

DILWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Lesley Hay

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**Dilwyn Parish Council
Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on Monday 11th May 2026 starting at 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr J Hall (Chairman); Cllr R Fellows (Vice Chairman); Cllr D Barron; Cllr J Clarke; Cllr M Griffiths; Cllr E Jordan; Cllr M Thomas and Cllr A Towler.

Also present: Ward Cllr Nick Mason; Parish Clerk: Mrs Lesley Hay; two members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

MINUTES

1. Cllr J Hall was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected as Chairman. Cllr Hall signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Chairman form.

2. Cllr R Fellows was proposed, seconded and unanimously re-elected as Vice Chairman.

3. Responsible Finance Officer – Parish Clerk/RFO Lesley Hay.

4. Apologies for absence: Cllr J Lewis; Cllr P Preston; Cllr D Stirling-Brown and Cllr J Stirling-Brown.

5. Declarations of Interest: All Councillors declared an interest in The Crown Public House as the Parish Council is the owner of the said Public House. No other declarations received.

All Councillors confirmed there were no changes to their Declarations of Interest and Applications for Dispensation during the past four years.

Written request for dispensation: The Clerk reminded members that written dispensation had been received from all Councillors in respect of the Crown Public House as the Council corporate is the owner. Without the dispensation, the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of business.

6. Election of Council Representatives – the following were proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed:

6.1 Footpath Officers – there is now an established group of Footpath Officers.

6.2 Crown Liaison/Friends of The Crown – Cllr J Hall.

Lesley Hay – Parish Clerk

19 Karen Court, Dilwyn, Herefordshire HR4 8HU; Tel: 01544 318 624; Email: thelesleyhay@hotmail.co.uk

6.3 Planning Liaison Officers – Cllr J Clarke and Cllr J Stirling-Brown.

6.4 PCC Representative – Cllr J Stirling-Brown.

The Clerk reminded those present that notification of all planning applications affecting the parish are emailed to the Clerk. The Planning Liaison Officers will visit all planning application sites, with site meetings to be arranged at a convenient time in order to provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed plans with the applicants. This information will then be reported back to the next Parish Council meeting for discussion and, if required, a comment submitted to Herefordshire Council Planning Department.

7. Ward Councillor's report – please see general report added to the end of these minutes.

7.1 Open Session

Cllr D Barron asked the Ward Councillor if there had been any update on the possibility of reducing the speed limit through Stockingfield. Ward Cllr Mason acknowledged that this is a very dangerous stretch of road and explained that, unfortunately, there had been a considerable backlog of requests. However, the request has now climbed the ladder and it is hoped that the traffic team will review the speed limit through Stockingfield later this year.

There was discussion with regard to installing a Speed Indicator Device (SID). The Clerk explained that Balfour Beatty's programme has been discontinued but they are available to purchase. However, permission would need to be obtained from Herefordshire Council with regard to installation/positioning. Further, in some areas guidelines state that SIDs should not operate at a single site for more than five days in any four-week period and should not return to that site within two months.

Personal email addresses

The Clerk explained that she had forwarded to each Councillor their new personal gov.uk email address with instructions on how to activate. Once everyone's new email address is active, the Clerk will begin forwarding council-related emails to that email address. Item to remain on the agenda and to be discussed further at the next meeting.

School entrance pathway

Cllr D Barron reported she had been approached by a parent at the school to ask the parish council if something can be done regarding the muddy grass by the main gate entrance of the school. It is a narrow, slabbed pathway so all parents stand on the grass area, which, after rain, becomes very muddy and slippery. This was discussed and it was agreed that this area most likely belongs to the church. Cllr Barron was advised that it may be helpful if the parent liaises with the school in the first instance and then possibly approach the PCC for advice.

Future editions of The Dilwynner

Mr Geoffrey Herdman reported that currently a combined July/August issue of The Dilwynner is produced, but individual issues for December and January. The January issue is especially problematic to produce given the many activities taking place over

Christmas. Also, there is not a lot of news for the year end but always plenty in the summer months. As such, the team would like to change the arrangement to produce individual issues for the months of July and August, and a combined issue for December/January. This change was unanimously agreed by the councillors present.

7.2 The Chairman closed the Open Session.

8. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12th April 2026. It was unanimously agreed that these were a true record and should be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

9. Finance Matters

9.1 End of year 2025–2026 bank balances had been circulated with associated documentation. These documents had been audited and a certificate issued by the internal auditor.

9.2 To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/2026. The Annual Governance Statement for 2025/2026 was read out by the Chairman, and agreed and accepted by the Council. The External Audit Form was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, as Responsible Finance Officer.

9.3 To approve the Annual Accounts for 2025/2026. The Annual Accounts for 2025/2026 had been audited and these were agreed and accepted by the Council. The External Audit Form was duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk, as Responsible Finance Officer.

The Notice of Date of Commencement of Period of the Exercise of Rights will be displayed on 3rd June 2026 for 30 working days up to and including 14th July 2026.

