



Clerk to the Council Paula Gittoes

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**Annual Parish Meeting Minutes held at
at 7.30PM on Thursday 14th May 2026 at Abbots Morton Village Hall**

Present: Martin Willingale (Parish Council Chair), Nick Humphries (Parish Councillor), Martyn Walton (Parish Councillor) and Richard Whitlow (Parish Councillor)

In attendance: Kerry Williamson (Outgoing Clerk), Paula Gittoes (In coming Clerk)
County Councillor Satinder Bell

Parishioners: 2

1. Chairman's welcome and announcements

Martin Willingale opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2. Apologies for absence

Jacqueline Allum (Parish Councillor), and Ben Hurdman (District Councillor).

3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 22nd May 2025

It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes as a true record, and they were duly signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising from those minutes (if any)

There were no matters arising.

5. To receive a report from the County Councillors

In attendance

6. To receive a report from the District Councillors

In summary:

- **Arrow Valley Solar** — No major updates, but this is the key stage to influence the scheme's design.
 - Early comments can be submitted to the developer
 - Request inclusion in all consultation events
 - Ask for traffic modelling to cover Abbots Morton lanes
 - Request photomontages from key parish viewpoints
 - Seek biodiversity enhancements within or near the parish
- **Five Year Housing Land Supply** — Wychavon confirmed to have a five-year supply with a 5% buffer after SWDPR adoption; updated figures expected summer 2026.
- **Planning Service Changes** — Development Management undergoing restructure; Clare Bull now leads Wychavon DM, with recruitment for a new Lead Officer.
- **RTPI Recognition** — Wychavon's planning team shortlisted for Local Authority Planning Team of the Year 2026.
- **Renters' Rights Act** (in force 1 May 2026) — Major reforms include:
 - End of Section 21 evictions
 - All tenancies now periodic
 - Rent increases limited to once per year
 - Stronger rights for tenants with pets
 - Landlords must issue the Government Information Sheet by 31 May 2026 or face fines up to £7,000
- **Home Adaptations Support** — Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service now offers grants for accessibility improvements to help older and disabled residents remain independent.

- **Community Resilience Funding**
 - £500,000 Small Grants Scheme launched for community groups, biodiversity and energy-efficiency projects
 - Over £3.7m in Community Legacy Grants already awarded
- **Local Nature Recovery** Worcestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy published, identifying priority habitats and species; Natural Networks continues supporting parish biodiversity projects.
- **Community Projects**
 - Rous Lench Allotments and Community Garden highlighted as a successful Legacy Grant project
 - Site visits show strong wellbeing and biodiversity benefits
- **Youth & Reading Initiatives** — Youth Council programmes and the National Year of Reading campaign continue to expand, with a new phase launching July 2026.

7. To receive a report from the Parochial Church Council

In summary:

Incumbent	Father Glenn Reading
Pioneer Deacon	The Revd Dr Chris Sheehan
Licensed Lay Minister	Dr Pippa Heenan
Benefice Administrator Parish	Miss Nelly Ledger
Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Jill Francis
Churchwardens	<i>Vacant</i>
Elected Members	Mr Guy Ledger Dr Lynda Payne Mrs Lynne Pemberton Mrs Christine Tooth Vacant
Honorary Treasurer	
Honorary Secretary	
Number on Electoral Roll:	14 (December 2025)
Average Weekly attendance:	6 Adult

Full report on the Website.

8. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee

In summary:

- A new Village Hall committee was formed, with Antony Bunce unanimously elected as Chairman.
- The committee is actively seeking a new Treasurer.
- Sarah Dykes will continue as acting Treasurer but will step down as a trustee.
- The “Bimble” car event and two quiz nights were very successful and well supported.
- These events enabled the hall to cover its annual running costs for the first time in many years.
- A memorial plaque for Colin Pemberton was unveiled by Lynne at the November coffee morning.
- In January, Antony and a First Responder colleague delivered a well-attended CPR demonstration.
- The hall received a £250 contribution from the County Council, helping to fund the monthly Community Coffee Mornings.

9. To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council by the Chairman

In summary:

- Planning matters dominated the year, following last year’s approval for two houses at The Chalet.
- A new application for Permission in Principle for up to three houses opposite The Chalet was refused by Wychavon and again refused on appeal, which was welcomed by the parish.
- The parish now faces the Arrow Valley Solar proposal, which would cover over 30% of Abbots Morton Parish and remove productive farmland.
- A detailed response to the Planning Inspectorate’s scoping request has been submitted, and a long campaign is expected.
- Ann Clayden continues to monitor and maintain the parish’s footpaths and bridleways.
- The petition to introduce a 40mph speed limit on the Alcester Road has made little progress within the County Council, likely due to budget constraints.
- There is ongoing uncertainty about the structure of the new Unity Council, and regret that Wychavon will be dissolved in 2028.
- The parish has received little communication from County Councillor Satinder Bell throughout the year.
- Due to wider uncertainty, the parish agreed to a larger-than-usual increase in the precept, with similar pressures expected next year.
- The village defibrillator has been replaced due to the old one becoming obsolete.
- The Christmas tree lighting event was again successful, with Graham Hobbs switching on the lights in recognition of his work on the village planters. The event raised £269.76 in donations.
- Thanks were given to all councillors and to District Councillor Ben Hurdman for his regular reports.
- Clerk Kerry Williamson has done excellent work but is leaving; the parish has appointed Paula Gittoes as the new Clerk.

10. To receive a report on the Parish Council's finances

Opening balance 01/04/25: £ 7,935.11

Receipts for period 01/04/25 to 31/03/26: £ 9,951.47

Payments for period 01/04/25 to 31/03/26: £ 9,985.14

Closing balance 31/03/26: £ 7,901.44

VAT recoverable 01/04/25 to 31/03/26: £ 189.09

11. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest

None