Little Witley Parish Council
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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Little Witley Parish

Monday 18th May 2026, 7.30pm at the Village Hall

Attending: Paul Cumming(Outgoing Parish Council Chair and chair of the meeting), Pam Cumming, Colin Bexley, Philip Owen, Louise Slater, Roz London, Tina Boughey.

Apologies none given

1. Opening and welcome – Mr Paul Cumming, 2025/26 Outgoing Chair LWPC
2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025.

Colin Bexley Proposed and Philip Owen Seconded that the minutes be approved. All in favour.

3. Reports from:

a) **Little Witley Parish Council (Cllr. Paul Cumming)**

Paul Cumming thanked all councillors for their contributions this year.

Cllr. Cumming spoke of three activities during the year.
Parishioners complaining about the lanes and the roads and that more speeding is taking place.
A speed survey has been undertaken by WCC recently on Well Lane near Ockeridge Lakes Fishery. The survey found most speeds to be reasonable. No further action expected at present

WCC asked for more specifics about concerns around the lanes. Report concerns on WCC Report it and follow ups can be done through Cllr. Bowen (WCC).

Re-organisation of the Councils – 2 options either 1 council for Worcestershire or Two Unitary Councils, a north and a south Unitary Authority.
This, in turn will mean more work will be created for Parish Councils and discussions are currently taking place about forming parish cluster groups to prepare for this.

SWDP – South Worcestershire Development Plan – has run several years late but plan is now in place as of March 2026. Little Witley has been designated a Tier 4 parish going forward which will mean that Little Witley will be classed as open countryside with regard to planning terms.

Compliance exercises – HMRC and Companies House making life difficult. Cllr. Paul Cumming declared that as Chair of the Parish Council he will stand down at the AGM of the Parish Council this evening.

Cllr. Paul Cumming was thanked for his dedication and service by Councillors.

b) Little Witley WI (Report by Tina Boughey)

Gave a verbal overview of the highlights of the Little Witley WI over the last year. Councillors thanked Tina for her thorough report.

c) Parish Path Warden

There is no-one currently in post as Parish Path Warden and it was noted that this should be advertised on behalf of WCC.

d) Friends of St Michael's and All Angels, Little Witley- John Sitch

Friends of St Michael's and All Angels, Little Witley AGM Chairman's Report 2025-2026 This year seems to have flown by with a number of successful events and we are actively planning for further events for the rest of this year.

There has been some worthwhile improvements to the Church including the installation of the speaker and microphone system and also the development of a relaxed seating area at the back of the Church which has encouraged conversation after the service; Gail thank you for organising the coffee and biscuits for everyone after the service which is much appreciated.

We are still keen as a Committee to further improve the service we offer visitors and members of the congregation so the construction of toilet facilities and also undercover storage for our lawn mowers has been discussed at length.

At this point I would thank again Valerie for the generous donation of both mowers to the church as without them we would have to look at costly alternative arrangements.

Further investigations concluded that the cost of the Lawn mower store would exceed £10,000 so it was felt that the funds could be better used elsewhere to maintain the Church and to pay for some of the ongoing works as highlighted in the recent Quinquennial review.

Currently, both mowers are stored undercover locally as a temporary measure; thank you Peter Owen and Tessa Jones for allowing us to do this however a more permanent solution is required in the future.

There is a still a need for Toilet and storage facilities so any guidance and support would be appreciated to develop these projects.

Peter and Diana Hill have managed to recruit a cleaner to carry out a full clean before every Communion service which has been a great help and thank you both for continuing to clean and organise the cleaning rota of the volunteers on a monthly basis.

Thank you also for the those who carry out the flower arranging in the church which is always welcoming to congregation and visitors alike with some amazing displays this Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas.

Finally, a big thanks to all those who maintain the Churchyard including the Crypt Kickers who include Peter Hill, Rob Jukes, Alan Cope and Roz London and to all those who have helped over the year with weeding, pruning and general maintenance of the Churchyard to make it a very special place for both visitors and congregations to enjoy.

Events this year include a Wine Walk and Barbecue where a number of new people and families attended, an enjoyable Harvest Festival Lunch and only last month a Quiz led by Rev. David Morris ably helped by a number of Scout volunteers, all of which were well attended.

All these events are needed to raise much required funds to maintain the Church and thanks to all the committee members and their families for their support and help at these events.

