

SELLACK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday 14th July 2026

in Sellack Parish Hall at 7pm

The meeting commenced at 19:10.

Present: Parish Councillors S. Aitken (Chair), M. Robinson, E. Crowe and J. Marshall (Vice Chair).

In attendance: Claire Vaughan (Clerk) and Stephen Rowland (Potential Co-opted Councillor).

Residents: One.

1. APOLOGIES

None received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda and to receive and consider any written requests for dispensation.

None received.

3. Co-option – to consider any applications received for co-option onto the Parish Council

Council noted receipt of one application, from Stephen Rowland. The Chair invited Stephen to speak and following a short introduction and confirmation that all the steps in the Council's Co-option policy had been followed, Councillor Emma Crowe proposed the co-option of Stephen Rowland on to Sellack Parish Council, which was seconded by Cllr John Marshall. Following a unanimous vote, by a show of hands, Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Stephen Rowland as councillor for Sellack Parish Council. Councillor Stephen Rowland signed the Acceptance of Office before the meeting continued.

4. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

- 4.1. **Resident views:** The resident in attendance advised that following the restoration of the QE II coronation bench, they had pro-actively arranged for the other, George VI 1937 bench to be restored and it continued to be stored at their residence, until a suitable location in the parish could be agreed. The Chair expressed the Parish Council's thanks to the resident for arranging for the restoration of the second bench, which the resident had paid for themselves. Council noted the resident's views on the potential siting of both benches and advised that these would be taken into consideration as part of a wider consultation.
- 4.2. **Ward Member Report:** Noted. Council noted the boundary commission proposals, which would place Sellack within Old Gore Ward. The Chair raised the adoption of the Wye Charter and asked that this be added to the forward plan for the September meeting of Council, for further discussion. Council noted that the public realm customer interface had now moved back inhouse, to Herefordshire Council.
- 4.3. **Update from Police Community Support Officer (PCSO):** PCSO David Alexander was not in attendance but advised the Clerk, via email, that there had been no reports made to the Police from the parish area in the last eight weeks. The Chair asked that any future reports of damage to the picnic site be submitted as a police report by the Clerk. The Clerk advised that, following the recent damage to the barrier, the PCSO had advised considering CCTV for the site. This suggestion will be discussed further by the BBPS Working Group, at its next meeting, along with dog waste bins. Council

thanked the local volunteer who had conducted a repair to the barrier, for it to be secured again.

5. To adopt minutes of the Annual Ordinary meeting of Council, held on 12th May 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the Annual ordinary meeting of Council, held on 12th May 2026.

The minutes were then signed by the Chairperson.

6. PARISH COUNCIL ASSETS

- 6.1. **Asset Register Update** – Council **RESOLVED** to appoint key asset leads, as follows, with the leads to review the Clerk's recommendations, following her annual checks, before the next meeting, including to make a recommendation on whether they would replace or remove the asset, if ever required:

- BBPS – Cllr Marshall
- Memorial Trail plaques – Cllr Robinson
- War Memorial – Cllr Aitken
- Benches – Cllr Aitken
- Defibrillator - Clerk

- 6.2. **Backney Bridge Picnic Site (BBPS) Update from Working Group Chair:**

Cllr Marshall advised that two cherry trees had been planted by a volunteer and him, with a plaque now installed. Following Council approval of his quote, the Parish Lengthsman had mown the picnic site and cut back brambles in the spring. The Chair thanked Cllr Marshall and the volunteer group at the picnic site, as the site is looking clean and tidy. Cllr Marshall confirmed that some litterpicking had taken place and the volunteer rota for watering the trees was working well.

- 6.2.1. To discuss and agree next steps for supporting work to increase biodiversity on the neighbouring Backney Common and the role of the Parish Council – Cllr Marshall advised that he had met the commoner/neighbouring tenant. They discussed the broken fencing that currently divides the BBPS footpath from the track. Council **RESOLVED** to task the Chair of the Working Group with finalising a fencing agreement with the commoner and to discuss the future management of Backney Common to protect and enhance its value to wildlife.

Council **RESOLVED** to task the Clerk with speaking to HALC about connecting to other Parish Councils that have taken on stewardship of commonland and establish what process is involved.

- 6.2.2. **BBPS maintenance** - Council **RESOLVED** to approve the summer maintenance top-up quote of £75.00 plus VAT, to mow the path. Council **RESOLVED** to task the Working Group with considering an annual contract requirement for potential tender from 2027 onwards.

