

Minutes of the Broadwas and Cotheridge

Annual Parish Meeting

14th May 2025

7pm at Broadwas Village Hall

Members Present: Cllrs Burrows (Chair), Cullen (Vice Chair), Worrall and Guest .

Also in attendance: L Law Clerk, Ward Cllr Jones-Williams and 3 members of the public.

1. Welcome by the chair.

Cllr Burrows welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies. Apologies were received by Mr Dennis, Headmaster of Broadwas Primary School and Cllr Mel Fordington.

3. To approve the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2024. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2024 were **approved** and the Chair signed a copy.

4. To note any reports from local bodies and organisations.

The following reports from local bodies and organisations were received and noted:

- Broadwas Sports Association. Broadwas Sports Association is a thriving Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) centred around croquet, serving the local and surrounding village communities. **Membership & Facilities:** 77 active members, 5 full-sized croquet lawns. Largest croquet club in the Midlands. Open and operating 7 days a week

Sporting Activity & Achievements: Main focus is croquet, played at both social and competitive levels. Hosts regional,

national, and international competitions. International fixtures include matches in Germany and previously Czechia

Community Engagement: Welcomed over 120 visiting players this year. Strong emphasis on inclusivity and social bonding. Affordable annual membership (£120)

Maintenance & Development: Lawns maintained by members using existing equipment. Planned upgrades to the Pavilion and outbuildings. Professional lawn drainage and dressing work scheduled

Acknowledgements: The Association extends its sincere thanks to Broadwas Parish Council for their continued support.

- **Broadwas CE Primary School Report – May 2025:**

Key Highlights from the Past Year

- Expanded curriculum focus on PE, Art, Science, and DT; improved online assessment tools.
- Completed front-of-school building upgrades.
- Successfully merged with Bumblebees Pre-School.
- Used Pupil Premium to support learning, mental health, trips, and uniforms.
- Sports Premium funded staff training, equipment, swimming, and unique activities like "Kidditch."
- Successful fundraising through PTFA and Parish Council support (e.g., fireworks event), which helped renew the reading scheme.
- Improved attendance rates; persistent absences down.
- Active in community engagement via local media and social platforms.
- Upcoming international reading project with Ukrainian families in Poland.
- Developing a Wellbeing Project involving a school dog and specialist support.
- **Challenges for the Coming Year:**
- Operating in a **deficit budget** due to declining local pupil numbers.
- **Increasing demand** for SEND and mental health support.

- **Urgent need** to boost enrolment to ensure the school's long-term sustainability in Broadwas.
- Support from the Parish Council is crucial to promote and maintain Broadwas CE Primary School as a vital part of the village community.

James Dennis, Headteacher.

- **Broadwas Village Hall Committee.**
- **Governance Update:**
Constitution amended to improve governance—now six elected and six representative members. Committee remains active and well-supported by volunteers.
- **Financial Overview:**
- Annual income: £12,597.83
- Outgoings: £14,220.33
- Resulted in a small annual deficit: -£1,622.50
- Fundraising income rose 190% over last year (£5,962.75 raised)
- **Community Events:**
- Highly successful initiatives included food trucks, children's discos, bounce days, Santa's Grotto, and the new pop-up pub.
- Events have significantly increased hall use and bookings, averaging 1–2 parties per month.
- Some events (e.g. Ceilidh Dance) cancelled due to low ticket sales—highlighting the need to refine promotion strategies.
- **Maintenance & Upgrades:**
- Safety fully compliant: PAT testing, fire and electrical checks up to date.
- Key improvements:
- New double-glazed doors, certified key safe
- Upgraded lighting and wiring

