



Present: (Chair) Cllr. Libby Tassell; Cllr. Eberlin; Cllr. S. Field, Cllr. J. Ballard attended from 20:32 Minute 1023, Cllr. M. Birchall; Cllr. Morey was co-opted from minute reference 1020 (co-option of Councillor)
In Attendance: Carole Hirst - The Clerk; Cllr. Justin Bowen WCC County Councillor; 2 members of the public.

Minute Reference	
1014	To Note Apologies: Cllr. A. Juckes, Cllr. F. Doyle, Absent: Cllr. G Crompton; Cllr. Paul Cumming (MHDC Councillor); Cllr. Pam Cumming, (MHDC Councillor)
1015	a. Register of Interest. Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests. NOTED b. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. Cllr. Eberlin disclosed a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in minute 1017 Suffolk Lane Cllr. Eberlin is affected by the flooding as she lives there. c. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. d. Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation- No requests for dispensation requested.
	Democratic Period/ Public Time – No public questions
1016	Approval of the Minutes. To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting of Abberley Parish Council held on the 15th July 2026. Cllr. Eberlin Proposed and Cllr. Tassell Seconded that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on the 15th July 2026 be approved. All in favour.
1017	Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. - To appoint Councillor as Lengthsman Co-ordinator –Cllr. Ballard agreed to be the Lengthsman Co-ordinator for 2026/27. - To appoint a second Councillor as Police and Speeding issues Co-ordinator – 1 appointed in July. Cllr. Doyle agreed to be appointed. Proposed by Cllr. Eberlin and Seconded by Cllr. Field. All in favour. - Suffolk Lane, Clows Top Road and the Common, Flooding update. Suffolk Lane – awaiting a response from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) regarding any further mitigation measures that could be implemented. Clows top Road – some drains have been cleared other not. Cllr. Birchall agreed to report via the WCC portal. The Common, Abberley – flood damage to road still to be repaired, awaiting a further update from WCC. - Speeding on the Stockton Road and Clows Top Road- update. WCC have produced the results of the speed survey recently conducted. WCC were recommending that the next steps for the PC would be to consider 12 roundels identified on a plan. Under



