

HUNNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 28th May 2025, 7.00pm at St Kenelms Church Hall, Romsley

Those present: Cllr. Myatt (Chair), Cllr. G Goodwin, Cllr. S Goodwin, Cllr. Seeley and Cllr. McGregor and Clerk

Chair Cllr. Myatt presided over the meeting attended by no Parishioners.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. S Goodwin reason for absence approved by all Councillors present.

MINUTES

The minutes of the last Annual Meeting held on 15th May 2024 were read out.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The 2024/25 period, like the previous year has been a very active time for us and the area.

The start of the year brought a large proposal from a company called Grenergy to install a battery storage facility on a plot of land near Goodrest Farm and to the rear of Bromsgrove Road. Concerned residents voiced their opinions and concerns directly to the company at their initial engagement in April.

Over the next few months, we held two large meetings that saw significant engagement from Hunnington residents, which we were all pleased to observe.

In September, Grenergy issued a full planning application proposal regarding the battery storage facility, which Cllr. McGregor has worked hard to ensure a comprehensive objection had been submitted supporting the residents' views. I would personally thank Cllr. McGregor for his dedication to this matter. Thank you. This is an ongoing application which is shortly going to Bromsgrove Planning Committee.

In December, the government added a new definition within the green belt planning policy called grey belt land. This has added a spanner in the works, giving more weight to developers etc. to acquire planning permission where previously these would be refused. This gives us grave concerns for the future of our glorious fields which surround Hunnington and neighbouring areas.

With this Grenergy have amended their application to support the government's new

policies. Once again, Cllr. McGregor has responded to their amendments.

The other notable application was 263 Bromsgrove Road permission in principle for 2 dwellings, which was refused last year and also lost at appeal this year, while we at Hunnington again objected to the same application being resubmitted; sadly. Bromsgrove granted permission in principle due to the new grey belt definition.

There were a few other planning applications throughout the year, with Bromsgrove granting a few extensions, a few of which are ongoing.

May saw the 80th anniversary of VE Day, for which District Councillor's Karen May and Simon Nock have granted us £500 to celebrate the occasion with two figures. fitted to the top and lower half of Hunnington proudly marking the day. Thank you. Cllr. Goodwin and Cllr. McGregor, for your effort and time fitting these.

Sadly, Councillor Karen Payne resigned from her position at Hunnington PC. She will be sorely missed for her dedication, passion and commitment to the area. I would like to thank her personally once again for all her hard work and wish her all the best. in the future.

Thank you for Ruth, Hunnington Parish Council Clerk, for all your continuous hard. work and support; also, to the Lengthsman and others who ensure our area is. maintained, which is always appreciated every year.

Once again, thank you to all HPC councillors for their continuous support, time and commitment throughout the year; without you all, there would not be this first tier of local council for the local residents to go to for support and to raise concerns.

Finally, I personally look forward to another year of helping the local community and giving as much support as possible.

Curt Myatt
Chairman of Hunnington Parish Council

TO RECEIVE REPORT OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

This has been the most challenging year for the county council as it continues to face relentless financial pressures due to increasing demand and rising costs in key service areas.

- Children's social care placements
- Home to school transport
- Adult social care
- Dealing with inflation

The net budget of the council is now just shy of £0.5b for the coming financial year. These pressures are not unique to Worcestershire but are widespread across county

councils and upper-tier authorities nationwide, who are responsible for social care services. Despite ongoing efforts to manage spending and demand, the council's forecasted financial position remains challenging, with £7.9m in reserves being used to cover in year costs.

Key budget challenges are complex, and mainly due to the demographics, national legislation that did not anticipate the ongoing effects of Covid 19 on mental health and the increasing numbers of special education needs provision, which also causes a much higher bill in home to school transport to deliver this service. The council's budget is essentially fixed in cash terms, limiting its ability to raise income.

National restrictions on council tax and business rates further constrain funding. It is very difficult for the county council to engage in income generation from trading activities. The cost-of-service deliver continues to outpace income growth, exacerbated by factors such as:

- National living wage increases
- Changes to employer national insurance contributions
- Rising costs faced by suppliers, partners and contractors

Budget Deficit and Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

At the final budget stages, the council faced a £48.6m budget gap. This was reduced by £12.5m in cost efficiency and the use of £15m in one-off reserves.

