

# SOUTH LENCHES PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish Council: Kate Lee

Email: [clerk@southlenchesparishcouncil.org](mailto:clerk@southlenchesparishcouncil.org) Website:

<http://www.southlenchesparishcouncil.org/>

1.	<b>To receive and approve apologies of absence.</b> Apologies from Cllr. Dr Murray. Present: Cllr Mr Seabourne (Chair), Cllr Mrs Hodges, Cllr Mrs Buxton, Cllr Tyrell, Cllr Soderman, Cllr Mr Doyle, Miss Kate Lee (Clerk), 2 residents
2.	<b>Declarations of Interests: Cllr Buxton – planning approved.</b> <b>No others</b>
3.	<b>The meeting will be adjourned for Public Question time:</b> Question from a resident on the verges and STW putting right the mess made. Answered in 6e.  To receive reports from County, District Cllrs. And Police. No reports from County and Police. District report from Ben Hurdman. District Councillor Report to South Lenches Parish Council  1. Local Government & Strategic Consultations Future of Local Government in Worcestershire: Residents are invited to take part in the Government’s statutory consultation on future council structures. The consultation runs until 26 March 2026, with a final decision expected July 2026.  Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Review: A public consultation on revised CIL Charging Schedules runs until 2 March 2026, reflecting legislative changes and the emerging SWDPR.  2. Climate, Nature & Environmental Updates Climate and Nature Panel: - Presentation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan including risk assessments and 20 priority actions. - Updates on active travel including Brompton lockers, ParkThatBike, and school engagement. - Local Nature Recovery Strategy update ahead of County Council adoption. - Work underway on Wychavon’s first Biodiversity Duty Report.  Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Government funding confirmed to 2029 with first statutory biodiversity report due by 26 March 2026.  Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): Worcestershire County Council has completed and published the LNRS with Wychavon contributing to priorities and habitat mapping.  3. Community & Housing Switch Together: Registration open until 27 March 2026 for group-buying solar scheme.  Empty Homes Hub: New online hub launched with guidance, reporting tools and support for bringing empty homes back into use.  4. Rural Issues Rural Matters Advisory Panel: Focus on impacts of local government reform on rural areas; updates on Rural Grants totalling £353,929 since July 2025.

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	<p>5. Town Centres &amp; Local Economy Town Centre Advisory Panel: Updates from Visit Worcestershire, Place Boards, and active travel projects.</p> <p>Wychavon Business News: February edition published and accessible online.</p> <p>6. Planning &amp; Development Development Management Overview: Major applications include 215 homes at Stockwood Lane, 250 homes at Allesborough Hill, and multiple Parkway-related submissions.</p> <p>Major Decisions: Approvals issued for major sites in Badsey, Pinvin, Drakes Broughton, Besford, and Pershore.</p> <p>Enforcement Actions: Multiple notices issued in Drakes Broughton, Crophorne, Peopleton, Upton Warren and Fernhill Heath.</p> <p>7. Strategic Sites Wychavon Town: SPD consultation continues with three outline applications in progress.</p> <p>Mitton: Inspectors support allocation with three outline phases underway.</p> <p>Rushwick: Applications received for 105 homes and Travelling Showpeople plots.</p> <p>Throckmorton: Identified as an "area of search"; masterplanning ongoing.</p> <p>Evesham Riverside Shopping Centre: Homes England funding secured, with acquisition expected by 20 March.</p> <p>8. Building Control 199 applications validated Dec–Jan, 118 completion certificates issued, 565 inspections completed, market share at 67%.</p> <p>9. Meeting Dates Full meeting calendar available on Wychavon's modern.gov portal.</p> <p>10. Council Tax Freeze Wychavon District Council has frozen its share of Council Tax for 2026/27, keeping the Band D charge at £128.21 and maintaining one of the lowest district council rates in the county.</p>
4.	Minutes of the previous meeting: Approved.