- Curtain refurbishment, kitchen emergency exit repair
 - Broken toilet and outdoor lighting replaced
 - Hall and passageway redecorated
 - Grounds and tree maintenance carried out
 - **Ongoing & Planned Works:**
 - Hall floor restoration delayed due to contractor withdrawal; new contractor now appointed, grant funding to be sought.
 - Future upgrades include baby changing facilities, broadband and Wi-Fi, kitchen/toilet renovation, and resurfacing of parking areas.
 - **Contractor & Service Management:**
 - Key services provided by named contractors (gardening, plumbing, cleaning, caretaking, etc.).
 - Total service costs approximately £9,171.02 for the year.
- **Cllr Barbara Jones-Williams** presented her annual report, summarising her work over the past year as the representative for the Martley Ward on Malvern Hills District Council.
 - **1. Representation and Roles:**
 - Cllr Jones-Williams has served the Martley Ward for 30 years and continues to represent the newly added parishes of Broadwas, Cotheridge, Knightwick, and Doddenham.
 - She continues in her role as Rural Champion and serves as Vice Chair of the Old Grammar School Foundation, which supports students in further education.
 - **2. Ward Grant Allocation:**
 - The £1,000 Ward Grant for 2024/25 was distributed as follows:
 - £500 to Path o Nones
 - £500 to Broadwas Sports Association
 - **3. Local Government Reorganisation:**
 - Following government directive, local authority restructuring is underway, with MHDC expected to be dissolved by 2028.
 - Proposed outcomes include a Worcestershire unitary authority, a South Worcestershire unitary (the preferred option), or a larger mayoral system.
 - Cllr Jones-Williams expressed concern over the reduction of local

representation and the potential negative impact on rural communities.

4. MHDC Financial Measures:

- In light of the council's impending dissolution, MHDC is allocating reserves back into the community through grants.
- MHDC did not increase its share of Council Tax for 2025/26.
- A £1,000,000 Community Facility Legacy Grant Scheme has been launched to support improvements to local public spaces and community facilities.
 - Grants up to £100,000 available (match funding required for requests over £15,000).
 - Application deadline: 8 June 2025.

5. South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR):

- Final hearings concluded in April 2025, with possible follow-up in September to address ecological and transport concerns.
- The district is currently behind on its local development plan, with only 2 years of proven land supply.
- Planning appeals are being lost as a result, including two in Martley.

6. Acknowledgements:

- Cllr Jones-Williams welcomed newly elected County Councillor Mel Fordington and expressed thanks to outgoing Councillor Scott Richardson-Brown.
- She reaffirmed her commitment to working closely with parish councils.

SNT Kempsey and Alfrick (West Mercia Police) Report:

Reported crimes between 29th April 2024 and 26th April 2025:

2 Assaults- no injury.

2 Criminal damage.

2 Burglary, residential property.

1 Theft.

1 Harassment.

2 Poaching.

1 Anti-social behaviour instance reported in the village.

Compared to similar villages crime in Broadwas and Cotheridge is very low.

Patrols are active daily whilst on duty and 24-hour response cover from Malvern. The police have been active and visible within the community visiting schools and the community centre at St Leonards. Speed monitoring is being actively carried out in the villages when issues are raised. Cllr Worrall questioned the speeding and asked if they would attend in Cotheridge. Cllr

Burrows stated that the Parish Council had been in contact with the police and Worcestershire CC in regard of speeding and it was ongoing.

A member of the public raised the issue of speeding motorcycles in the villages and their promotion on websites and social media. PCSO Ash Smith.

Parish Overview

The Church Parish of Lower Teme Valley (LTV) comprises St Mary Magdalene Church (Broadwas), St Leonard's Church (Cotheridge), and Knightwick Chapel, all under a single Parochial Church Council (PCC).

St Leonard's Church, Cotheridge

- Progressing toward being a community hub; new stacking chairs purchased.
- Hosted a concert in August and runs monthly social gatherings.
- Welcomes Parish Council meetings in the church building.
- Annual fete hosted in Pauline and Mike Key's garden, a key fundraiser.
- Awaiting construction work on the church tower, faculty process completed.
- Monthly Evensong services continue but with a small regular congregation.
- School community contributed to the mural on the west wall.