Other highlights this year include the annual Carol Service organised by Di Cope with help from Gail Hayward with excellent participation by a number of children all enjoyed by a full Church. Also in Advent Dan and Tessa Jones created a stunning Christmas light display which really brightened up the long winter nights.

This year we have held some very successful events and the annual drive to ensure that our Church continues to thrive will continue next year.

I would like to thank all those who have helped me including Fran for her secretarial support and for all the work that the committee do throughout the year

e) **Little Witley Village Hall – Philip Owen**
The village hall is ticking over nicely and the committee are sharing out the tasks. Fundraising is on-going with kitchen as a priority for raising funds.

There are regular bar nights.
It is thought that the hall will be 100 years old this year with an event on July 4th 2026.

The hall is being rented out regularly.

The new booking system 'Hallmaster' is now up and running.

Councillor JBowen WCC Councillor offered a small grant towards funding.

West Mercia Police

Last 30 days of incidents reported to police as at 29/4/2026

Category of Incident	Martley & Tenbury SNT Area (A)	Stoke Bliss (B)	Pensax (C)	Little Witley (D)	Abberley (E)
Anti-social Behaviour - All Categories	8	0	1	0	0
Burglary - Residential	1	0	0	0	0
Unlisted Crime	1	0	0	0	1
Criminal Damage	2	0	0	0	0
Making off without payment	2	0	0	0	0
Public Order	2	0	0	0	0
Shoplifting	1	0	0	0	0
Theft of Vehicle	3	0	0	0	0
Animals & Wildlife	1	0	0	0	0
Concern for Safety	7	0	0	0	0
Missing Person	3	0	0	0	1
Suspicious Circumstances	4	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision with injury	1	0	0	0	0
Highways disruption	13	0	0	1	0
Traffic Offence	1	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision - Damage Only	4	0	0	2	0

The position for the Martley & Tenbury SNT Area as a whole over the past 30 days is shown in column (A) for comparative purposes. There were 54 incidents reported to police during this period. Please note that for data protection purposes some categories of crime are not included in the above figures.
There were no incidents reported to police for the Stoke Bliss area in the same 30 day period.
There was only 1 incident reported to police for the Pensax area during the 30 day period. This was an incident of anti-social behaviour.
There were 3 incidents reported in the Little Witley area over the 30 day period. 1 incident of Highway Disruption and 2 road traffic collisions that involved damage only.

There were 2 incidents reported in Abberley over the 30 day period. 1 incident of 'Unlisted Crime' and 1 involving a missing person.

PCSO Lee Durrant is leaving and his duties are being incorporated into the work of P.C. Abigail Partridge

f) WCC County Councillor Report – Cllr. Justin Bowen

Worcestershire County Council Matters

This financial year has been perhaps the most challenging that Worcestershire County Council has ever faced. With a debt of more than £600 million, a budget deficit of nearly £50 million, and just 2 weeks of emergency reserves remaining, the Council was on the bring of a S.114 notice, the Local Authority equivalent of bankruptcy.
This led to drastic measures being needed, one of which was to increase Council Tax by 8.98% for 2026/27.

However, alongside this, work has been going on to address some of the structural problems that had led to this situation.

In the directorate for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, transformation has taken place to address the £60+ million bill being paid every year to private companies to look after Worcestershire children in care. Following investment in our Worcestershire Fostering service, alongside a complete restructuring of how the service functions, we've managed to increase the number of our own foster carers by nearly 20%, bucking the national trend of decline and going a long way to reversing a fall of 40% over the previous 5 years. This has helped us save more than £12 million in placement costs, up by 30% on the previous year. Similar changes are coming to both Adult Social Care and Highways over the coming months, as part of a full Transformation Plan for the Council. More details of this will be announced soon.

With the government also due to announce its decision for Worcestershire under Local Government Reorganisation, the year ahead is likely to be the most important one for our county for decades.

Tenbury Division Matters
This year has again been dominated by flooding, roads and community matters.

Flooding
In October, I attended and addressed the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee meeting where £1.8 million was put back into the programme budget for the Tenbury Wells Property Flood Resilience scheme. This was a huge relief, but of course the

work now continues to get the scheme implemented. That is the challenge for the months ahead.
I've also been working with the coordinators of the Tenbury Wells Flood Warden Scheme which will be launched soon. This scheme will be another crucial part of flood defence and will show how our community is doing everything we can to protect ourselves – particularly important when it comes to seeking funding in future. To support this, I've connected the coordinators with officers in Highways so that the scheme joins up with County Council flood planning. This is a big step in making sure flood response runs smoothly. I'll also be seeking funding for protective equipment for the scheme's volunteers. More news on this in the months ahead.