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## 5. To receive Clerk report:

- a) Phone mast - Minimal cost for this but following consultation of councillors agreed this is not of interest. Have let them know.
- b) Update on audit
  - i) Policies
  - ii) Financial regs and standing orders
  - iii) Risk assessment
  - iv) Code of conduct
  - v) Play area inspection

Zoom meeting with auditor took place on 25th Feb. Auditor now has all documents she has asked for and is working through them. She will be requesting a selection of invoices also. On the whole went well but she did note that our policies are due for renewal. Suggest that we all review over the coming weeks and renew at May meeting. Balances and reserves policy is good but amounts and dates need to be brought up to date. As per the transparency code – payments over £100 need to be published either as supporting docs on the website or on the finances page of the website. KL has shared the latest payments summary as part of the January minutes item on the website. Communications policy requires changes to number of notice boards but otherwise can be agreed to be adopted.

Standing orders and risk assessments also need to be reviewed as not been reviewed since 2021.

Our code of conduct is fine however there is a newer version shared by WDC that we could review and decide whether to adopt.

Gill mentioned that we need to evidence playground inspections – perhaps once a month a photo is sent to the clerk by the councillor who undertakes these.

Also notes made when small repairs are carried out.

**Action:** Cllr Seabourne to share evidence of checks monthly and any small fixes.

- c) Neighbourhood Watch report - Terry and Sarah have now made contact with each other – Terry has been out of action and off emails hence the delay. Sarah will be able to provide us with a report at our May meeting.
- d) Annual Appraisal - As part of the audit it was noted that the clerk's annual appraisal will be due before May. Action: Date to be agreed.
- e) Parish lengthsmen - Have shared worksheets and info from Simon. He is requesting somewhere in the region of £20 ph – up from £16. CALC have advised that anyone can be our parish lengthsmen so long as they have completed the training. Decision need to be made on plans for 26/27. Simon has been paid up to Jan 26. His Feb and March worksheets need to be submitted to the portal by Sunday, March 15th. Councillors resolved to offer payrise equivalent to grant increase. A new contract will be issued for 6 months.  
**Action:** Cllr Mr Doyle to review contract and redraft.
- f) Dropbox - We are currently at 85% usage of our Dropbox account and will need to either start paying or remove the NHP documents which are taking up a large amount of room. The cost for the next tier up is £95.88 a year or £9.99 per month.  
**Action:** Move NHP docs – Clerk to set up a new email address and Cllr Dr

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	<p>Murray to move files across. Then use a new dropbox account.</p> <p>g) <u>New format budget spreadsheet</u> - Would like to check everyone is happy with new format of the budget spreadsheet and take any requests. Councillors agree to adopt new format.</p>
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<b>6.</b>	<p><b>To receive Cllrs. reports:</b></p> <p>a) <u>Neighbourhood Plan update.</u> (Cllr. Mrs. Hodges). Thanks to resident who has put a lot of input into the Reg 14. Consultation. Steering group have been working with consultants to update plan ahead of adoption. Working towards having a document ready for reg 15. There will be a period of public consultation for 6 weeks at WDC. There may be modifications following this and once done they will run a referendum. If 50% agree to adopt the plan will be adopted. There will be no cost to this. Costs may be incurred if examiner requests changes. Cllr Seabourne proposed sign off of the new plan in May meeting.  <u>Action:</u> Clerk to add to May agenda</p> <p>b) <u>Pool/play area.</u> (Cllr. Mr. Seabourne). Contractor keeping area very neat and tidy. Bark is looking low, will likely need to be replenished before winter.</p> <p>c) <u>Asset Inspection report.</u> (Cllr. Mrs. Tyrell). Wooden bus shelter at Handgate has been repaired by Ed Cottrill. Otherwise all assets fine.</p> <p>d) <u>Traffic survey</u> (Cllr. Mr Seabourne). Two traffic surveys have been done in last few months. One on Evesham Rd to support planning application which we do not have results for. Low Road was done in preparation for VAS. Results show that largely traffic is within reasonable speed limits. WCC have been paid the contribution for the new VAS and the rest will be covered. This is now on order and the new pole in situ.</p> <p>e) <u>Severn Trent works</u> (Cllr. Mr Seabourne) Road closed signs are very confusing and suggest no routes open. ST have been informed multiple times. March 31st onwards Evesham Rd from Main St in Church Lench to Handgate crossroad- phase 1. Handgate crossroads to top of Hipton Hill will then be closed. The total estimated time for road closures is 18 mths. They have committed to repair the verges, however these will be minimal.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Council to ask for ground to be leveled before top soil and grass seed applied.</p>
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<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Council Matters: to consider the following:</b></p>
7.1	<p><u>Parish Lengthsmen:</u> contract and pay increase request for 2026-2027 – offer hourly pay rise in line with increase from WCC.  <u>Action:</u> Clerk to arrange audit with Parish Lengthsmen scheme manager. Work schedule to be updated to remove leaves. Will only be one VAS sign that requires charging. Request change in contract length to 6mth term. Cllr Doyle will review contract and clerk will share contract with Lengthsmen.</p>
7.2	<p>Quotes for disabled access to the play areas – LSRC have requested detailed plans. Cllr Seabourne has received one quote. Tarmac or composite resin options from Plex. Require 2 further quotes from contractors. Cllr Tyrell will enquire from a landscape architect. Cllr Soderman will also contact someone.</p>
7.3	<p>Publication of traffic survey results. Cllr Buxton proposes results to be published. Cllr Hodges seconded.  <u>Action:</u> Clerk to publish on the website and share a post on the Community Facebook page. Cllr Seabourne will write some comment to accompany results. Will also share with the Lenches Newsletter editor to circulate via email.</p>