	finance item later in the PC meeting Councillors are being asked to discuss next steps and the finance for this.																																																																																												
1018	Cllr. Bowen WCC Report: Report attached as Appendix 1. Cllr. Cumming MHDC – no report received.																																																																																												
1019	FINANCE a) To consider Receipts, Payments from 16th July to 16th September 2026 <table><tr><td><u>Payments list September 16th 2026</u></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Abberley Village Green Trust £400 grant</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 400.00</td></tr><tr><td>Abberley PCC £600 Grant</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 600.00</td></tr><tr><td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 100.00</td></tr><tr><td>In2Out - Lengthsman July</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 229.50</td></tr><tr><td>PKF Littlejohn LLP - External Audit</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 378.00</td></tr><tr><td>C Hirst Aug pay</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 757.67</td></tr><tr><td>HMRC - Aug tax and employer nic</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 268.68</td></tr><tr><td>WEL MEDICAL Defib pads Manor Arms</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 86.28</td></tr><tr><td>IN2OUT AUG 26 LENGTHSMAN AND PARTS FOR INSTALL VAS</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 260.43</td></tr><tr><td>WEL MEDICAL Defib pads Manor Arms</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 86.28</td></tr><tr><td>Abberley Village Hall - July Meeting hire</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 17.00</td></tr><tr><td>Wel Medical credit notes</td><td></td><td></td><td>-£ 14.34</td></tr><tr><td>Clerk Expenses 2 months to 16th September</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 75.60</td></tr><tr><td>Clerk Pay Sept with back pay for calc rise backdated to April 1st</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 906.69</td></tr><tr><td>HMRC deductions includes employer nic</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 334.04</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td><u>£ 4,485.83</u></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><u>RECEIPTS upto 16th Sept 26 not previously reported</u></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>WCC Lengthsman June</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 182.75</td></tr><tr><td>WCC Lengthsman July</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 229.50</td></tr><tr><td>WCC Lengthsman Aug</td><td></td><td></td><td>£ 229.50</td></tr><tr><td><u>TOTAL RECEIPTS</u></td><td></td><td></td><td><u>£ 641.75</u></td></tr></table> Cllr. Tassell Proposed and Cllr. Field Seconded that the Payments to 16th September 2026 be approved. All in favour. b) note the Bank Reconciliation on 1st September 2026. Noted. APPENDIX 2. c) To note the Budget update report to 1st September 2026. Noted	<u>Payments list September 16th 2026</u>				Abberley Village Green Trust £400 grant			£ 400.00	Abberley PCC £600 Grant			£ 600.00	Citizens Advice Bureau			£ 100.00	In2Out - Lengthsman July			£ 229.50	PKF Littlejohn LLP - External Audit			£ 378.00	C Hirst Aug pay			£ 757.67	HMRC - Aug tax and employer nic			£ 268.68	WEL MEDICAL Defib pads Manor Arms			£ 86.28	IN2OUT AUG 26 LENGTHSMAN AND PARTS FOR INSTALL VAS			£ 260.43	WEL MEDICAL Defib pads Manor Arms			£ 86.28	Abberley Village Hall - July Meeting hire			£ 17.00	Wel Medical credit notes			-£ 14.34	Clerk Expenses 2 months to 16th September			£ 75.60	Clerk Pay Sept with back pay for calc rise backdated to April 1st			£ 906.69	HMRC deductions includes employer nic			£ 334.04				<u>£ 4,485.83</u>					<u>RECEIPTS upto 16th Sept 26 not previously reported</u>				WCC Lengthsman June			£ 182.75	WCC Lengthsman July			£ 229.50	WCC Lengthsman Aug			£ 229.50	<u>TOTAL RECEIPTS</u>			<u>£ 641.75</u>
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	d) To note that the CALC National pay increase for 2026/27 has been awarded which is backdated to April 1st, 2026. The clerk pay grade is SCP 27 and this rate has increased from £19.81 to £20.46. Noted e) To discuss the feedback from the WCC speed survey and next steps. Councillors decided that a new VAS sign would be a valuable investment for the Clows Top Road. A budget of £3000 was Proposed by Cllr. Tassell and Seconded by Cllr. Field. All in favour. f) To discuss quotes for the Neighbourhood Plan in readiness for the MHDC funding application for the plan. Cllr. Birchall Proposed and Cllr. Tassell Seconded that the quote from David Nicholson for £8475 be approved subject to a successful application to MHDC for the funding of this. David Nicholson has considerable local knowledge and expertise in this area and he was responsible for the “Making” of the previous NDP for Abberley Parish Council. All in favour. g) To clarify the £450 grant from Abberley Parish Council to Abberley Village Hall towards Car Park works. Correspondence was received on Tuesday 8th September to clarify that Abberley Village Hall will use the £450 granted in 2025/26 towards the cost of the car park works with the Village Hall paying the balance of the payment and the work will be undertaken during October half term. Noted.
1020	To consider co-option candidates to co-opt onto the Parish Council. Malcolm Macbeth and Ryan Morey applied to be considered for co-option. Cllr. Tassell Proposed and Cllr. Field Seconded that Ryan Morey be co-opted onto the Parish Council. All in favour. Cllr. Tassell thanked both applicants for taking the time to apply. Cllr. Morey signed the Acceptance of Office Form and joined the meeting as Councillor.
1021	PLANNING • M/25/00275/LB – Jaylands, The Village, Abberley- To replace the existing dormer windows on the third floor with traditional solid wood rebated windows, solid integrated slimline glazing bars and 12mm slimline glazing. To make all repairs as necessary to the dormer structures – APPROVED. • M/26/01219/FUL Wind Ward, Reynolds Lane, Abberley- Removal of agricultural occupancy condition 2 on planning permission MR 231/67 - agricultural bungalow- CONSULTATION to 29th September 26 This is a second time of applying for the removal of the agricultural tie on this property. No comments have been brought to my attention with regards to this application so far. • M/24/00321/CCO - Residential development of 25 dwellings, including 10 affordable units, with public open space, a vehicular and pedestrian access point and associated landscaping (ref: M/22/00642/RM). Discharge of Condition 15 (highway improvements/ offsite works/ site access works). Parishioner would welcome the councillors support in ensuring planning conditions are adhered to. Cllr. Field was asked to look into this on 31st August.