The Clerk informed those present that all documentation will be submitted to the external auditor, and will be uploaded onto the website as appropriate and displayed on the village notice boards within the appropriate timescale.

9.4 The Clerk explained that Robert Taplin had kindly agreed to remain as internal auditor for financial year 2025–2026 to enable the Parish Council to appoint a replacement. The Clerk explained that Miss Gwyneth Owen (retired solicitor from Dilwyn) had very kindly offered to take on the role of internal auditor. It was unanimously agreed to appoint Gwyneth Owen as Dilwyn Parish Council's internal auditor for 2026–2027.

9.5 It was unanimously agreed to make a donation of £50.00 as a gift to Robert Taplin for his work as internal auditor – the Clerk to purchase a voucher and card of thanks.

9.6 To consider and approve payment of outstanding invoices – Schedule of Payments had been circulated. It was unanimously agreed to pay the outstanding invoices for April.

9.7 The Clerk reported that she had two outstanding invoices – (1) for repairs to the drains at The Crown and (2) for repairs to the bollards on the village green. The Friends of the Crown had kindly agreed to donate £2000 towards the drain invoice and the Clerk will liaise with Steve Thomas. The remaining part of the invoice will be settled from the HUB account. It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should go ahead and settle these invoices.

9.8 PRow – the Clerk was asked to liaise with the lengthsman with regard to: (a) clearing parts of the overgrown footpath DW7 and arranging to replace the two stiles along the footpath and the one at the top of Bankie, and (b) to repair the stile by the new bridge on footpath DW2.

10. Official documents: the Clerk explained that there had been no amendments during the past year but that a Transparency Policy and an IT policy had been added. After discussion, it was agreed to adopt the above documents and to adopt the newly revised Risk Register. All Councillors present agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct. Email or paper copies are available from the Clerk.

10.1 The insurance policy for 2026–2027 is £2979.41, which is a slight increase on last year's premium. Cllr R Fellows has reviewed the policy and, after discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk would settle the invoice before the next meeting.

11. The Crown

Following a second email from the owner of The Old Shop with regard to the broken fence panels, Cllr M Thomas was asked to prepare a quote for replacement panels/labour etc. It was agreed that the quote would be circulated via email and, once approved, Cllr Thomas would go ahead and repair the fence between The Old Shop and The Crown as a matter of urgency.

Friends of The Crown

There was a short discussion in that the Friends of The Crown committee are extending an invitation to residents to become a 'friend' of The Crown by supporting a four monthly lottery. More information will be available in the June edition of the Dilwynner.

12. Highways and Environmental Matters

12.1 Tyrrells/KP Snacks signs are now in place. However, Tyrrells lorries are still using sat nav directions that take them through the village and down small byroads, causing considerable disturbance and damage. Tyrrells to be asked again to liaise with their contractors and stress that lorry drivers keep to the main road as directed by the signs.

12.2 Village lamp posts – the Clerk had again been asked about repainting the lamp posts, with a view to Dilwyn entering Village in Bloom next year. The Clerk explained that there may be some lengthsman funding available to get the lamp posts repainted. After discussion – during which Councillors expressed their concerns about spending precept funds on cosmetic painting – the Clerk was asked to obtain quotes from Gareth Jenkins and Graham Dyer and bring them to the next meeting.

13. Drainage Programme for 2026–2027

The Clerk confirmed that she had submitted two drainage grant funding applications – one for West View/Orchard Close and one for The Common Road.

14. Planning Applications

Application No. 26110 – Bankside, Dilwyn (circulated). Single storey rear extension; front porch, new windows and rendered elevations. The response date is 21st May 2026.

15. Police Report

The Kington and Weobley Safer Neighbourhood Team is based at the police station in Kington, and in addition to Dilwyn, covers the parishes of Shobdon, Pembridge, Lyonshall, Titley, Brilley, Eardisland, Eardisley, Winforton, Willersley, Kington, Monkland, Weobley, Almeley, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton, and Staunton-on-Wye.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) consists of Sergeant Nicola McColl, PC Steve Thomas and PCSO Felix Rawlinson. The team deal with long-term problem solving, threat, risk and harm, local issues and attend events in our area, while 24-hour Patrol Officers deploy from Leominster and cover the area for emergencies.

Throughout the year we have held regular, accessible surgeries nearby in Weobley and Pembridge and we invite the residents of Dilwyn to attend these should they have anything they wish to raise with us. We use these as an opportunity for the public to voice their concerns or ask any questions they may have of their local policing team.

Traffic has played a large part of our year, with the team conducting speed enforcement across our area of responsibility. I know speeding is a concern that has been raised in the village in the past. However, on speed monitoring sessions, we have found that the number of people speeding through the village to be very low. However, if there are repeat offenders that the community notices, we can follow up.

The team has been making use of the Police Partnership van conducting multiple police surgeries and property-marking events across the policing area.