- 6.2.3. **Trees** – Council discussed arranging an arboricultural inspection of the trees onsite. Council **RESOLVED** to task the Chair of the Working Group with working up the content and purpose of a survey request and the clerk with putting the request out for quotes.

- 6.2.4. **To agree Volunteer Day date for spring 2027** – Cllr Marshall advised that this would be discussed at the next Working group, with a suggestion to hold one volunteer day per year, moving forward. He advised that the next Working Group meeting was scheduled to take place on 14th September. Council **RESOLVED** to task the Working Group with developing a list of volunteer activities and professional activities.

- 6.3. **Benches** – the Chair took this item alongside Item 6.5 on Information Boards. Council **RESOLVED** to carry out a parish wide consultation on enhancing the memorial trail

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and where to site both the two Information boards and two restored benches. Cllr Crowe agreed to develop the survey.

- 6.4. **Cherry tree** – Following receipt of some resident feedback, following newsletter publication, Council **RESOLVED** to plant the final cherry tree at BBPS and agreed to ask the Parish Lengthsman to quote for planting the final cherry tree at BBPS, alongside the two already planted.
- 6.5. **Information Boards** – see Item 6.3.
- 6.6. Consider any potential risks to Parish Council assets – none noted.

7. PARISH FOOTPATH OFFICER AND LENGTHSMAN UPDATES

7.1. Parish Lengthsman and Drainage Grant Works Updates

7.1.1. To receive an update on application to Herefordshire Council for drainage grant funding in 2026-27 – The Chair advised that Herefordshire Council had given approval for some of the 'new asset' work the Parish Council had applied for but the Parish Council has not yet received a response re: ongoing maintenance work. The Chair advised that the Parish Council was just awaiting advice from HALC before proceeding. Council **RESOLVED** to follow up with the Lengthsman regarding the temporary manhole cover at Sellack Marsh, to check when this would be resolved.

7.2. Parish Footpath Officer Update (Cllr Mark Robinson)

7.2.1. To consider potential works to put forward to Herefordshire Council for PROW grant funding in 2026-27 – Council **RESOLVED** to apply for funding to replace metal waymark posts at four locations in the parish (at Upper Grove) and two metal gates near St Tysilio's Church and along the river towards Hoarwithy. Council **RESOLVED** to task the Parish Footpath Officer with speaking to the landowner to consider submitting an application to make footpath improvements through the woodland, along SK10.

- 7.3. Review any defects to be raised with and receive updates on work requests from Herefordshire Council – None.

8. PARISH COUNCIL EVENTS CALENDAR

- 8.1. Remembrance Event, November – Council **RESOLVED** to confirm this event will take place on Saturday 7th November, and the Clerk was asked to invite the Royal British Legion and request a collection box. A planning document has been drafted and the Clerk will share this with councillors to finalise plans at the September Council meeting.

9. FINANCES

- 9.1. **To consider, approve and sign the revised End of Year 2025-26 Finance Report.** Council **RESOLVED** to approve the revised end of year balance sheet, summary of receipts and payments and bank reconciliation and the Chair and Clerk signed and dated these documents.

- 9.2. **To consider and approve the revised Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year ending 31st March 2026:** The Clerk advised that two unrepresented cheques had not been included within the accounting figures within the AGAR form presented at May Council, therefore revisions had been made and the AGAR was being brought back to Council for approval.

- 9.2.1. **To receive and note the full internal audit report for 2025-26 plus to consider any recommendations made.**

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor was aware of the revisions made to the AGAR and had advised that their original report and recommendations remained the same. Council noted receipt of the full report and remained

content with the decisions made regarding the auditor's recommendations, at the May Council meeting.

9.2.2. **To consider, approve and sign the revised Annual Return Governance Statement – Section 1**

The Clerk advised that, due to revisions being made to the AGAR, the Council had not been able to arrange a quorate meeting in June and had therefore missed the statutory deadline for the exercise of public rights and, the Clerk had ticked 'No' to Assertion 1 of Section 1. She added that the Council would be required to carry out a limited assurance review at the end of this current financial year and would be required to tick 'No' to Assertion 4 in the 2026/27 AGAR.

