

## HARVINGTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

### Draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 19 May 2026 at 7pm in Harvington Village Hall, Harvington.

**Present:** Cllr. Mr Salter (Chair of the Parish Council); Mrs J. White (Clerk); District Cllr. Mr Reeves; Cllr. Mrs Allison; Cllr. Mr Powell; Cllr. Ms Smith; Mr Chris Haynes of the Village Hall Committee; Mrs Sophie Dodds of Cameo Teas; Mr Andrew Muir (Parish Paths Warden); Mr Alan Williams (Tree Warden) and 4 members of the public.

**1. Welcome:** Apologies received from: Wendy and Konrad Monks of the Community Support Group; Lesley Robinson of Phoenix Ladies; Jessica Brownlee of Harvington Brownies/Guides; Terry Bennett the Community Watch Co-ordinator; and no response from the Cricket club.

**2. Minutes of the meeting 24.04.25.** Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by District Cllr. Reeves and **resolved** by all present at last year's meeting, that the minutes were a correct record, duly signed by the Chairman.

**3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council:**

We started the new council year with May's Annual Parish Council Meeting and the election of the Chair, various committees and working group members. Over the year we have had a few changes to our team; we said goodbye to councillor Mr Baugh and councillor Mrs Ball. We also said a fond farewell to Nicky Holland, our long serving Clerk, on the announcement of her retirement. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nicky for all her hard work, support and dedication to our village and send her our best wishes for the future. This left a vacancy for the post of Clerk to the council. After a set of interviews and a lot of deliberation from the staffing committee, we appointed Mrs Jenny White to the role who has settled into the role and started the Cilca training required. I will take this opportunity to introduce you all to Jenny. We still have 2 vacancies if we could tempt anyone to joining our team.

We have also had a change to our County councillor. Councillor Satinder Bell is our new representative. This year your councillors have continued to attend many training sessions including planning and finance courses.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of the councillors for their time and efforts they have voluntarily given over the past 12 months.

We as a parish council try to act as quickly and responsibly as possible to reports and concerns raised by members of this parish. But however, our hands are somewhat tied, as we are dependent on county and district councils, highways and rooftop housing association to find the time and funds to complete the requests.

The parish council work hard on your behalf to ensure that the village is as safe and as welcoming as it can be, However over the last year we have had some vandalism around the village to the benches in the orchard and playing field. Unfortunately this comes at a cost to repair the damage, out of an already tight budget, obtained through your council tax payments. If you witness any forms of vandalism we ask that report it.

Some of the routine tasks carried out on behalf of the village, to mention but a few, are the emptying of litter and dog waste bins, amenity mowing, streetlighting, weekly inspections of the playing field, community orchard and defibrillators, maintaining the planters at the entrances to the village and the Christmas tree at the crossroads, and employing the village Lengthsman to conduct various tasks around the village including flood elevation work.

The council has many more long term and time-consuming projects on the go at any one time. To mention a couple that you will hear more about later, are the playing field refurbishment and the Neighbourhood plan.

The sighting of the new Defibrillator solar powered cabinet has taken place opposite Leys Field And a bleed kit added to the box at the Golden Cross. The Jubilee orchard is in blossom at the moment, we must thank Mr Pedrick and Mr Williams for their time and knowledge on the

