

Abbots Morton Parish Council



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Meeting of Abbots Morton Parish Council
at 8:00PM on Thursday 19th March 2026 at Abbots Morton Village Hall

DRAFT Minutes 03/2026

Present: Cllrs Martin Willingale (Chair), Nick Humphries, Martyn Walton and Richard Whitlow

In attendance: Kerry Williamson (Clerk)

Parishioners: 9

1. Chairman's Welcome & Announcements

Chairman, Cllr Martin Willingale, welcomed the Councillors and parishioners.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Jacqueline Allum and Cllr Ben Hurdman (District Councillor) sent apologies.

3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest

3.1. Register of Interests

Noted.

3.2. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

3.3. Other Disclosable Interests

None.

3.4. Dispensations

None.

4. Open Session

The meeting was adjourned for the open session.

4.1. District Councillors

Cllr Ben Hurdman provided the following report at the meeting:

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.

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.

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.

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.

Town Centres & Local Economy

- *Town Centre Advisory Panel:*

Updates from Visit Worcestershire, Place Boards, and active travel projects.

- *Wychavon Business News:*

February edition published and accessible online.

Planning & Development

- *Development Management Overview:*

Major applications include 215 homes at Stockwood Lane, 250 homes at Allesborough Hill, and multiple Parkway-related submissions.

- *Major Decisions:*

Approvals issued for major sites in Badsey, Pinvin, Drakes Broughton, Besford, and Pershore.

- *Enforcement Actions:*

Multiple notices issued in Drakes Broughton, Crophorne, Peopleton, Upton Warren and Fernhill Heath.

Strategic Sites

- Wychavon Town:

SPD consultation continues with three outline applications in progress.

- Mitton:

Inspectors support allocation with three outline phases underway.

- Rushwick:

Applications received for 105 homes and Travelling Showpeople plots.

- Throckmorton:

Identified as an “area of search”; masterplanning ongoing.

- Evesham Riverside Shopping Centre:

Homes England funding secured, with acquisition expected by 20 March.

Building Control

199 applications validated Dec–Jan, 118 completion certificates issued, 565 inspections completed, market share at 67%.

Meeting Dates

Full meeting calendar available on Wychavon’s modern.gov portal.

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 country.

4.2. County Councillor

Cllr Satinder Bell did not provide a report.

4.3. Village Hall Committee

Cllr Martin Willingale (Parish Council representative to the Village Hall Committee) shared the following report:

The AMVH committee held an Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 3rd February 2026.

Committee Members:

The Rector – ex officio – Father Glenn Reading

Representative from the Parish Council – Martin Willingale

Representative from the Parochial Church Council – To be advised

Chair: Antony Bunce

Treasurer: Sarah Dykes

Booking Officer: Sue Bunce

Publicity Officer: Debra Carew-Cox

Secretary: Pat Willingale

Committee Member: Tina Hill

It was AGREED that Sarah would remain as Treasurer for the time being but would no longer serve as a Trustee whilst we look for a replacement in this role.

Thereafter

It was agreed that we should seek some independent advice on possible energy solutions and explore available grants to this end. Inkberrow Village Hall, where solar panels and a battery storage system have been installed, with the aid of a grant from Wychavon.

Pilates classes have, unfortunately, been cancelled due to lack of numbers. We still have Tai Chi and Monday Yoga regular hires.

Child's birthday party on March 14th.

The Church is running a Lent Course on February 25th.

Easter Quiz Night Friday March 27th 7pm, £6 entry fee, including nibbles, bring your own drink, prize for best Easter fancy dress, Committee to also dress appropriately!

Building, Maintenance/development: We are awaiting a reply regarding the flooring in both the Gents and Ladies toilets.

As mentioned, we will seek an independent survey of our energy needs and research any available grants. It may be that we will have to fundraise specifically for this or use some of our cash reserves.

Future Events:

A potential date for the Bimble has been mentioned of Saturday, May 30th.

Father Glenn was welcomed to our Coffee Morning.

4.4. Footpaths Officer

Footpaths Officer, Ann Clayden shared the following report:

A very brief report from your Parish Paths Warden

There is a fallen tree across the bridleway at the top of Slade Wood, just beyond the steep rise. Walkers can find a way round (with care), but it is currently impassable for horse riders. The issue has been reported to the County Council and is awaiting prioritisation. I have also reported the collapse of the waymarker post beside the track beyond The Low; again this is awaiting prioritisation.

As far as I am aware, the Council post for the PROW Officer responsible for our parish has still not been filled, so there will, I'm afraid, be delays in getting things actioned. The post-holder is also my 'go-to' person for issues on which I need informal advice, so again the ongoing vacancy may cause delays in responding to issues that have been raised.

With the longer days and better weather, I intend to be out and about more checking on the state of our paths, in particular looking out for encroaching vegetation as plants start to grow again. As always, if you spot anything in need of attention, please let me know.

4.5. Public participation

There were 9 parishioners present.

9 parishioners in attendance raised concerns with the Arrow Valley Solar Farm proposal.