	An email has been sent to planning enforcement from the parish council asking them to review the planning application in line with the current state of the development itself. We hope for a response from them soon. Cllr. Field reported that she was standing down from the Planning Working Group due to outside commitments and family restraints with effect immediately. Cllr. Tassell Proposed that Cllr. Eberlin take over as Chair of Planning Working Group and Cllr. Morey be appointed to the Planning Working Group. Seconded by Cllr. Birchall. All in favour.
1022	Apostles Meadow Working Group – (Report from Cllr. Eberlin) The meadow has been cut earlier than planned so we will re-sow yellow rattle in the autumn and wildflower seeds again in the spring to start to establish a wildflower meadow. We hope that some of the seeds will be in the soil – the meadow cut will have reduced the spread of thistles though. There was very little ragwort to be seen. The aim is to increase the biodiversity in the meadow and provide paths for people to enjoy the space. The meadow has survived the drought but the blackthorn look dead. There are also 4 or 5 dead lime trees in the long hedgerow that have not survived the two long hot summers. The oaks have survived, the other whips are growing and the Ecotone planted shrubby areas are all growing well. The hedge is overgrown and needs a tidy up to allow replanting and for light to reach the young whips. We plan to do this using a contractor and include spreading existing and new woodchip. Tasks for the autumn include: • Strim hedgerows and mulch. • Purchase replacement trees x 5 and replace dead blackthorn. • Mulch Ecotone trees • Buy picnic and /or benches to enjoy the view • Sow yellow rattle in autumn • Seek proposals for naturalistic play equipment. To include land drainage proposal. • Apostle's meadow sign and information sign. Good dog behaviour sign. • Check woodland paths and tree health. • Liaise with the coppicing team for next steps during the winter We will be reviewing the finances for the maintenance of the meadow at the Finance Committee as we have a commitment to ensure that we spend the Section 106 funding in the designated time. Cathie to organise a budget meeting for Apostle's Meadow plans. Three quotes have been sought for meadow tasks which have now been received.: • George Crump • Greenaways • Phil Nott



1023

Neighbourhood Development Plan – Progress Report - Cllr. Birchall

Background

The current Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was “made” (formally adopted) on 20th July 2021 with a stated validity to 2030.

Although the Abberley NDP is still within the stated validity period, the associated South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) was revised on 26th March 2026, and an updated National Planning Framework was published in August 2026.

Furthermore, areas previously earmarked for development in the NDP have now been (or are in the process of being) developed.

Accordingly, the current NDP requires updating to:

- i) incorporate local changes since last NDP was made;
- ii) ensure consistency with the revised SWDP;
- iii) extend the validity to match that of the SWDP (2041);
- iv) ensure compliance with the revised National Planning Framework.

Although the intention is for much of the work to be undertaken by a voluntary Working Group, it is considered that expert planning assistance will be required to amend the NDP, particularly with respect to above requirements (ii) and (iv) above.

Malvern Hills District Council offer some technical advice and (currently) financial assistance of up to £10K with NDP revision process. Accordingly, Mr Andrew Ford of MHDC has been contacted by phone and email. Concurrently, an “Expression of Wish for Assistance” and application for a grant of £10K were submitted.

Mr. Ford outlined the process in general terms, and provided contact details for 3 Planning Consultants who he considered could assist us with the revision of the NDP.

Planning Consultant Search

Email contact was initially made with the three contacts provided by Mr. Ford. Two declined the appointment due to work commitments.

Initially, there was no response from the third.

Given the lack of success to that point, an internet search for planning consultants was undertaken, and several were contacted by email.

Only, a single positive response was received, from a Mr Ashley Davies of Ashcott International, Cannock.

After various telephone conversations and emails, Ashcott were asked to provide a fixed fee quote to conduct NDP revision and Review, Community Survey, and Housing Needs Survey.

Ashcott duly provided a quote of ~£4.8K on 14th May 2026.

Subsequently, contact was made on the 22nd May 2026 with the 3rd contact suggested by Mr. Ford. This was from Dr David Nicholson, who was the Consultant used for the 2020 Abberley NDP. Following an informal meeting on the 6th August 2026 with the



NDP Working Group (see below), Dr Nicholson submitted a comprehensive fee proposal of ~£8.5K on the 12th August 2026.