Conclusion

Despite financial pressures, the county council remains committed to:

- Promoting health and well-being
- Delivering a good standard of adult social care
- Helping children and families
- Protecting the environment
- Supporting businesses

While significant challenges remain, we continue to work towards sustainable solutions and strategic partnerships that will ensure Worcestershire remains a thriving and well supported community.

Just to dwell for a moment on longer local issues, I have been able to support Hagley Library with my local fund, I continue to work with all the agencies to resolve flooding issues, ad chase highways to deliver the standard of roads I believe you deserve. As well as a vast range of other issues from broadband poles, ambulance wating times, mobile phone signals; just to name a few problems I have been helping residents with.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parish council for all they do for this community, and I would like to thank you the resident for your support. It is an honour and a privilege to represent the Clent Hills Division.

Cllr. Karen May
Clent Hills Division – Worcestershire County Council

TO RECEIVE REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES

Financial and Strategic Update – April/May 2025

We are pleased to provide you with an update on the latest financial settlement for Bromsgrove District Council and key areas of focus for Belbroughton and Romsley District Council Ward. While we continue to face financial challenges, we remain in a strong position, and we want to assure you that we are working hard to ensure every pound is used wisely to benefit our communities.

Financial Settlement from Central Government

The Government's financial settlement for BDC has been confirmed for only one year, making long-term financial planning more difficult. One of the most significant aspects of this settlement is a £352,000 reduction in central grants, impacting us overall budget.

While we did receive £100,000 to cover National Insurance increases, this fell £200,000 short of the council's actual requirement. However, despite these financial pressures, BDC remains in a strong financial position, with projections indicating we will have around £20m in reserves by 2027. This ensures we have stability for the years ahead, but we must continue to manage our resources carefully.

Tackling Fly Tipping – A Local Priority

Fly tipping is an issue we have been addressing head-on. We have been working closely with BDC's Environmental Team, and we now have a monthly review of fly tipping incidents and enforcement actions. Covert CCTV cameras are in place, leading to ongoing prosecutions. These measures already making a difference, and we are committed to continuing this work to crack down on those who blight our communities with illegal dumping.

Parking Enforcement – More Coverage for Rural Areas

Parking concerns are regularly raised by residents, and we are making key changes to improve enforcement.. AMPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras are being introduced in Bromsgrove town centre, freeing up Parking Enforcement Officers to patrol wider areas, including Belbroughton and Romsley.

A new policy means that at least 20% of officers' time must be spent in rural parts of the district, rather than focusing solely on the town centre. This will help tackle persistent parking problems in our villages and ensure fair enforcement across the whole district.

Levelling Up Investment – Regenerating Our Town

Progress continues on the levelling up fund projects, aimed at regenerating Bromsgrove and supporting long-term economic growth. The demolition of the old Windsor Street Library and fire station is now complete, and we are moving forward with plans to submit a planning application for residential homes on site.

Additionally, work is ongoing at the old market site, but we recognise that a fresh name is needed for this development – something that truly reflects the future vision for the area. These projects are vital in ensuring Bromsgrove remains a thriving and attractive place to live.

Housing Challenges – Meeting Growing Demand

Housing remains one of our biggest challenges. Before the general election, Bromsgrove was required to build 386 homes per year. This figure has now increased to 713 per year until 2043 – an 85% rise.

This is particularly difficult given that 89% of Bromsgrove District is green belt land. The release of sites for development will be part of the new Local Plan, with a public consultation expected in May/June 2025. This will be an opportunity for residents to have their say on future housing plans, and I encourage everyone to take part.

Looking Ahead – A Strong and Stable Future for Bromsgrove

As we move forward, we must acknowledge the ongoing discussions about devolution and what it could mean for the future of district councils. While change may be on the horizon, our focus remains on ensuring that Bromsgrove gets the recognition and funding it deserves.

We are committed to using our current funding wisely and strategically for the long-term benefit of all residents. Bromsgrove is a fantastic place to live, and we will continue working hard to enhance our local communities.

Thank you for your support and we want to personally thank all residents for your continued engagement and support. Your input and involvement help shape our district, and we appreciate the opportunity to represent you. If you have any concerns, ideas or feedback, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Together we make a difference.

Cllr. May and Cllr. Nock

As there were no parishioners present, the Chair duly declared the meeting closed at approximately 7.15pm

Signed..... Dated.....
Chair – Hunnington Parish Council