ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of meeting of Almeley Parish Council held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 7 p.m. at Almeley Village Hall, Almeley, Herefordshire.

PRESENT: Councillor Jon Argent (Chairman) and Councillors Andrew Cross, Vanessa Faulkner, Michael Handley, Colin Powell, Rose Proctor and Martin Skyrme.

IN ATTENDANCE:
Councillor Robert Highfield (Herefordshire, Castle Ward)
Six members of the public.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation

None.

3. Minutes

The Council received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2025. Members had no disagreements with the text but no resolution was agreed to sign the minutes.

4. Open Session

A member of the public reported a broken drain cover. Councillor highfield said he would follow this up with Balfour Beatty.

A member of the public asked about the clearing of gullies from the school to the church.

A member of the public asked whether the Lengthsman was clearing grips.

5. Finance

The Council noted the February bank balance and finance report, and the updated budget spreadsheet (previously circulated, now attached to the minutes).

The Council noted the following payments made under Clerks Delegated Authority (Finance Regulations item 5.5):

Clerks salary for January and February 2025
Paul Wragg (cleaning of notice boards) £30.00
HMRC P32 December £101.10
Pro-Fit Energy £9303.75
Pro-Fit Energy £3101.25
Stanton King (Roof survey) £1140.00
Steve Wragg (welding rods) £20.00
HMRC P32 January £101.10

The Council **RESOLVED** that the following payments be made:

Clerks salary for March 2025
Clerks expenses (previously circulated)
D C Gardening Services – Inv SI-2124 £60.00 (Schedule of works previously circulated)
D C Gardening Services – Inv SI-2123 £2400.00 (drainage grant)
AWQM – Hire of Prichard Room - £45.00
Almeley Village Hall – Inv 280 – Hall hire for 2025 - £138.00

6. Planning

6a. P250547/FH – Full Householder. Church House, Almeley HR3 6LD. Reinstatement of window on frontage elevation, removal of redundant chimney, replacement render and associated works for thermal upgrade of the property, addition of ASHP and solar PV panels on outhouse to the rear of the property

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to support this application on the grounds that it is in conformity with the Neighbourhood Development Plan

6b. 250619/K – Works to trees in a conservation area. Malt House, Almeley HR3 6PY. Proposed removal of Silver Poplar tree, which is dropping branches, roots are problematic and tree should not be so close to a building.

After discussion the it was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

7. Parish Maintenance

The Council considered lengthsman tenders for 2025/26. It was reported that only one tender had been received. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that DC Gardening would be appointed to undertake the mowing element only at a cost of £300 plus VAT monthly and that remaining issues be considered at a future meeting.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that Councillors Handley and Skyrme review the location of the Safer Parish signed, and report to a future meeting.

8. Environment

The Council received a report from the Environmental Working Group including progress on the solar project. After discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

(a) to thank the Working Group for a comprehensive report noting in particular that the PV array on the AVH roof was already having a positive impact on utility use; and

(b) that the Council's 2025/26 budget should include: £100 for additional sandbags, £200 for a solar communication panel, and £200 for biodiversity works.

9. Highways and Footpaths

Councillor Faulkner reported meetings with residents who had responded to the request for new Public Footpath Officers and introduced John Burgess, Juliet Burgess, Andrew Leach and Carol Leach.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint John Burgess, Juliet Burgess, Andrew Leach and Carol Leach. as Public Footpath Officers until Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

10. Community Plan Working Group

The Chairman reported that good progress was being made on the Community Plan: A Parish Council organised community litter pick would be taking place on 29th March 2025 and councillors were encouraged to attend and support. Equipment and hi-vis tabards had been provided by Herefordshire Council, and an assessment of risks undertaken. The first maker's market would be held at the Village Hall on 19th April 2025. The working group were seeking additional quotes for the proposed play area behind the village hall, and a further meeting was being arranged with Herefordshire Council's funding officer, with a view to finding grant opportunities. A report would be made to a future meeting.

The Chairman also reported a report from the Green Group (circulated before the meeting)

11. Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED** to consider amending Standing Orders to allow secret ballots before decisions on co-options as part of the review of Standing Orders at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May 2025.

12. Composition of the Council

Councillor Faulkner reported that it was her intention to the resign from the Council after the annual meeting in May 2025.

13. Clerk Recruitment

The Chairman reported that he and Councillor Faulkner had met with Herefordshire Association of Local Council's Chief Executive Lynda Wilcox to interview an applicant for the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

The meeting closed at 9 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date: _____