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<p>maintenance of the trees.</p> <p>The long awaited bus shelter has been installed and I must say, is looking good.</p> <p>We have continued to support the organisations in the village through our grant applications. We have given monies to the following in the last 12 months totalling £1900.00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school prize</li><li>• Wychavon Games</li><li>• Girl Guides for new tents</li><li>• Royal British Legion</li><li>• The church fete.</li></ul> <p>Once again I would like to thank organisations, businesses, clubs and individuals who helps keep our village a lovely place to live.</p>
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<p><b>4. <u>To receive the following reports from:</u></b> <b><u>District Councillor Craig Reeves:</u></b></p> <p>I'd like to start by thanking residents for their support and engagement over the past year. So many of you have taken the time to report issues, raise concerns, and share ideas, that make such a difference to our community. From everyday matters such as fly tipping and overhanging trees, through to larger planning and development concerns, your feedback helps ensure that matters are identified and addressed.</p> <p>It's important that residents continue to feel heard and represented. And with that, I hope that you do, as I focus on providing reports and films online and with our local newspapers. All whilst of course engaging at committees and parish and district council meetings.</p> <p>There have been a number of planning applications overseen, with a small number delivered to committee over this past year - and I have done my best to represent Harvington with planning matters and support our Neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Part of planning matters means championing our wonderful village and ensuring that focus is shone on bringing concepts such as the Greenway project to fruition; a project that looks to connect Evesham with The Valley, through to Harvington and onwards to Salford Priors. There is some real progress here and talks with The Valley and David Lloyd Clubs, who have an application in the wings at Twyford may bring the project one step closer.</p> <p>And with David Lloyd, their application is still pending, with focus on traffic safety and pedestrian access requested by National Highways.</p> <p>You may have seen that I have kept focus on Evesham with aim to bring uplift to the town centre. Many residents I speak with here in the village, both old and new have their concerns about the town. It's a place that many rely upon, and its uplift will bring prosperity far and wide. With that - I'm very pleased to say that the Riverside Shopping Centre has been brought into public ownership, being now owned by Wychavon. This has been with the support of a Government grant, by Homes England. This means the redevelopment will have a residential portion, as well as a retail, leisure and hospitality offering - regenerating the space with the Abbey Park and bell tower as a focus.</p> <p>To further continue to uplift the town centre, a working group has been setup by Wychavon and Evesham Police, to include myself with aim to tackle antisocial behaviour and unite officers to form solutions.</p> <p>We should also soon see the tarpaulin removed from the Round House (The NatWest building), This project has been a private endeavour by Natwest, and myself and other councillors have been working to secure it's future once the works are complete and Natwest vacate.</p> <p>I believe the prospect of positive change in this area, will, and (I'd argue) 'already has' seen momentum of change - with positive developments and applications, including proposals to redevelop the defunct petrol station on Abbey Road come to the table.</p> <p>As you may be aware, we are in the final Wychavon years, as the council, alongside county will close, and a new authority combining the two services of both authorities is formed. Again, as you may be aware, there are two options proposed, with a North / South (as opposed to a</p>
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'whole') Worcestershire favoured by 5 of the 6 districts. We expect to hear the Ministers decision in late June or July.

As we await what shape this council will take, a time will come when councils will be asked not to allocate any new spending, This will come in the form of a Section 24 notice. There are no concrete timeframes as to when this will be requested, but this is an expectation and one that we must prepare for. It is why projects such as the Riverside Shopping Centre are thankfully green lit, with a path to completion set out - whilst myself and other councillors navigate swiftly and with hope, to attribute funding to the likes of the Greenway project and other concepts in the wings.

Those projects will transition into the new authority, and all projects that have no funding attributed when the Section 24 notice is served will have to await the new authority in 2028.

May 2027 will see elections take place. Where this election is usually part of the district election cycle, it will be the new authority. The boundaries are likely to be the current County Council boundaries with two Councillors elected per area, but this is yet to be confirmed.

Earlier this year we saw the South Worcestershire Development Plan approved, which will help relieve some of the planning pressures and uncertainty we have experienced over the past couple of years. Applications have been brought to planning here in Harvington and myself, along with the Parish council have worked to see the sanctity of our neighbourhood plan remain. This has been a challenge, and whilst the previous and outdated South Worcestershire Development Plan was in flux, our village did see houses approved. However, along with new homes, comes investment of which I shall ensure I work with our parish council and local community to see that funding put to its best local use.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for their hard work, all done so voluntarily. They work tirelessly for our village and it doesn't go un-noticed.

