

CUSOP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of meeting of Cusop Parish Council held on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 7 p.m. at Cusop Village Hall, Cusop, Herefordshire.

PRESENT: Councillor Nick Blayney (Chairman) and Councillors Joe Emmett, John Gibson and John Ievers.

In attendance: David Thame (Clerk)
Three members of the public.

2025/126. To Receive Apologies for Absence

None, all present.

2025/127. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations.

None.

2025/128. Chairman's Announcements.

None

2025/129. Co-Option of Parish Councillors

The Council further considered the co-option of members to replace Christopher John Kemp (resigned 9th November) and Cheryl Hyde (resigned 13th December 2025). After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk prepare a graphic for members to post on social media, that a further invitation should be made via the Council website and email list, and that encouraging new councillors should be a priority for the forthcoming annual parish meeting.

2025/130. Open Session:-

A written report from Councillor Philip Price, Herefordshire Ward Councillor, Golden Valley North, was circulated to members (copy attached to minutes).

A written report from the Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team was received, stating that there are no relevant crime issues since the last meeting, and that speed checks on Newport Street and Hardwicke Road continue.

A member of the public drew attention to pot holes on Hardwicke Road and C1205, noting that some have been filled, and enquiring about the effectiveness of reporting highways defects to Herefordshire Council.

A member of the public requested that the 30 mph speed limit on B4348 Hardwicke Road begin (from the Bredwardine direction) before the corner junction with C1205.

A member of the public drew attention to damaged grit bins on C1205.

2025/131. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th January 2026 (copies previously circulated), and that they be signed as such by the Chairman.

2025/132. Lengthsman's Scheme

The Council considered recent work completed by the lengthsman including drainage at Cusop Dingle and Nantyglassdwr Lane, tasks for the lengthsman, and the revised Lengthsman's Contract with Herefordshire Council for 2026/27. The Clerk reported that the per mile allocation for core funding of the Herefordshire Lengthsman scheme has halved for 2026/27. The allocation of £2,268 in 2025/26 is therefore reduced to £1,134.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- (a) to approve the Lengthsman's Agreement with Herefordshire Council 2026/27 and that the Chairman and Clerk sign accordingly;
- (b) that the Chairman meet with the Lengthsman to conduct the annual review of sites and locations, and that the Council record its appreciation of the work's completed this financial year;
- (c) that the annual review of the Lengthsman's Contract be considered at the April meeting; and
- (d) the Council notes the recent removal of newly-installed ditch markers at Cusop Dingle, and that residents should be reminded that the markers are placed for a purpose, and replacing them is expensive.

2025/133. Local Drainage Fund

The Council considered recent work completed, and the potential for further applications the deadline for which is 3rd May 2026, and the outcome of the Parish Summit held on Tuesday 4th March 2026 at which Herefordshire Council had indicated grants would be capped at £5,000 each, and the timetable moved forward to allowing works to be completed over the drier summer months. The result was a tight deadline for the third round of bids had been set at 3rd May, although this was likely to be extended to 17th May 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman assemble prospective projects and costings for potential Local Drainage Fund support ahead of decisions at the Council's April meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, a member of the public spoke about the bid for 2025/26 funding from the Local Drainage Fund for surface water drainage alleviation at Thirty Acres. The

Clerk reported correspondence from the Locality Steward making it clear Herefordshire Council did not consider the bid, as currently framed, amounted to a public spending priority and would not be taking action at Thirty Acres. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the likely cause of the problem at Thirty Acres is run-off from Church Road (U75242), that Herefordshire Council be invited to consider a tarmac lip/spillway to divert run-off into existing ditches, and to consider enforcement of existing riparian landowner duties.

2025/134. Neighbourhood Development Plan (Minute 2025/77, 2025/114)

The Council considered the oral report of the Clerk, the draft Housing Needs Assessment, progress on the site appraisal and the production of a newsletter update. The site appraisal was a pilot for Herefordshire – and potentially for England – and would be completed by the end of March under supervision from neighbourhood planning agency, Locality.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that Community First be invited to re-cast the Housing Needs Assessment to meet the requirements of the revised National Planning Policy Framework by focusing on types and styles of housing required, rather than aggregate numbers which have already been determined by the New Standard Method.

It was further **RESOLVED** that a brief newsletter be prepared and circulated updating residents on the current position, and likely next steps, and that residents should be encouraged to opt for further update emails.

