# ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a meeting of Almeley Parish Council held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7.15 p.m. at Almeley Village Hall, Almeley, Herefordshire.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Michael Handley (Chairman) and Councillors Andy Cross and Colin Powell.

**In attendance:** David Thame (Clerk)
Councillor Robert Highfield (Herefordshire, Castle Ward)
Four members of the public.

**2025/75. To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Edwards, Hughes, Proctor and Skyrme.

**2025/76. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor Powell declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 2025/79.

**2025/77. Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the the meeting of the Council held on 19th November 2025 (copies previously circulated), and that they be signed by the Chairman accordingly.

**2025/78. Public Session**

Councillor Highfield reported the imminent surface dressing of several parish roads. The process, which involved filling potholes, had an expected life space of 8-10 years.

M Group had been appointed to replace Balfour Beatty Living Places as Herefordshire Council's public realm contractor from 1st June 2026.

The government had confirmed Herefordshire's grant allocation for the coming three year period: it was likely to impose significant pressure on spending. The lengthsman grant, local drainage fund and public rights of way fund had been preserved for the 2026-27 financial year, by utilising reserves, but would end from April 2027, and the Parish Council should plan accordingly.

Councillor Cross asked Councillor Highfield about the introduction of home-sorted recycling collections in Herefordshire. Councillor Highfield said he understood that the proposal was no longer proceeding.

A member of the public drew attention to a forthcoming litter pick in the village and asked for this to be advertised on the Council website, and for a contribution to the cost of hi-vis vests for litter pickers and for help with refreshments at the village hall. The Chairman indicated this would be added to the agenda for the meeting on 18th March 2026.

The Clerk reported that the safer neighbourhood team at West Mercia Police had indicated no crimes in the previous three months.

A member of the public drew attention to an event to celebrate the completion of restoration works at Mere Common to be held on 19th April 2026 at 1 p.m.

Councillor Cross raised concerns about light pollution from Eardisley Industrial Estate.

**2025/79. Planning Consultation - 253588 - Station Farm, C1079 From Questmoor Farm To Meadows Farm Via Almeley, Almeley, Herefordshire, HR3 6LJ**

The Clerk reported that, following Councillor Powell's declaration of interest (Minute 2025/76), the meeting would be inquorate if the Council proceeded to consider a response to the planning consultation for the demolition of agricultural buildings and erection of four new-build dwellings (in lieu of the existing Class Q permission) and associated works, and the Council moved on to next business.

**2025/80. Lengthsman**

The Council considered the work of the lengthsmen (GWG Tree & Garden Services) and the grass/mowing contractor (DC Gardening Services), including a report on progress of the Local Drainage Fund, where a sum of £1,565.83 has been awarded by Herefordshire Council. After discussion it was RESOLVED: That

(a) Herefordshire Council be invited to unblock the pipes providing drainage on the C1079, having become blocked with road chippings;

(b) the Local Drainage Fund be allocated to resolving drainage issues on the Eardisley Road U90418 from its junction with the C1079 to the parish boundary.

(c) with respect to contractors pricing for grass-cutting in 2026-27, the invitation should specify cuts on a monthly, rather than the current fortnightly basis, except at the war memorial;

(d) the Lengthsman be instructed to sand and re-coat with preserver the benches at Almeley Wootton, Woonton and Almeley, and to provide a price to cleaning and repainting the railings at the war memorial, and addressing the supporting brickwork; and

(e) that drainage problems adjacent to 'Crispin' on the A480 be referred to Councillor Highfield.

**2025/81. Footpaths**

The Council considered public rights of way, including AM6, AM7, AM8/9, and a bid for Herefordshire funding to improve access at AM10 (The Batch). After discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That,

(a) the replacement of stiles on AM9/AM8 around the Nieuport Estate is being resolved through the Herefordshire Public Rights of Way Team;

(b) that Herefordshire will supply replacement stiles and handrails for two locations on AM7, and that either the PROs or Lengthsman will install, as appropriate;

(c) that replacing steps at two locations on AM7 will be resolved by the Lengthsman;

(d) that the Parish Rights of Way Officers be authorised to complete works to replace a stile on AM6, following instructions from the Herefordshire PRO Inspector, and that they adhere to the relevant risk assessment (see below);

(e) that a Parish Council account at Kington Building Supplies be opened to enable the Parish Rights of Way Officers to secure necessary supplies; and

(f) that the Clerk's risk assessment for works on public footpaths (circulated at the meeting) be approved.

Councillor Cross reported to way-marking finger posts which needed clearing or replanting. the Clerk would instruct the Lengthsman accordingly.

**2025/82. Parish Policing Priorities**

At the request of the Kington Safer Neighbourhood Team the Council considered parish policing priorities. It was **RESOLVED** that priorities for this quarter should be enforcing the rules of mobile phone use whilst driving, and hare coursing after summer disturbances at Logaston.

**2025/83. Election Expenses**

The Council considered the response to the Council's dispute regarding PV46 Herefordshire Council (By-election) £4157.86. A balance of £1,657.86 is outstanding. The Elections Office have yet to respond: the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils indicated its support for Almeley's action.

**2025/84. Finance**

The Council considered the Clerk's Financial Report and cash book (report attached), showing that at 31 December 2025 the current account balance was £2180.11 and the deposit account balance £25333.33. The Council considered budget monitoring and reserves.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| PV67 GWG Tree & Garden Care (drainage to Kinnersley boundary) | £110.40 |
| PV68 Almeley Village Hall | £108.00 |
| PV69 GWG Tree & Garden Care (drains and grips in village) | £220.80 |
| PV70 GWG Tree & Garden Care (new grips, clearing drains and pipes) | £220.80 |
| PV72 Salary tax month 10 | £502.81 |

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm payment of the following invoices settled under Financial

Regulations or existing delegated powers:

| | |
|---|---|
| PV63 Autela Payroll Services | £87.00 |
| PV64 Storage boxes for archives | £22.00 |
| PV65 Salary tax month 9 | £668.01 |

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payments due to be made by direct debit 22 January 2026:

| | |
|---|---|
| PV59 HMRC Tax month 8 | £113.14* |
| PV66 HMRC Tax month 9 | £229.70 |

*this is a balancing sum, previous credits had already paid £29.86 of an original £143.00 P32 demand

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the following payments due to be made by direct debit:

| | |
|---|---|
| PV71 HMRC Tax month 10 | £157.31 |

**2025/85. Speed Indicator Device**

The Council further considered locations for and management of speed indicator devices. It was **RESOLVED** that no action be taken to install a speed indicator device in Almeley; that the future management of the existing location at Almeley Wootton be considered at the next meeting, and that Herefordshire Council be invited to revisit the speed markings installed, following the Council's Police & Crime Commissioner grant, on the A480.

The meeting closed at 8.29 p.m.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signed _____ Date _____