Finally, I encourage anyone with concerns, questions, or ideas to continue getting in touch. Whether it's a small or large, I'm always happy to listen and help where I can. We have such a strong and resilient community here in Harvington and I'm truly proud to represent you at our District council. Thank you.

**Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator:** No report received.

### **Village Hall Committee - Mr Chris Haynes:**

The Village Hall is run by an independent charity, and board of trustees with village representatives elected at the AGM. In terms of our charges, there has been no fee increase in the last 10 years. We have around £20,000 in reserves, which seems a lot, but this could soon go on bigger fixes such as the roof or heat pump repairs. But we are hopeful that we have enough. The hall is run by 3 volunteers and it was last refurbished in 2011.

Our energy management system includes a sophisticated system of solar panels and 2 heat pumps, both gained through grants given to the hall. The heat pumps read the weather and are tuned to our bookings, so heating comes on just before the booking, to save energy. We estimate that this gives us an energy cost saving of around 70%.

The hall is heavily used; every term-time weekday by Harvey Bears and most weeks it is used for 5-6 evening events. Weekends are family parties and annual village events. I would like to share that we do have the green room at the rear of hall, seating 12 people, available for hire.

### **Tree Warden - Alan Williams:**

The Tree Council begun in 1973, to investigate and care for the trees, with catchy slogans such as 'it's 1973, plant a tree'. Overtime it was soon clear a more formal structure was needed. By 1990 the Tree Warden scheme had come into force across England and Wales. Our first Tree Warden was Hugh Nunn, off Green Street. He gathered a team of enthusiasts to plant trees, starting in 1992. Most of the oaks on the Evesham Road were planted by the Girl Guides in 1998 and a few others planted some by the cross in 1996. Going along Leys Road, the trees that are plentiful now, were not there. They were planted in three's; some have died but it was

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an experiment to clone green elm trees, to see if they would be resistant to disease. When I took over, I surveyed all of the trees. But there is now limited room to plant more trees, particularly along the highway. There are some nice and rare trees, including black poppy trees. It is important to guide the trees the right way, focusing on removing growth and lifting the crowns of younger trees.

Evesham Road: I have reported for some years re. the problem of the overgrowth of brambles and shrubs along this road and the ditch running next to Orchard Place back fencing. Early in May 2025, I decided to cut back the heavy overgrowth that was now blocking some 10 - 15m of pavement. Ironically, a couple of months later in July/August, the Highways Department cut back all the overgrowth along this road and revealed the ditch as it used to be many years ago. After this mechanical cutting and strimming, I spent some time pruning back machinery damaged branches mainly on the Lime and Hawthorn trees along this stretch. Throughout June to August, I removed the epicormic growth on most of the Oak trees along this road as well as the Limes, Hawthorn and Maple trees; where necessary, I also lifted the crowns of some trees.

Alcester Road: During June and August on several walks around the Parish boundary, I removed epicormic growth and damaged branches of Oak trees on the left-hand side of this road towards New Inn Lane. Also in August and September, I lifted the crowns of 3 Oaks and the mature Hungarian oak opposite Hawkes Piece. I have also been encouraging the other Hungarian oak to grow back after being cut off at ground level by man or machine in 2023.

Bottom Crest Hill/Old Bypass Road: Pruned the lower branches and lifted the crowns one layer in August for the 4 Oak trees along Old Bypass beyond Fen Fitness.

3 Counties Tree Wardens Forum: I attended a one-day meeting on 29 September 2025 in Norton Village Hall. This was organised by the Tree Council and Wade Muggleton, Worcestershire Tree Wardens network Co-ordinator. The meeting included several presentations and a walking tour of the tree planting activity and the "Miyawaki" Planting plots near Ashmore Farm and behind the Norton housing on LHS of the B4088 road towards Evesham. I also visited the orchard at New Farm and the Worcestershire Councils planting plots of 1500 trees behind New Farm and down towards the river walk to Twyford. The formal meeting covered several topics: Britain's Tree Scope and resilience to disease in response to rapid environmental changes; Community tree nurseries; Community Orchards in Worcestershire; Community planting grants; Future development of Tree Health monitoring via a Tree Alert system for monitoring pests and diseases.