Concerns were as follows:

- Flooding/drainage
- Environmental, farming and wildlife effects
- Increased traffic
- Security and theft

Clerk to contact surrounding Parishes to highlight the proposal.

The meeting resumed following the open session.

5. To consider and adopt the minutes from the Parish Council meeting on the 29th January 2026

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

6. **Planning:** To consider the following planning applications to be determined by Wychavon District Council:
 - 6.1. **Appeal Lodged: W/25/01853/PIP; Planning Inspectorate Reference: 6002026**
- Land At (OS 0301 5516), Abbots Morton Road, Abbots Morton. Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 3no dwellings. Application refused by Wychavon District Council. Appeal dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate. **Noted**
 - 6.2. **W/26/00336/AGR:** Newhouse Farm, Abbots Morton Road, WR7 4NA. Prior Notification for a new Agricultural Building. To note comment submitted between meetings and receive any update. **Application approved by Wychavon District Council.**
 - 6.3. **W/26/00120/HP:** Mulberry House, Abbots Morton Road, WR7 4NA. Replacement of dilapidated existing wall/fence with boundary wall (part retrospective) - (VARIATION OF CONDITION 1 REF W/24/00713/HP). To note comment submitted between meetings and receive any update. **Noted**
 - 6.4. **W/26/00177/FUL:** Yew Tree Cottage, Gooms Hill, Abbots Morton, WR7 4LT. Replace existing septic tank with underground sewage treatment plant. To discuss. **Clerk to submit comment: 'Abbots Morton Parish Councillors have considered the application and have no objections.'**
7. **Public Rights of Way and Highways**
 - 7.1. **PROW maintenance and obstruction issues: To consider and review.**
There were none.
 - 7.2. **Lengthsman Scheme: To receive an update and to consider any items for the Lengthsman's work schedule.**
No additional items for the Lengthman's work schedule.
 - 7.3. **Flooding: Update on the flooding issues within the Parish.**
There had not been any significant flooding issues to report.
8. **Progress reports**
 - 8.1. **Speeding & Road Safety:** The petition had been handed to the Highways Cabinet Member, but no further update was available. Clerk to continue to chase an update.
 - 8.2. **Defibrillator:** A new defibrillator had been purchased and fitted at the village hall. Cllr Martin Willingale had installed a new cover over the cabinet and added a new door seal as well as giving the cabinet a clean. The Clerk reported that County Cllr Bell had contacted the local Parish Councils regarding allocation of divisional funds. The Clerk had applied for funding towards local health and wellbeing activities (coffee mornings) and the cost of the new defibrillator.
 - 8.3. **.gov.uk Email and Website:** New .gov.uk email accounts had been set up for all Councillors. The website had also been migrated over to the .gov.uk domain. Councillors commented that one of the photos on the reel is not Abbots Morton, Clerk to ask Eyelid Productions to remove this photo.
9. **Parish Matters for Discussion/Decision**
 - 9.1. **Devolution/Unitary Authority:** A response to the Government's consultation on the two proposals for the Local Government Reorganisation in Worcestershire was

discussed. Council supports the two unitary authorities' proposal, Clerk to submit consultation responses.

10. Finance

10.1. Budget expenditure: To consider and approve.

It was RESOLVED to approve the budget expenditure.

10.2. Bank reconciliation: To consider and approve.

It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation.

10.3. Invoices: To approve the following invoices for payment:

10.3.1. Kerry Williamson (salary and expenses) - £774.28

10.3.2. HMRC (PAYE) - £43.72

10.3.3. Jeremy Moore (Lengthsman) - £352

10.3.4. Abbots Morton Village Hall (meeting room booking) - £27

It was RESOLVED to settle the above invoices via internet banking.

10.4. Payments: To note the following payments made between meetings:

10.4.1. WEL Medical Limited (new defibrillator) - £913.14

10.4.2. Eyelid Productions (migration of website) - £220

NOTED

11. Correspondence

11.1. Worcestershire CALC: Health & Wellbeing Newsletter (March).

The above correspondence was NOTED.

11.2. Worcestershire CALC: CALC Updates 26-02 & 26-03.

The above correspondence was NOTED.

11.3. Worcestershire CALC: Wychavon Area CALC Meeting.

The above correspondence was NOTED.

11.4. Wychavon District Council: Have Your Say on the Future of Worcestershire.

The above correspondence was NOTED and covered under item 9.1.

11.5. Wychavon District Council: Letter from Cllr R Morris, Leader of Wychavon District Council.

The above correspondence was NOTED.

11.6. Wychavon District Council: Latest News for Wychavon Parish & Town Councils.

The above correspondence was NOTED.

11.7. Worcestershire County Council: Budget Engagement Meeting – Presentation Slides.

The above correspondence was NOTED.

12. Councillors' reports and items for the next agenda

Cllr Martin Willingale reported that the security information event had taken place and had been well attended.

The Clerk reported that the telephone would soon be disconnected in the telephone box. Clerk to contact power company about the loose pole next to the telephone box.

13. Date of the next meeting

The next scheduled meeting was changed to 14th May 2026.

The meeting closed at 10.05PM.