gate requires repairing.
       - Car park potholes require attention.
       - A bench has been damaged.

       Cllr Hemsworth to seek quotations for the repairs reported and will bring back to the next meeting

RESOLVED: Members agreed as a priority, to authorise the Clerk in conjunction with Cllr Hemsworth to spend up to £1000 for cutting back the overgrown vegetation around the boundary of the play area.

4. School Representative report: Cllr Jenkins - No report received.

5. Speeding/Parking Issues & Crime Prevention Update: Cllr Staff
   A new approved monitoring location has been verified by West Mercia Police near Cornflower Way.

11. Planning: To consider any Planning Applications received before this meeting - None to consider

12. Update to the Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Lowe - No update to report

13. Correspondence for Information: Circulated by the Clerk throughout the month. No additional matters raised.

14. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas
    Cllr Haywood announced her resignation from the Parish Council after approximately fifteen years of service. Members thanked her for her contribution and commitment to the community. She indicated she intends to continue attending future meetings as a resident where possible.

    The Clerk confirmed following the resignation of Cllr Haywood that the bank signatory list would need to be reviewed and updated. Cllr Lowe and Cllr Staff offered to become new bank signatories. The necessary paperwork will be completed.

    A topic to refer to the Village Hall Committee for consideration (via Cllr Dovey) - Request to allow residents to park on the overspill area of the village hall car park.

    Vehicular parking obstructing access to Minett Avenue and Christine Avenue for refuge vehicles and the emergency services.

15. **Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 8 July at 7.30 pm at Rushwick Village Hall**

    The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed ……. Chairman…… Date……..

REPORT FROM DISTRICT CLLR SARAH ROUSE

Report to Parish Councils

South Worcestershire Development Plan – The Next Phase

With the ink only just drying on the recently adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), work has already begun on the next Local Plan review. The Government is now requiring local plans to be produced far more quickly than in previous years, with councils expected to move through the process at a significantly accelerated pace.

Under the new national housing targets, the Malvern Hills area is expected to deliver approximately 250 additional homes per year above the numbers that have only just been agreed through the current SWDP process. This represents a substantial increase in housing expectations across the district.

At this stage, there is no clarity regarding which sites may be proposed to meet these new housing figures. Many sites previously considered during both the first and second SWDP processes were rejected following extensive local consultation and examination. However, over the next two years communities are likely to begin seeing renewed pressure for development proposals.

It is anticipated that settlements such as Leigh Sinton, Bransford and Rushwick may continue to experience significant development pressure due to their location and existing infrastructure links, whilst many smaller rural villages may see less direct impact. Nevertheless, this raises ongoing concerns about the continued imbalance between market housing growth and the genuine affordable housing needs of local rural residents.

It is important to note that whilst a Parish Plan is a good local tool for a Parish Council to determine local community priorities it does not hold any weight as a statutory planning tool .

Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites

One of the continuing challenges across rural communities is the lack of genuinely affordable housing for local people, particularly younger residents and families wishing to remain within their communities. So for those areas unlikely to see development via the SWDPR this maybe an option to consider.

Some areas of the country, including Devon, have seen Parish and District Councils take a more proactive role in identifying locally supported Rural Exception Sites. These are small-scale developments specifically intended to meet local affordable housing needs and are often supported where they remain sensitive to village character and infrastructure.

There may be value in exploring whether similar locally-led approaches could help address affordable housing pressures within our own rural communities whilst allowing greater local influence over site selection and scale.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)

Parish Councils may also wish to consider the future role of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). Having an adopted NDP in place can still provide important local planning policies, including:

- Protection of valued green spaces
- Design and character guidance
- Local infrastructure priorities
- Environmental protections
- Community-led development policies

However, it is important to recognise that recent changes to Government planning policy mean that NDPs no longer provide the same level of protection against development on sites formally allocated through the Local Plan process. If a site is ultimately allocated within the SWDP, the ability for an NDP to resist development is now significantly reduced.

Despite this, NDPs remain an important tool in helping communities shape development rather than simply react to it.

Current SWDP Timetable

The following draft timetable has been submitted to Government and the Planning Inspectorate:

Milestone	Date
Notice of Plan Making publication	30 June 2026
Scoping Consultation	18 September – 30 October 2026
Publication of Gateway 1 self-assessment	31 October 2026
Consultation on proposed plan content and evidence	June 2027
Gateway 2 request	October 2027
Consultation on proposed plan	June 2028
Gateway 3 request	September 2028
Submission for examination	October 2028
Anticipated adoption	March/April 2029

Parish Councils are encouraged to engage early in the process as the shortened timetable is likely to reduce opportunities for later amendments.

Malvern Hills District Council Grants and Funding Opportunities

Parish Councils, community organisations and local voluntary groups are reminded that a range of grants and funding opportunities continue to be available through Malvern Hills District Council.

Current and emerging funding opportunities typically include:

- Community infrastructure and capital grants
- Environmental and biodiversity funding
- Youth and wellbeing project support
- Community resilience and cost of living support
- Arts, culture and heritage grants
- Sports and recreation funding
- Rural community initiatives
- Small grants for local events and projects

Groups are encouraged to regularly monitor the council website as additional Government-backed schemes and rural funding opportunities are announced throughout the year.

Ward Member Community Funding Update

I am also pleased to confirm that my annual ward budget has now increased to £5,000 per year, allowing additional support for local community organisations and projects across the ward.

In just the first month since the fund opened, funding and support has already included:

- Support for Alfrick Cricket Club with the purchase of new cricket balls
- Funding assistance for Suckley Festival traffic safety equipment
- Support towards the new poppy wall installation at Leigh Church
- Offer of funding for a new bench at Suckley Playing Fields
- Funding for two community Christmas carol gatherings, including chocolates for local children
- Ongoing discussions with Alfrick Memorial Hall regarding future funding support
- Discussions with EDDY who provide supported swimming sessions for individuals experiencing mental health challenges at Escape to the Lakes

I continue to welcome applications from local organisations, community groups and parish councils for projects that support community wellbeing, local facilities, safety, recreation and inclusion.

As ever any questions or if you need me to do anything just get in touch