Roads
Speeding traffic remains a major problem on many of our roads. Alongside this, speed limits are often felt to be inappropriate for rural roads. Some progress has been made in specific areas, including funding for new Vehicle Activated Signs in places such as Pensax and Great Witley, alongside improved signage in places such as Abberley.

However, the issue remains that County Council policy is driven purely by data, with no consideration of impact on quality of life. In rural areas we often don't have sufficient data to support changes, and this is something I've been trying to address since my election last May.

So, I'm happy to say that that I've now secured agreement from the new Cabinet Member for Highways that there will be a comprehensive review of policy. I have also secured support from Councillors from other rural areas across Worcestershire. My aim for this year is that we will finally achieve the objective that our community will have a much bigger say on the speed limits on our roads. I will provide updates on this as it progresses.

Potholes have continued to plague our area, although as a community we've made significant progress in getting Highways to act by reporting them. More than 50 reports have been placed on the Worcestershire Portal for both potholes and blocked drains, and where residents have shared their reports we've been able to get Highways to act. We need to continue this proactive approach.
In February, I spoke at the full County Council meeting in favour of £1 million being ringfenced for rural road maintenance and improvements and was delighted that it was agreed for this year. It's the first time I can recall money being specifically set aside for rural roads, although now the task is to ensure we get our share!

Community
This year, I've allocated nearly £10,000 for local projects and organisations, including The Regal Theatre, Tenbury Scout & Guides Group, Teme Valley Wildlife, Stoke

Bliss Defibrilator, Great Witley Parish Council, The Shelsleys Village Hall, Tenbury Christmas Lights, Tenbury Primary School and We Are Men United.
Alongside this, I've worked with Worcestershire's Public Health team to secure more than £20,000 to local Health & Well-being projects, including at Tenbury Community Pool, Kyre Riding for the Disabled and Tenbury United Youth Football, amongst many other projects.

Finally, in March and after conversations with local traders, I launched my campaign "Its Time for Free Parking in Tenbury Wells".
I know from when I had my own business that removing barriers to visitors spending time in a town is one of the most important ways of increasing footfall and spending. There are many factors that affect this, but it can be summarised as marketing, parking and signage.

I have therefore written to the leader of Malvern Hills District Council to make the case that Tenbury Wells deserves special treatment when it comes to free parking and requesting that MHDC Teme Street car park is made free at least until September.

Alongside this I have raised with Worcestershire County Council that the waiting time on Teme Street and Market Street be increased from 45 minutes to 90 minutes – providing a balance between allowing longer stays with not clogging up parking. This has been provisionally approved, and consultation will now take place ahead of implementing a new Traffic Regulation Order.

Together, I think these measures can help provide a desperately needed boost to trade in the town.

There are many challenges facing our rural community, but I believe that over this last year we have made a start in addressing them. I look forward to continuing that work over the year ahead.

g) Malvern Hills District Council (Cllr. Paul Cumming & Cllr. Pam Cumming)

We have provided over £5m for community infrastructure improvements, including new facilities at Malvern Town Football Club, Upton Rugby Club and the Tunnel Hill Centre. We have invested heavily in virtually every Ward in MHDC to improve community and sports facilities.
We have invested over £1m in local businesses, enabling them to invest in growing their business, but fund matching on infrastructure investment. This has included things such as improving shop fronts, investing in kitchens, etc. There is another £500k available for the next financial year.

We are investing in our Communities, with a further £1m allocated including provision for Mental Health, Community hubs, and a grant of £160k for Community Action, securing their funding for the next four years after MHDC has gone. Community Action provide essential travel for old and less able people, and in our rural community this is critical. Our funding secures this service.
We are investing in our refuse collection service, which is the best in the County. To do this, we bought a building next to our depot to allow the service to expand, meaning we are the first in the County to be able to start collecting Food Waste.
We have finally implemented the SWDP, which protects our countryside from un-scheduled development. This includes ensuring our rules exist long after MHDC is dissolved.
Introduced a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy with a focus on prevention.
Enabled, and then took over the new Worcestershire sports park at Lower Broadheath which includes football pitches, basketball and tennis courts, a new sports hall and country and nature facilities including a skateboard area.
And this was all done with no increase to Council Tax.

Meeting closed at 8:24pm