Further details of the correspondence with the consultants and the quotes received are provided in the report provided to the Finance Committee.

NDP Working Group

The following persons have currently volunteered to form the NDP working group:

Mike Birchall	APC and Abberley Resident
Libby Tassell	APC and Abberley Resident
Francis Doyle	APC and Abberley Resident
Catherine Knight	Former Abberley Parish Councillor and Abberley Resident
Marion Evans	Abberley Resident

A preliminary meeting between the first 4 members of the Working Group and Dr Nicholson was undertaken on the 5th August. In that meeting, Dr Nicholson suggested that the best approach would be to jointly go through the current NDP line by line, identifying the areas that needed modifying. I agree with him that this would be a sensible strategy if we are to proceed.

Next Steps

Before any further progress can be made, decisions need to be taken by the Parish Council, as follows:

- i) Is the intention to proceed with the appointment of a consultant dependent upon receipt of the grant?
- ii) Subject to decisions from (i), which consultant to appoint?

My personal view is that it is likely that a grant application will be approved. If so, as both quotes are within the £10K grant limit, then in so far as Parish Finances are concerned, consultants can be judged primarily on their suitability for the task.

In this regard, given Dr Nicholson's past experience with the Abberley NDP (and indeed on working with MHDC), it would appear sensible to appoint him as a "known entity". The correspondence with him (and in particular his "Fee Proposal") indicates he is fully aware of the processes required to successfully amend the NDP in line with procedural requirements.

Although Ashcott's quote is considerably cheaper than Dr Nicholson's, correspondence with Mr Davies does not suggest he has as thorough an understanding of the process.

Mr. Ford of MHDC has confirmed that he has worked on NDP submissions from Dr Nicholson on many occasions but has no similar experience with Mr. Davies.

My preference therefore would be to appoint Dr. Nicholson, subject to agreement from the Parish Council.

SEE MINUTE 1019 (f) David Nicholson quote was approved.



1024	To discuss an enquiry regarding an extra defibrillator for the Stockton Roadside of the parish. Cllr. Tassell outlined discussions that had been undertaken regarding the potential siting of a new defibrillator next to the Parish Noticeboard, outside Abberley Post Office on the Stockton Road, Abberley. The Clerk had ascertained that a defibrillator could be purchased that did not require electricity by obtaining a casing that was designed with insulation against the weather. Councillors asked the Clerk to obtain further information and quotes for the defibrillator, posts, backplates and clips etc and report back to Councillors.
1025	Worcestershire County Council 'report it portal'. A reminder on how to use the WCC Portal to report road / path issues. Including; Drainage and flooding, grit bins, manhole covers, spillages, overgrown/fallen trees and shrubbery and other road / footway issues. Cllr. L. Tassell gave an overview on how to make reports onto the WCC Report It website and what sort of reports are taken on this website.
1026	Dates for Parish Council meetings for 2027 at Abberley Village Hall. Wednesday 20th January 2027 – 7.30pm Wednesday 17th March 2027 – 7.30pm Wednesday 19th May 2027 – 7pm (AGM and Annual Parish Meeting) Wednesday 21st July 2027 – 7.30pm Wednesday 15th September 2027 – 7.30pm Wednesday 17th November 2027 – 7.30pm
1027	Councillors reports and items for future agendas. None were requested
1028	Date of Next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on 18th November 2026, at 7.30pm at Abberley Village Hall. (Budget and Precept setting meeting).

The Meeting closed at 20:54 pm

Appendix 1 Cllr. Justin Bowen WCC Report.

Worcestershire County Council Matters

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has announced that it is “pausing” LGR in Worcestershire pending a “review” after it received legal advice following applications for Judicial Review from a number of local authorities. The legal advice, and the review, is likely to centre around whether the government followed its own criteria in deciding on which LGR proposal to accept. In Worcestershire, the North & South Worcestershire option that the government decided to follow did not meet its original criteria. Therefore, it is doubtful that the review will result in that option being pursued.



Farming and Food Procurement Policy

Our farmers are facing unprecedented challenges from increasingly higher costs and tight margins, and as such I believe there is a responsibility on Worcestershire County Council to do what it can to help.