The rest of the internal controls set out within the Governance Statement were considered and it was agreed that all statements had been put in place and achieved for the past year, except for Assertion 1, due to reasons stated. Council **RESOLVED** to approve Section 1 of the AGAR, which was then signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

9.2.3. **To consider, approve and sign the revised Annual Return Accounting Statement – Section 2.**

The revised Accounting Statements were considered and it was **RESOLVED** to approve them. They were signed by the Chair, having already been signed by the Clerk.

9.2.4. **To confirm the Parish Council meets the criteria for 2025/26 and wishes to claim exemption for that year. To consider, approve and sign the revised Certificate of Exemption.**

The Council confirmed it meets the criteria for 2025/26 and wish to claim exemption. It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Certificate of Exemption.

9.2.5. **To set the revised dates of the period for the exercise of public rights.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised dates for the Exercise of Public Rights would be 16th July – 26th August 2026 inclusive.

9.2.6. **To consider, approve and sign the revised explanation of variances and bank reconciliation.**

Council **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the revised explanation of variances and end of year bank reconciliation.

9.3. **To agree and approve the latest bank reconciliation for 2026-27 Q1 Appendix 1**
Council **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation for Quarter 1 of 2026-27.

9.3.1. Cllr Marshall confirmed receipt and review of bank statements for January-June 2026, as part of the Council's Financial Regulations. Cllr Marshall signed these bank statements to confirm review.

9.4. To note receipt of any income since the previous meeting. None noted.

9.5. To note any payments made since previous meeting, under delegated authority.
Council noted the following payments made:

9.5.1. Unity Trust Service Charge (Account Fee) - £7 per month for May.
Automatically deducted from account

9.5.2. Cherry tree plaque and engraving - £65.00

9.6. To consider and approve any invoices for payment.

9.6.1. Clerk's Salary for June and July 2026

9.6.2. BBPS Maintenance Items – Metal paint and set of 5 brushes - £27.00

9.6.3. BBPS Maintenance Day by Lengthsman – TGC3900 - £343.64 plus VAT

9.6.4. Autela Payroll Services Q1 – Inv17268 - £64.81 plus VAT

9.6.5. Eyelid Productions Annual Website Support – Inv4318 - £100.00

Council **RESOLVED** to approve payments 9.6.1. to 9.6.5. by BACs (except for payments to the Clerk, which will be paid by cheque for June and July but Council **RESOLVED** to move to BACs payments for the Clerk's salary from August onwards).

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- 9.7. To consider any financial risks to the Parish Council – Council noted the BBPS abutment and trees remained a potential financial risk.

10. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – FOR REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ADOPTION (can be viewed at <https://sellackparishcouncil.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/>)

- 10.1. REVIEW – Standing Orders – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Standing Orders without any changes.
10.2. REVIEW – Retention Schedule – Council reviewed and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Retention Schedule without any changes.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

- 11.1. Discuss content for the parish council website and Facebook page:
Council **RESOLVED** to include posts on the memorial trail enhancements and third cherry tree on the Council Facebook page.

12. To note items arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chairman agrees to take as urgent. Such matters will be for noting only or deferral to a future meeting.
None noted.

13. CORRESPONDENCE – FOR ACTION

- 13.1. Nature and Biodiversity Community Grant Scheme – Council considered this grant scheme and noted the deadline date of August 2026, so it was agreed not to apply on this occasion.
13.2. Herefordshire Councillor Ward Fund Grant Scheme – Council considered an application to this grant scheme and **RESOLVED** to speak to the Ward Member about two potential projects – water quality testing kits and a War Memorial structural survey (match fund).
13.3. Advice / Information from the Monitoring Officer - Civility and Respect Pledge – Council noted that this item had been added to the forward plan, for further discussion at the September meeting.

14. CLERK'S INFORMATION SHEET AND CORRESPONDENCE - FOR NOTING

Council noted receipt of the following:

- Bank statements
- HALC Bulletins – June 2026.
- Letter from Herefordshire Council - Amendment to the Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints
- Toolbox Talk, Working Outdoors guidance

15. FUTURE MEETINGS:

- 15.1. To note the forward plan and raise any items for future meetings
15.2. To note the date of the next meeting: Council **RESOLVED** to change the date of the September meeting to Tuesday 1st September, 7pm at Sellack Parish Hall.

Meeting closed at 21:10

Signed.....

Date.....