Harvington Wood: On 22 January 2026 I attended an open meeting in Village Hall to find out about Heart of England plans for 47 hectares of woodland down Anchor Lane and when planting of 26 hectares will take place; hopefully in Autumn 2026.

### **Parish Paths Warden - Andrew Muir:**

The Parish Path Warden role involves an 'eyes on the ground' approach, working with the County Council. Approximately five or six times a year, I walk all of the paths around the village but this year has been quiet in terms of issues. There was a matter raised at the caravan site which was cleared quickly. I try to get out and strim paths, such as around the churchyard and the back of Finch Lane. You will have noticed that plants like cowslip are pouring onto the footpaths currently. By the golf course, the Heart of England Forest are looking at creating a permissive footpath, and it may be worth the parish council investigating the possibility of a join up from Harvington with the old railway line. The other point to share is that rotten fence posts will be reviewed by Worcestershire County Council in time as their work's schedule allows.

### **Cameo Teas (Come And Meet Each Other) - Sophie Dodds:**

The aim of the Church of England has always been to reach out into the community. We have now been doing this with CAMEO TEAS for 21 years. This has only been possible because of a

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cross section of volunteers from Harvington have been able to keep the show on the road. We always meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 3pm at St. James Church, for tea and cakes and a friendly chat.

The highlights in 2025 were:

In May was an invitation for Afternoon Tea at Hillers Farm Shop, when 27 people attended. We all enjoyed a lovely get-together and we were even able to sing "Happy Birthday" to Gwenda Grinnell, who unfortunately is no more with us, she has sadly passed away. It was also the last time when our Rev. Richard Thorniley joined us, as he retired and moved on with his wife Gill to pastures green. They are all very much missed.

In June we entertained year 5 from Harvington School. Extra chairs and tables are put up in church to accommodate about 30 children and teachers. The conversation is highly interesting and we have had lots of fun when we listen to their anecdotes. Rev. Richard organised a quiz and also explained the vagaries of the church.

In July the children reciprocated and we are treated to tea and cakes and entertainment in their school.

In December we rounded off the year by holding a Carol Service at St. James Church followed by a traditional Christmas Lunch, this year at Broom Hall Hotel. They made us very welcome; the meal was delicious, the friendly chat as always amongst friends very entertaining and looking back it was once again a very successful year.

A rota is set up at the beginning of the year; two friends are usually on duty to help on a monthly basis to serve the refreshments. The group is self-financing, friends contribute each time they meet £2, helping to augment any outings during the year.

**Cricket Club:** No report received.

**The Harvington Community Support Group:** (Report provided by Wendy and Konrad Monks)

The Harvington Community Support Group was originally initiated by Sheila Harris and is now coordinated by Wendy and Konrad Monks who have lived in Harvington for many years. The purpose of the group is to provide low-key practical and emotional support to residents of the village, or to provide advice about how to access help for more complex needs. As we have become better known our team of volunteers has gradually expanded, so that as well as Wendy and Konrad we have six further volunteers, Mike Barbour, Joy Rawes, Kay Barrett, Judith Noon, Annette France, and Sheila Hemming. Following the departure of Reverend Richard Thorniley, we are pleased to have the support of Father Glenn Reading as well.

Most of the people who get in touch with us are elderly, and some are very frail. The kind of help needed is often transport and assistance with attending appointments, but also sometimes getting in shopping, sitting with someone whilst a carer goes out, general 'friendly visiting', helping with computer problems and admin, minor DIY etc. Despite a quiet period in the autumn we have still responded to over 50 requests for help in the last year and have rarely had to turn anyone away.

