Aymestrey Parish Council

Minutes of the scheduled meeting of the Parish Council
on Wednesday 28 October 2026 7.00pm in Aymestrey Parish Hall

Present: Cllrs Nick Barrow, Domenica Dunne, Pauline Hammond, Dan Hurcomb (20:28), Doug Murrie, John Probert, Jo Stannard and Eleanor Waldron, Chair. No vacancies.

In attendance: No members of Public, Ward Councillor Carole Gandy, the Parish Footpaths Officer and Mrs Maggie Brown, clerk.

77./26-27 **Apologies for absence.** None received.

78./26-27 **Declarations of Interest and written Dispensation requests**. None received.

79./26-27 **Open Discussion:**

a) Ward Cllr Carole Gandy's report was circulated prior to the meeting. It can be read on the website, www.aymestrey.org or from the clerk.
Funding has been secured to help eliminate rough sleeping. As some may decline traditional accommodation, questions have been raised about whether this funding could also be used to improve conditions for those in temporary accommodation.
Initiatives aimed at supporting residents who rely on food banks focus on developing practical skills, including budgeting, and preparing economical meals are underway.
Grant funding has also been available to improve facilities in public buildings, providing safe spaces for confidential discussions with professional advisers.

b) Views of residents on parish matters. One query regarding food banks - it was explained that residents access food banks through a voucher referral system. It is understood a FoodShare initiative is available in Hereford.

c) Reports from Councillors.
Cllr Probert. Meeting with Herefordshire Council, an ecologist and representative from MGroup to assess erosion of the banks of the Lugg by Lyepole Bridge. Reported - the long-term plan will not be executed over the winter, and boulders will be placed in the river as a temporary measure. Closing the road was mentioned but not confirmed. A letter to all residents is expected.
Cllr Murrie. Speeding traffic passing speed indicator devices observed; two at 43mph and one at 53mph. The clerk was asked to contact Ian Connolly (Traffic Management Advisor, Road Safety Team, West Mercia Police) to ask for speed checks between specific times of day.
Cllr Hammond. Gulley cleansing by the Parish Hall carried out on Tuesday 27 October.
Cllr Waldron. One phone call to the Aymestrey Good Neighbour Scheme received, from a Wigmore resident. Cllr Waldron assisted the caller with their request.
Cllr Stannard. Poor condition of road signs at Mortimers Cross when approaching from Shobdon. Agreed – clerk to forward photographs to Herefordshire Council.

80./26-27 **Minutes: RESOLVED** minutes of the scheduled meeting 23 September 2026 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

81./26-27 **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

a) The Parish Footpaths Officer (PFO) reported continued work recording locations and conditions of stiles, gates, and bridges, to be forwarded to Herefordshire Council. No expense claims received.

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b) Matters relating to installation of a bridge and steps on AY9 and any decisions required.
Item discussed after item 88. Cllr Hurcomb arrived as discussions were ending.

Reported. The Footpaths Officer (PFO), clerk and member of the Weobley Footpaths Team (WFT) met, after which a draft Method Statement and Risk Assessment were drawn up. A second meeting, PFO & WFT, arranged on 29 October (tomorrow) to assess whether the new bridge can be installed in the same place as the existing bridge, or whether an alternative is preferred. Cllr Barrow's offer to attend this meeting and assess whether his telehandler could be used to help was gratefully accepted. The preferred location is to be confirmed. Advice to be taken from Herefordshire Council if required. Insurance cover is to be checked by the clerk. Two members of the Aymestrey Footpaths Team have indicated which personal protective equipment they need.

82./26-27 **Lengthsman. Works to be undertaken by the Lengthsman.** Clearing ditches in Covenhope valley as in previous seasons.

83./26-27 **Planning**. To consider response to application to be determined by Herefordshire Council.
P262561/FH - Full Householder Aymestrey, Mortimer, Yatton Cottage Yatton Leominster HR6 9TP, Erection of a garage (application includes modifications to approved application reference 252715 for a single-story extension to facilitate the garage door opening in place of an approved retaining wall).
RESOLVED the Parish Council raised no objections to this application.

