

CUSOP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of Cusop Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 7.15 p.m. at Cusop Village Hall, Cusop, Herefordshire.

PRESENT: Councillor John Ievers (Vice Chairman, in the Chair), and Councillors Joe Emmett, John Gibson and George Gilbert (the latter from Minute 2025/153).

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

2025/149. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blayney.

2025/150. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations.

None.

2025/151. Chairman's Announcements.

None.

2025/152. Co-Option of Parish Councillors

The Vice Chairman invited George Gilbert to address the Council, and it was **RESOLVED** that George Gilbert be co-opted as a member to replace Christopher John Kemp (resigned 9th November).

Councillor Gilbert signed his declaration of acceptance of office before the Clerk and took his place at the table.

2025/153. Open Session:-

A written report was received from Councillor Philip Price, Herefordshire Ward Councillor, Golden Valley North.

Councillor Price reported that following the setting of the Councils budget for 2026/27, Herefordshire Council are still adding significant sums of money to resurfacing and surface dressing on the County road network on a planned priority basis, as per the previous 2 years. Whilst this is making our roads better the backlog of road maintenance is still more than £100 million. With a poor funding agreement from Government for Herefordshire for the next 3 years, continuing investment in road maintenance at current rate will prove challenging even though the county acknowledges it really need to up the rate to get on top of the improvement required

This winter with the very wet weather, has seen pothole problems reaching a level that Herefordshire Council struggle with an acceptable rate of repair and focuses on repairing Category 1 potholes at the expense of the nearby potholes that ought to be repaired at the same time. Category 1's must be fixed within 24 hours and serious issues within 2 hours of Locality Steward notification.

Category 2 potholes have an ongoing 28-day period for repair: hence the problem of some pothole repairs being done and others not. An extra sum to fund this will assist but will not do fix roads.

Councillor Price drew attention to the Local Drainage fund. He said that this scheme in conjunction with our Local Parish support has had a major impact on local drainage in our communities. Parish councils and local lengthsman can make differences in our local road infrastructure by getting water off our roads and lessen the breakdown of road surfaces.

Golden Valley Police reported in writing there had been no incidents since their last report.

Councillor Gibson drew attention to the extent of potholing on Church Road (U75242).

Councillor Emmett drew attention to road closures on the Peterchurch Road.

A member of the public asked if Golden Valley Police had an update on garden shed thefts on Nantyglassdwr Lane reported several months ago.

2025/154. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11th March 2026 (copies previously circulated) and that they be signed accordingly by the Vice Chairman.

On the motion of the Vice Chairman it was resolved to bring forward the item relating to public rights of way.

2025/155. Public Rights of Way

The Vice Chairman reported that, together with Councillor Gibson (lead member for public rights of way) and the Clerk he had met David and Sharon Witt, who had volunteered to become public footpath officers. Mr Witt was present. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to thank both David Witt and Sharon Witt for their kind offer, and to appoint both as Public Rights of Way Officers until the annual meeting of the Council in 2027.

It was **RESOLVED** that the public rights of way officers, together with Councillor Gibson and the Clerk, prepare a simple job description for consideration at a future meeting.

The Clerk reported a price of £750 excluding VAT to add a further length of boardwalk to the newly-created bridge at Nantyglassdwr Lane (junction CU20/CU21) where some residents had reported difficulty with the existing placement of stones. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Lengthsman be invited to explore simpler solutions (gravel, or confining stones with a mesh cage), and that if they are unsatisfactory the Council will return to this matter at a future meeting.

The Clerk reported that Herefordshire Council would be open to an application for a grant from the Public Rights of Way Fund in respect of Lengthsman's work replacing stiles on CU2 and CU4 (Cusop Hill circular), and for self-closing gates at footpath junctions with C1205 (Michaelchurch road). It was **RESOLVED** that an application for funding be made in respect of these paths.

2025/156. Lengthsman's Scheme

The Council was advised that the Chairman had met the Lengthsman for an annual appraisal meeting on 11th April 2026, and was satisfied. It was **RESOLVED** that, in view of their local knowledge

and responsiveness, the contract with GWG Tree & Garden Care be extended for a further year to 31 March 2027.

2025/157. Local Drainage Fund (Minute 2025/133)

The Council considered further applications, the deadline for which was 17th May 2026, including completing ditching on C1205 beyond Watery Lane (U75238) to Red Barn, and addressing drainage from Trewern (Church Road U75242) to the junction with Thirty Acres. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to make a bid to the Local Drainage Fund in respect of C1205 ditching.