2025/135. Herefordshire Local Plan

The Council considered whether to engage consultants to act for the Council in the consultation and examination stages of the Herefordshire Local Plan. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk seek quotations from planning consultants acquainted with neighbourhood planning in Herefordshire able to offer the specialist support the Council requires.

2025/136. Traffic Regulation Order/Traffic Calming

The Council considered progress and the next steps on Newport Street white traffic calming gates, and on the location and procurement of a speed indicator device, including the results of a consultation with residents immediately adjacent to proposed sites. The Clerk reported that the five residents immediately adjacent to the proposed speed indicator device site on Hardwicke Road responded with enthusiastic approval. At Newport Street just one of five immediately adjacent residents had responded, objecting on grounds of light pollution. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council proceed to obtain the necessary license for Hardwicke Road, but that the Clerk write again to residents of Newport Street with further information and that preliminary steps be taken to ascertain whether the landowners of the two alternative sites would be prepared to permit the installation of a speed indicator device.

The Clerk reported that the Evolis solar-powered colour speed indicator device that was to have been purchased jointly with Dorstone Parish Council was supplied by Elancity. Elan City had now quoted a price of £2589.99 plus VAT. The Clerk had obtained a price for an equivalent device from Truvelo (UK) Ltd at £3,995.00 plus VAT. Price comparison site www.startsafety.uk showed simpler, single colour devices without solar power from £2,436 and the Evolis device, supplied by Elancity, at £2,699.00 plus VAT. The Council considered the report and **RESOLVED** that the

Clerk place an order with Elancity for the Evolis solar-power colour speed indicator, applying the resources remaining from the Police & Crime Commissioner grant, and is authorised in consultation with the Chairman to raise a payment before the grant deadline of 31st March 2026.

The Clerk reported that Herefordshire Council had agreed the location of the white traffic calming gates at Newport Street. JACS UK Ltd had quoted £1076 plus VAT for a 1200mm wide and a 600mm wide gate, as specified by Herefordshire Council. Installation and delivery would be £1240.00. Should traffic management be required that would be a further £950.00. The Council considered the report and **RESOLVED** that the requisite license be obtained from Herefordshire Council for the installation of white traffic calming gates at Newport Street, and that the Clerk place an order with JACS UK Ltd in the sum of £1076 plus VAT for two gates as described, applying the resources remaining from the Police & Crime Commissioner grant.

2025/137. Playground Refurbishment/Section 106 funding

The Clerk reported that he had applied to Herefordshire Council for community asset transfer, and in the process had drawn attention to the disrepair of the access strip from Coronation Terrace to the playground, and to the easements permitting access over the roadway (and the status or otherwise of obligations to contribute to the upkeep of the roadway). He had indicated to Herefordshire Council that the Parish Council would be reluctant to take on responsibility for title HE14405 if that meant a substantial contingent liability for the repair of the roadway. Herefordshire Council had replied that they would endeavour to seek a long-term solution for the roadway before proceeding with community asset transfer. The report was **NOTED**.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Gibson's offer to conduct a simple weekly inspection of the playground be gratefully accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Lengthsman be asked to improve the condition of the two simple plank benches remaining at the playground and if they could not be improved, to remove them.

2025/138. Annual Parish Meeting: Newsletter

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman call the Annual Parish Meeting for a date in May and that the Clerk produce a newsletter invitation to residents setting out the Council's work in the last year and the prospects for the future.

2025/139. Local Nature Recovery Strategy

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Emmett respond on the Council's behalf to the consultation on the Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

2025/140. Defibrillators.

The Council noted that the Trustees of Cusop Village Hall have resolved this issue.

2025.141. Planning Consultation - 260277 - Norville, Cusop, Hereford, Herefordshire HR3 5QX

The Council considered the consultation on an application for a first-floor side extension over the existing lounge and a new single-storey rear extension. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the application appears to conform to the Cusop Neighbourhood Development Plan and that therefore the Council has no objection.

2025/142. Finance

The Council considered the Clerk's Financial Report and cash book (both attached). The current account balance is £8,365 and the deposit account £19,025. Balances have been inflated by the early receipt of a Herefordshire Local Drainage Fund grant. A Police & Crime Commissioner grant of £5104.00 must be spent by 31st March 2026. To today the total spent is £1627.24, leaving a balance of £3476.76.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Unity Trust Bank mandate be varied to remove Christopher John Kemp, resigned.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, is authorised to settle all invoices relating to the Lengthsman's scheme and Local drainage Fund so that payment can be made before 31st March 2026, and to make the relevant claims to Herefordshire Council for reimbursement before 10th April 2026.