84./26-27 **Policies. Adoption of updated Accessibility Statement.**
Cllr Murrie confirmed the website has been tested and conforms to accessibility standard WCAG2.2 AA as required. Cllr Murrie was thanked for writing the statement.
RESOLVED to adopt the Accessibility Statement, reviewed following the website upgrade**.**
Accessibility Statement | Aymestrey Parish Council

85./26-27 **Financial Matters**

a) Noted: verification of bank reconciliation to the end of Q2 checked by Cllr Hurcomb.

b) The Responsible Financial Officer's Report to end Q2 was noted. No recommendations or questions raised.

c) Noted: payments/receipts not listed in the September Minutes. Paid: £7 Bank Fees; SG Projects £330 [£55 VAT] defibrillator installation; One Stop Print Shop £308.20 printing Aymestrey Matters. Received: Herefordshire Council £7,738.50 50% Precept.

d) Noted: balances. Unity Trust Bank on 22 October 2026 £26,474.37 including Reserve Fund £5,000, General Revenue Reserve £8,946.60, Total £13,946.60. Earmarked/Ringfenced: Traffic Calming Schemes £1,061.10, Election Fund £1,000, Total Earmarked/Ringfenced £2,061.10. Un-ringfenced/Reserve funds £10,466.67.

e) **RESOLVED** to approve payments listed below. No invoices received after publication of the agenda.

i.	Brown, Mrs M Payroll Month 7 2026/27 including backpay	£506.11
ii.	HMRC Payroll Month 7 2026/27 including backpay	£158.96
iii.	Clerk Expenses Mileage & coffee with Weobley Footpath Team	£52.69
	Total Payments	£717.76
	Non reserve/ringfenced balance after Payments:	£9,748.91
	Bank balance after Payments	£25,756.61

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86./26-27 **Budget 2027/28.** Recommendations from the Finance Working Group were considered in conjunction with the first draft of the budget which will be finalised at the November meeting.

Matters highlighted –

- Membership with Herefordshire Association of Local Councils versus seeking alternative sources for training/advice. Estimated cost in the region of £500.
- Budget for Home Working Allowance currently £100 per annum (as per contract from 2018) to £312 per annum as permitted by HMRC. Heating, electricity, and storing documents/archive.
- Lengthsman tasks. Whether to have pavements through Aymestrey swept was debated.
- Community Projects, including amounts contributing to a Wigmore School Award, Aymestrey Good Neighbour Scheme (mobile phone), potential new site for Speed Indicator Device, hire of flail machine to clear bracken on Yatton Hill Common, replacement defibrillator pads and annual support, hire of toilets for a Parish event (e.g. bonfire night), repair/replacement of notice boards, and refreshments for public meetings.
- An amount to ringfence towards expected costs when renewing the Neighbourhood Development Plan. £2,000. Advice to be taken as to whether this is sufficient.

The budget will be met from the annual precept and funds from reserves. Members noted the importance of carefully balancing these sources of funding to ensure that reserves are maintained at an appropriate level.

An initial suggestion (not confirmed) to increase the Precept by 5%, taking it from £15,477 in 2026/27 to £16,250.85 in 2027/28, a difference of £773.85. 5% increase equates to estimated £4.24 increase per annum for a Band D property (using this year's Tax Base). If it were raised by 10% a Band D property would pay £8.47 more per annum.

A second draft will be considered at the November meeting, when the budget will be finalised and the Precept for 2027/28 set.

87./26-27 **Defibrillator – Covenhope.**

a) An awareness session regarding the use of defibrillators was discussed. Agreed: the clerk will arrange a suitable date with a First Responder (contact details to be supplied by Cllr Stannard) and book the Parish Hall on a Saturday morning. Details to be confirmed.
b) **RESOLVED** to purchase a Bleed Kit for Covenhope.

88./26-27 **Information Sheet.** The contents were noted. No matters arising.

89./26-27 **Items for the next agenda.** None raised.

90./26-27 **Date of next scheduled meeting** 7pm Wednesday 25 November 2026 at Aymestrey Parish Hall.

Meeting closed: 20:33

Signed …….. Dated 25 November 2026.
Chair of the Parish Council

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