Feedback we have had from residents and relatives suggests that the help we provide is appreciated and that people derive a sense of comfort knowing we are there in the background. As co-ordinators, we enjoy our role in this, but we couldn't do it without the commitment of our always willing volunteers and we very much value their input.

An extra dimension for the group has been the production of the "Welcome to Harvington" booklet, which gives an excellent overview of the village, as well as providing relevant information for residents old and new. The booklet was up-dated early this year and was distributed to every household in the village in April. A special thank you is due to Mike Barbour who has undertaken the lion's share of this work, and we are also very grateful to the Parish Council who have kindly funded this project once again.

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### **Brownies/Girl Guides:** (Report provided by Jessica Browlee)

For those who don't know, Girlguiding is a national charity that has supported girls in the UK since 1909. It is more than a club and girls are encouraged to push themselves, learn new skills, and make a positive impact in the community. We are part of an international family of scouts and guides, it really is something special to be a part of. In Harvington we now have all of the different girl-guiding sections: Rainbows- 4-7, Brownies7-10, Guides- 10-14 and Rangers 14-18. We welcome around 80 young members to our groups each week and a team of about 10 adult volunteers work really hard to give all of these girls amazing opportunities. We also have a brilliant group of young volunteers aged 13-18 who are developing their leadership skills and showing us just how much responsibility young people are capable of.

Some highlights:

- We celebrated our 50th anniversary with a big party and then a family fun day in the summer (as part of the Harvington Festival)
- We attended Magical Midlands, a large scale girl guiding event with thousands of other Girlguiding Midlands members. They had a fun fair, adventurous activities, crafts, music and lots more.
- We had another fantastic camp, this time with a Paddington theme, and the girls enjoyed the zip wire, archery, rock climbing, hiking, tie dye, a campfire and more. A huge thank you to the Parish council and Perkins trust who supported us to buy all the new equipment we needed.
- In the summer Jessica, one of our leaders, visited Finland with a group of Guides from across Worcestershire. They met up with local Scouts and Girl Scouts and had a brilliant time exploring all of the beautiful nature.
- Ellie and Madison, one of our Rangers and young volunteers, visited Jersey with a group of about 30 other Guides from across the Midlands. They met local Guides, visited local sites, learnt to surf, swam, handled birds of prey and more.
- In November, the Brownies joined the Guides to represent us at the village remembrance service. They were very smart and made us proud, with girls carrying our flags and sharing a reading.
- Our Rangers had another great Christmas sleepover, joining up with other local girls for a fun festive weekend.
- We have spent the year so far exploring world guiding, taking part in space challenges, and exploring the outdoors.
- The Guides and Rangers thoroughly enjoyed our sleepover at Imagination street soft play a few weeks ago!
- This term will see the Guides go on a litter pick, have a bushcraft session, go to our first large-scale camp with other Guides and Scouts and some of our members are taking part in a week-long international camp in the summer. Some of our Rangers are volunteering at this event.
- Brownies are having a sleepover this year and are very excited for this adventure in just a matter of weeks.

Our impact is clear and it is incredibly rewarding to see what our young members can do. They are so capable and we help them to realise that. They learn so many skills, try so many new things, push themselves, earn badges and are simply amazing. It would be great to see more volunteers getting involved in the next year so we can continue to provide girls with wonderful opportunities and lifelong memories. The Girlguiding girls attitude survey- which is well worth a read and a great insight into the lives of young people today, found that girls are over 20% more confident when involved in guiding! Guiding is so special and as one of our new Guides told us- 'It's great to be doing something fun and important, otherwise I just spend all of my time at home doing nothing. I really enjoy Guides.'