Neighbourhood Watch continues to expand steadily, and we are grateful for the support of our co-ordinators. A significant amount of useful information on local crime has been obtained from NHW members.

Social Media – you can follow us on Facebook under North Herefordshire Police, and also via Neighbourhood Matters where you can join as a member online. If anyone is interested in receiving updates from us via email, please get in touch and we can sign you up.

The team email address for your local team is Kington.snt@westmercia.police.uk.

16. Items for the next agenda (no discussion).

Date of the next Parish Council meeting – Monday 8th June 2025 at 7.30pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Report from Cllr Nick Mason; Ward Councillor for Weobley, happily serving the parishes of Weobley, Dilwyn, Birley and Upper Hill and those in Foxley and Pyons parish groups.

It's been a busy few weeks, with 8 evening parish meetings, and helping parish councils get their bids in to maximise funding from Herefordshire Council for ditching and drainage work; that's on top of my usual council work and the arrival of a third child! As such I hope I'll be forgiven for a report across the whole of the Weobley Ward, rather than writing distinct reports for each area within it.

I'm delighted to see a number of the roads I've asked to be repaired already on the schedule of works. Everyone agrees that while potholes are annoying, the real answer is long term repair of the roads. I'm glad to see preparatory works going on at Parks Lane, near Brinsop, following the common sense that you have to get the drainage sorted if you're not to pour good money after bad. Similarly Derndale Road is due to be repaired this summer, but I will be making sure that the drainage issues aren't still outstanding, as well as keeping an eye on issues with road closure.

Beyond the usual reporting of potholes, I've had a number of issues with raised metalwork around drain covers, in particular on Burton Gardens and on the Hereford Road, which should shortly be addressed. I also have had a close eye on the works on the pavers outside Mark Hurd's – while a team did promptly come to get them sorted, "rain stopped play", leaving one of them unsecured... by the time this is in print, it should be fixed.

I continue to be frustrated by issues with buses – some local (especially the school bus at Weobley), some county wide - but I am very glad to report that after a long delay of funding, the bus stop at Moorhampton is to be in the first tranche of work, so we should see progress soon.

Regarding the ongoing issues with the pumping station, including sewage rising in the fields; further to raising this with the Chief Executive to take to Welsh Water, I have a much improved channel of communication with Welsh Water, and will continue to put pressure on to get this resolved, working with the flood and drainage team at Herefordshire Council.

I continue to help people with the oil grant – the good news is that over 10% of grants made have been to people in this ward (despite being only 2% of the population) – but I'm sure that there are many people who are eligible who still haven't claimed. Please do spread the word!

Thinking to footpaths, ditches, and so on; there are frustratingly a number of cases where "asking people nicely" doesn't always get results, and I'm sorry that those will have to lead to enforcement actions. (If they do get to that point, the council will recover costs).

After years of lobbying for more to be done on this, in particular looking at mobile signal dead-spots, I am pleased the Council is looking to create a new digital officer post to

take on the responsibility for broadband provision across the county, management of our terrestrial mobile phone coverage and supporting the take up of new and improved digital services across the county.

A day hardly goes by without AI being in the news, and it's the same in local government! I've reported before that I am impressed with the leadership, after a few false starts, on how technology can save money and deliver better "customer" experience, rather than just chasing shiny, new, expensive projects. This was my professional world, and I would too often see the tail wagging the dog rather than fixing the foundations first. I am cautiously optimistic that Herefordshire Council has got the balance right.

There has been lots of "alphabet soup" regarding local government restructure, as we continue to be pressured into forming a larger FSA ("Foundational Strategic Authority"), and to develop an SDS ("Spatial Development Strategy"). And similarly, we're currently going through a review as to whether the council wards need to be changed. I can't deny frustration at how much time is spent in civil service bureaucracy, rather than actually getting stuff done. To me, providing support, stability and strategic direction is what we should do to make it easier for all residents of Herefordshire, rather than arguing about how it's all divvied up.

Reporting issues and other contacts

- Oil Grant scheme – warmhomeslocalgrant@herefordshire.gov.uk or 01432 260401
- Report problems on the road at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road
- Check on progress of a defect: herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map
- Report a serious pothole, flooded road or highway obstruction: 01432 261800
- Making a claim for vehicle damage : www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/highway-claims
- Footpaths issues PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk or 01432 383 550
- Report fly tipping by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or via the council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/fly_tipping

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me: 07884 268624, or nick.mason@herefordshire.gov.uk regarding any of these if you run into issues, need help, or feel you aren't getting the response you should!

Despite being busy; I have had the chance to give my wife a break by taking my other two children out to enjoy some of the many aspects of Herefordshire; they loved the tug of war at Dilwyn Young Farmers Rally, and various other events. There's so much that fills me with optimism that this county has a future for its young; even if mine are still far too young to take advantage of the recently re-opened Sal in Weobley, and so that was a trip I had to make alone!

Signed: Date:.....