The Council considered a request from Hay Chamber of Commerce to make donation, under the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act, 1972, to support Hay Christmas Lights November 2025-January 2026. After discussion there voted For 1 Against 3 and it was **RESOLVED** that this is a matter for Hay Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following invoices be paid, and to indicate approval two Councillors to initial and date:

PV147 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Mousecastle, Watery Lane)	£158.40
PV146 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Nantyglassdwy Lane – Local Drainage Fund)	£9000.00
PV145 HALC Subscription	£650.57
PV144 Society of Local Council Clerks	£79.00

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payment made under existing resolutions or delegated powers:

PV149 Clerk's salary (tax month 11)	£768.07
PV148 HMRC (tax month 11)	£79.34
PV143 HMRC (tax month 10)	£79.34
PV142 Clerk's salary (tax month 10)	£768.07

2025/143. Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Assertion 10

It was **RESOLVED** for the avoidance of doubt, that the Clerk is data protection officer, that the Clerk has had training on data protection and privacy and that it be offered to councillors, that the Council continue to provide transparency data quarterly and all spending published before each meeting of the council, and that the Council has reviewed the security of data.

2025/144. Asset Register

The Council considered the draft revised asset register (copy attached) arising from the Clerk's physical inspection of assets. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the draft revised register be approved, subject to the addition of items arising from Minute 2025/136, above.

2025/145. Annual Review of Effectiveness: Internal Controls and Risk Register

The Council considered the annual review of effectiveness and internal controls (see financial report circulated for item 2025/142, now attached) and to adopt a revised risk register. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised risk register, and the responses to the internal and external auditors' reports for 2024/25:

Internal Auditor

It is advisable to review Standing Orders alongside other key policies such as risk at the Annual Meeting in May.	The Council adopts a rolling policy of review of its suite of policies, usually on the anniversary of their adoption. This ensures each receives adequate attention, and avoids the risk that a single large scale omnibus policy review of leads to inattention and rubber-stamping.
I note that the Risk Register is due to be reviewed in May but would impress upon Cllrs the need to do this in a timely fashion every year.	As above, and below. Since the July 2025 review the Council has adopted the complaints, grievance and disciplinary policies indicated in the review, showing that the current system of periodic review is working. The risk register is due to review in July 2026.
When the register is reviewed this year, it would be advisable to update it to include the more modern risks of cyber threat for example.	The Council will adopt a new section on operational risks, which will form part of the risk register reviewed in July. The sections of financial control have been revised to take into account current practice. See attached.

External auditor:

Section 2, Box 1 for the prior year is incorrect due to a transcription error and should read £19,911.	Noted. Care will be taken.
Section 2, Box 4 incorrectly includes items which are not staff costs as defined in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide. Please note that Box 4 should comprise payments made in relation to the employment of staff including only gross salary, employers' national insurance contributions, employers' pension contributions, gratuities for employees or former employees and severance or terminations payments to employees. Employment expenses which are benefits (mileage, travel, etc.), items of reimbursement of expenses for postage, stationery or other outlays made on behalf of the smaller authority, payroll processing costs and contractor/locum clerk costs in respect of individuals who are self-employed, are not staff costs for the purpose of completion of the AGAR in accordance with proper practice. The figures in Section 2, Boxes 4 and 6 should read £5,782 and £29,306 respectively. Please ensure that amendments are corrected in the prior year comparatives when completing next year's AGAR	Corrected in 2025-26 As advised, appropriate corrections will be made to the 2024-25 figures in the 2025-26 AGAR

It was **RESOLVED** to initiate a review of insurance needs in view of the larger volume of public realm work it is now undertaking, and for cost effectiveness, and the Clerk is instructed to ascertain primes and terms ready for the next meeting.

2025/146. Date of April Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to change the date of the next meeting to 22nd April 2026.

2025/147. Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the consideration of item 2025/148 because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

2025/148. Employment Matter

The Council received the report of the Clerk's annual appraisal from the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

It was **RESOLVED** that the conclusion of the appraisal with regard to hours and salary scale be agreed.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date _____