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<b>8.</b>	<b>Finance.</b>
8.1	To consider: a) <u>To approve</u> payments. - Approved b) <u>To approve</u> summary of accounts to 28.02.26. - Approved
8.2	To approve full budget for 26/27 – Approved. Proposed by Cllr Soderman, seconded by Cllr Tyrell.

9.1	<p>To consider commenting on the following applications:</p> <p>a) <u>W/25/00131/HP</u> Pipers Gate, Atch Lench Road, Church Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UG.  <b>Proposal:</b> Side extension. <b>Comments:</b> None</p> <p>b) <u>W/25/00308/FUL</u> Associated Ref: <u>W/22/00436/FUL</u> The Hanger, Badgers Hill, Sheriffs Lench, Evesham, WR11 4SN. <b>Proposal:</b> Removal of the existing two bedroom static home and former commercial building and replacement with a live/work unit (Variation of condition 5 (external materials). <b>No further comments.</b></p>
9.2	<p>To note the following decisions and matters dealt with by delegation:</p> <p>a) <u>W/25/02647/HP</u> 6 The Croft, Church Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UD. <b>Proposal:</b> Two storey side and rear extension and new carport <b>Decision:</b> Approved.</p> <p>b) <u>W/26/00098/HP</u> The Willows, Sheriffs Lench, Evesham, WR11 4SN. <b>Proposal:</b> Replacement single storey rear extension. The council had no comment.</p> <p>c) <u>W/26/00197/FUL</u>, Hill Barn Orchard, Evesham Road, Church Lench, Evesham, WR11 4UB.  <b>Proposal:</b> Erection of a self-build live-work dwelling and 4no. holiday cabins together with ancillary works. <b>Comments:</b> Church Lench Parish Council request that the planning department consider this application at the same time as application: <u>W/25/02529/FUL</u> which is adjacent to this proposal, so the full implications can be understood.                      The proposed self-build live/work dwelling is located outside the defined development boundary, within open countryside. The Parish Council considers the proposal to be contrary to adopted Wychavon Local Plan policies which strictly limit new residential development in such locations and seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.</p> <p>The Parish Council also raises strong concerns regarding the excessive height and scale of the proposed dwelling. Due to its size and prominence, the development would appear visually intrusive and out of keeping with the rural character of the area, resulting in harm to the landscape and countryside setting.</p> <p>While the Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (currently at Regulation 14 consultation stage), it considers this proposal to conflict with emerging local objectives to maintain the rural character and prevent inappropriate development in the open countryside.</p> <p>For these reasons, South Lenches Parish Council requests that the application be refused.</p>

Circulation: **All members of the Parish Council; District and County Councillors.**

**Dated:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026  
 Lee

**Signed by the Clerk:** K.

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## Supporting notes to agenda for meeting March 2026.

	<b>Meeting notes with further information in Dropbox link.</b>	
<b>Agenda No: 4</b>	Minutes of the meeting held on 12.01.25.	<b>For approval.</b>
<b>Agenda No: 7.1</b>	Lengthsmen contract and email re. pay	<b>To note.</b>
<b>Agenda No: 8.1</b>	Payments and account summary.	<b>For approval.</b>
<b>Agenda No: 8.2</b>	New budget spreadsheet	<b>For approval.</b>