St Mary Magdalene Church, Broadwas

- Holds three Sunday services per month, including a growing all-age service (up to 35 attendees, including 10 children).
- Strong school involvement: weekly and biweekly church visits and collective worship led by church representatives.
- Space at the back of the church being reconfigured to improve flexibility, with a trial layout using moveable pews.
- Festival services enhanced by a small choir under Elizabeth Winscom's guidance.

Pastoral Work

- Monthly "Lunch in Company" (LinC) moved from Broadwas to Martley Village Hall.

Acknowledgements

- Thanks expressed to all volunteers, particularly Robert Pearce and Elizabeth Winscom, for their contributions to the PCC and wider church community.

Presented by Rev Anne Potter, Team Rector.

5. To receive the Annual Report from the Parish Council.

The Annual Report from the Chairman, Cllr Burrows was received by members and is summarised below. A full copy of the report is available on our website.

1. Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Chair thanked all current councillors for their voluntary service, noting specific contributions from Cllrs Guest, Worrall, and Cullen. Recognition was given to the resignation of Cllr Longley and to Clerk Lisa Law (appointed October 2023) for her effective support. Thanks also extended to Lengthsman Jeremy and parishioners who attended meetings or made contact.

2. Governance and Finance

Key progress has been made in strengthening financial governance following audit recommendations. A new minuting system and decision/action log were introduced. Councillors undertook relevant training. The Council has kept within budget and is in Year 4 of a 10-year plan to responsibly reduce reserves, maintaining a below-inflation precept increase.

3. Communications and Responsiveness

Improvements include quicker responses to parishioner enquiries, better organisation of council records, and website updates. Communications via Footprints newsletter and website continue as needed.

4. Environment and Maintenance (Lengthsman Scheme)

A full schedule of maintenance is now in place. Work includes drain checks, sign cleaning, vegetation control, and VAS battery replacement. Dog waste bin installation is underway; salt bins have been restocked; and repairs made to damaged bins. The council is pursuing the replacement of village signs and continues efforts to recruit a voluntary footpath warden.

5. External Engagement

The PC has regularly liaised with District Councillors (good attendance), but had limited engagement from the County Councillor. Several issues were escalated to the MP and statutory bodies with mixed responses.

6. A44 Speed and Safety Concerns

Speeding and accidents along the A44 remain a major issue. West Mercia Police have increased enforcement and shared data. County Council dismissed calls for action in Cotheridge following a survey. The PC continues to press for safety measures and may seek specialist support.

7. Berryfields Recreation Area

Play equipment has been refreshed; repairs to fencing and adult equipment undertaken. A new maintenance contract is in place. The football pitch is no longer rented out but remains available for local, non-commercial use. Discussions with the County Council are ongoing regarding school parking access.

8. Broad Green SSSI

Last year's contracted cut did not occur due to repeated delays. Natural England accepted this, and new contractor arrangements are being prioritised for the current year.

9. Balancing Parish Interests

Efforts continue to balance attention between the two villages. A new noticeboard has been installed in Cotheridge. It was agreed to alternate meeting locations between Broadwas and Cotheridge.

10. Planning and Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

The PC has actively responded to planning applications and is reviewing the NDP with external funding. A well-attended public meeting was held. Results from the parish-wide consultation are pending and will inform the review's scope and timeline.

11. Councillor Recruitment

Despite efforts, the PC still has 5 councillor vacancies (2 Cotheridge, 3 Broadwas), placing operational strain on remaining members and risking quorum.

Conclusion

The Chair invited suggestions and ideas from parishioners and

reaffirmed the Council's commitment to serving both villages effectively in the year ahead.

6. To receive any questions or comments from parishioners.

No questions or comments were made from parishioners.

Meeting ended at 7.55pm

Signed:

Dated:

DRAFT