It was further **RESOLVED** in respect of drainage on Church Road (U75242) from Trewern to the junction with Cusop Dingle that poor drainage was contributing to highway deterioration and potholes (see Minute 2025/153) and that Herefordshire Council be invited to consider funding improvements in addition to the tarmac lip/spillway to divert run-off into existing ditches, and to consider enforcement of existing riparian landowner duties, agreed at the March meeting.

2025/158. Improvised Resurfacing of the Verge, Junction of Cusop Dingle U75246 and Church Road U75242

The Clerk reported that, following complaints for residents, he had reported an improvised resurfacing of the verge at the junction of Cusop Dingle and Church Road to the Locality Steward for their action. The Locality Steward confirmed that the verge was part of the highway and the resurfacing was unlawful. The Locality Steward indicated that he had requested works to restore the verge.

Subsequent correspondence drew attention to the risk that gullies or drains under the highway may not be adequately protected against the weight of vehicles where they are presumed to travel under the verge, and the Locality Steward had noted the additional risk the resurfacing may have created by encouraging vehicles to believe the surface could support them. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

2025/159. Traffic Regulation Order/Traffic Calming

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk seek the appropriate license to install a speed indicator device at Hardwicke Road, and the white traffic calming gates at Newport Street, and report to a future meeting on the cost of installation, but that work on a speed indicator device on Newport Street be paused pending resident consent.

2025/160. Playground Refurbishment/Section 106 funding

It was **RESOLVED** to note the oral report of the Clerk that a site meeting with Herefordshire Council's section 106 project co-ordinator would be taking place on 24th April 2026.

2025/161. Grants & Donations Policy

Following discussion of discretionary payments at the 11 March 2026 meeting, the Council considered adopting a grants and donations policy, the model adopted by Almeley Parish Council having been circulated in advance. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the model grants & donations policy as the policy of Cusop Parish Council.

2025/162. Insurance

The Clerk reported it was three years since the Council agreed insurance with brokers Clear Councils. It was **RESOLVED** to instruct the Clerk to seek quotes for insurance in 2026-27, and to seek clarity from providers on cover for works arising from the Lengthsman's Agreement with Herefordshire Council.

2025/163. Police & Crime Commissioner Grant

It was **RESOLVED** to note the completion statement for the grant of from the Police & Crime Commissioner's Safer Roads Fund 2024, now completed in the sum of £5,203.24 excluding VAT (copy attached).

2025/164. Finance

The Council considered the Clerk's Financial Report, and cash book for the year to 31st March 2026 (both attached). The cash book and budget monitoring for the year ending 31 March 2026 showed total spending in 2025-26 was £30,213. Total income was £36,818.46, of which £15,055 was provided by the precept, thus for each pound of precept raised the Council was able to spend £2.45 on local services, thanks to grants and other support.

Current balances at 16th April 2026 are T1 current account £21,485.05 and the deposit account balance was £3,116.00.

It was **RESOLVED** to vary the Unity Trust Bank mandate to remove Mr London and Ms Green, former Clerks who retain an association with the account, and to add Councillor Gilbert.

The Council considered a written request from a resident for a donation of £178.30 to pay for a table tennis table and net, which they have already acquired. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the application does not meet the requirements of the Council's grants and donations policy in so far as it prohibits payments to individuals, to non-organised bodies, where there is no evidence other funding has been sought, nor will grants be made retrospectively.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following invoices for payment, and to indicate approval two Councillors to initial and date:

PV146 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Drainage Fund) (please see financial report)	£9000.00
PV158 Viking Office UK (stationery re accounts)	£57.90
PV159 Herefordshire Council (rent, playground)	£5.00
PV160 D H Thame (toner cartridge, one quarter of cost)	£27.91
PV161 Clerk's salary (Tax month 1)	£564.32
PV162 HMRC (Tax month 1)	£184.25
PV163 Administrative costs (printing, postage Jan-Apr 26)	£31.00

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

PV157 JACS (UK) Ltd (Newport Street, white gates) (Minute 2025/136)	£1291.20
PV156 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Nantyglasdwr Bridge) (Minute 2025/142)	£3000.00

PV155 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Local Drainage Fund) (Minute 2025/142)	£1320.00
PV154 HMRC Tax month 12	£79.34
PV153 Salary tax month 12	£768.07
PV152 ElanCity Ltd (speed indicator device) (Minute 2025/136)	£3107.99
PV151 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Minute 2025/142)	£711.96
PV150 GWG Tree & Garden Care (Minute 2025/142)	£48.60

The meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date _____

DRAFT