### **Phoenix Group:** (Report provided by Lesley Robinson, Co-Leader)

Phoenix Ladies Group is open to everyone. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month

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usually in the Village Hall. We often have a speaker or an expert demonstrating a craft. Depending on the topic we sometimes open up the meeting to the men folk in the village. We currently have 39 members but other ladies do come on a regular basis. In the warmer longer months we often supplement the monthly meetings with a mid-month activity such as a lunch or a sporting activity such as Pickleball. We always have a Christmas lunch/dinner, which last year was held at The Fish in Wixford. We also host a summer garden party/picnic which is always popular. Last year our summer outing was to Bletchley Park. This year we will be visiting the Harvington Hall in the other Harvington. We have had a diverse array of speakers in the past year, including Community Police Officers talking about neighbourhood safety & a talk on local place names. In April we had a Tai Chi lesson / demonstration that was very much enjoyed by the group. Earlier this month we were treated to a fascinating demo, crafting handmade flowers with paste. The group has previously supported the Harvington Festival by providing tea & cake, & we will be supporting them again this year. Any money made from this will go to our current chosen charities - Heart of England Forest & The Breast Cancer Support Group at Worcester Hospital. We hold a raffle at each of our meetings which also raises money for our causes. We would love to welcome new members / visitors to the group, so why not come along & give us a try. Our meetings are advertised on the parish notice boards, at the village hall, in the ARCH & at various local venues. Please feel free to give me a call if you have any queries. We hope to see you soon.

### 5. **Presentations:**

**a) Neighbourhood Development Plan:** Cllr. Ms Smith reported that in 2015 the Harvington Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) commenced, at the time run by Chris Haynes. The plan is so important to the village, as it gives villagers a say in how the village develops. We are currently undertaking a major review of the plan and have secured £8000 of funding from Wychavon District Council. We are about to issue a housing needs survey to all households and you are urged to please complete it, as the data from this survey will underpin the policies in our plan. We can use this data to say this is what the village needs. It helps to shape and develop our village in a way we want. Having an up-to-date plan is the only thing we can do to shape our village in the way we want. The next step will then be a resident's survey. We have recently had two resident's events, which generated lots of interest and support in the plan.

**b) Update on the refurbishment of the Playing Field:** Cllr. Allison and Cllr. Powell reported that seven years ago a committee was set up for the renewal of the playground. Christine and I undertook consultation with the village, and the greatest thing wanted by the community was a multi-use games area (MUGA), which was installed last summer. Since then we have installed a new toddler unit and tunnel, which has been very popular since day one. We are now looking at installing toddler fencing, provided by funding from a developer's levy. Thanks goes out to Christine Ball for her hard work and to the workmen also.

The usage of the play equipment is good. As a parish council, we inspect the playground weekly and I empty bins each week. The grass is cut regularly, keeping the playground welcoming. It is usually tidy, but sometimes uniform is left behind and we try to return it to it's owners via the school, but there have also been antisocial behaviour incidents, including damage to the new toddler slide, a broken padlock and smoking under the shelter. There has recently been graffiti in the wooden shelter, which was voluntarily removed by Cllr. Powell and Cllr. Salter. Damage is repaired quickly. As a result of seeking the support of residents, we haven't seen any further damage. We do have a level of dog-fouling on the playing fields and are currently working with the District Councillor to try and secure an anti-social Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). We continue to make the playing field a pleasant place for our village, as well the children from other surrounding villages.

### 6. **Matters raised by Parishioners:**

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**Village Green at Lion Court:** a resident raised whether the council would consider the new green area, which is for public use, could be used for active use? It was confirmed that the land is currently not owned by the Parish Council, but there are plans to take it on board, though the expectation is to keep it as a flower meadow.

**Cherry Tree, Ragley Road:** a resident noted that the cherry tree had been coppiced, but new growth is now emerging. There was a concern that without protection, the amenity contractors may damage the new growth when cutting the grass. It was agreed that the Clerk will contact Rooftop to enquire about protection to the emerging cherry tree, as it is situated on Rooftop land.

**New resident:** Warmly welcomed to the village. They hope to settle in and will be undertaking sympathetic restoration to their new property.

**Meeting closed at 20:00.**

DRAFT