I submitted a motion for farming to full County Council on September 10th for every Worcestershire County Council school, wherever possible under existing procurement practice, to source food it serves from local farmers and local producers. The same would apply to any catering services commissioned by the Council.

Unfortunately, Council chose to amend the motion in a number of ways which changed the objective and timescale of key elements. It replaced the objective of ensuring food served in Worcestershire schools is sourced locally with an approach of “signposting” schools. It changed an instruction to officers to engage with supply chain stakeholders to “encourage engagement”. Finally, it removed the requirement of officers to report back on progress and barriers faced within 3 months to simply reporting back “when practical”.

I will continue to press for action on this at future meetings.

Speeding Policy

Following work, I began last year, and liaising with Councillors from all parties, progress is being made on changing County Council policy on speed limits. Although there is still work to be done, I remain hopeful that we will reach a point where decisions on speed limits will include local people and councillors, whether that be parish, town or county councillors.

Tenbury Division Matters

Rochford Landslip

Highways have confirmed that previously I was given incorrect information on how the project was progressing, and that assurances on work having been completed weren't accurate. The landslip is now being managed by Worcestershire County Council's Major Projects Team, which has promised much tighter control over the project and significantly improved communication.

I have now been assured that the landslip now has a renewed focus, with topographical surveys and geotechnical surveys being completed, which will be followed shortly by Design Teams working on solutions to have the landslip repaired.

I have also been informed that on 24th September, a paper will be presented to Cabinet requesting funding.

I will be attending that meeting and asking questions on progress across the board.

Tenbury Property Flood Resilience Scheme

I contacted the Environment Agency about concerns raised by residents and businesses regarding the Property Flood Gates that would be installed. The industry standard height is 600mm, which for some properties would not be sufficient to offer flood protection. I have been assured that wherever



possible and where needed, 900mm gates would be installed. The only exceptions will be on some older properties where 900mm gates are not suitable. In those circumstances, alternative solutions will be explored.

Collaborative Working

After liaising with Burford Parish Council, Shropshire to secure joint funding, I have had agreement from Highways that Teme Bridge in Tenbury Wells will be cleaned in September. This is an excellent example of how collaborative working can get things done, even when it crosses county boundaries.

Similarly, cooperation with our parish councils, including Pensax, Abberley, Great Witley and others has resulted in a number of improvements going ahead, including new Vehicle Activated Signs, road repairs and drainage issues being resolved.

Additionally, by working closely with Malvern Hills District Councillor Duane Hubbard, progress has been made and outcomes improved on a number of issues over recent months, including flood management and on roadworks.

I look forward to other councils and councillors adopting a similar approach of working together to achieve results for our community.



Appendix 2 Bank Reconciliation 31st August 2026

Date	31/08/2026	RECONCILIATION			
TRANSACTIONS					
Balance brought forward			£	86,993.64	
Add total receipts to date				£15,668.75	
				£102,662.39	
Less total payments to date				£16,403.10	
Balance available					£86,259.29
BANK					
Total of bank balance	31-Aug-26		£22,541.14	Community Account (current)	
				COMMUNITY	
				INSTANT	
				ACCESS	
				ACCOUNT	
				(Deposit	
				Account)	
	22/6/26		£14,247.26		
			£50,000.00		
	NIC		£268.68		
	Lengthsman invoice not get left the		£260.43		
	account				
Closing balance			£ 86,259.29		Difference £0.00
Statement					
ALLOCATED FUNDS					
Events Budget		Left in budget			
Section 106 land purchase includes the 30% NN Spend Oct to Dec £1801.25 is 30% match funding NEW NN				30% of natural network expenditure from this budget as match funding	
	£ 12,652.02				
Parishioner Donation towards Apostles Field	£ 100.00				
King's Coronation Fund £7136	£ 1,232.16				
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 189.00				
GRANT FUNDING for General S137	£6,271.52				
NEW Natural Network Fund SPEND £4964.03	£0.00			GRANT TO COME IN FROM NN AND GO BACK INTO GENERAL	
Community Infrastructure Levy x 3 sch	£47,259.69				
Total Allocated	£ 67,704.39				
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS			(A)	£ 67,704.39	
UNALLOCATED FUNDS			(B)	£18,554.90	
TOTAL FUNDS AT THE BANK			(A + B)	£ 86,259.29	