

KNIGHTON ON TEME PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICES

Detailed at the end of this report

MEETINGS

Throughout the last year the parish council has continued to follow protocol for physical meetings held at the Parish rooms Knighton On Teme.

The next parish council meeting will be on 14th May 2026 and continue to be held in The Parish Rooms on the first Thursday of alternate months unless otherwise stated, publicised within the agenda and open for all public to attend.

The Parish Council wishes to encourage attendance by members of the public who are given an opportunity to participate during the informal Public Question Time and raise any issue's they have within the parish area, give views on matters within the current agenda or raise a matter for future discussion. The publicised agendas provide information on how members of the public can engage with the Parish Council during public questions.

County Councillor Justin Bowen regularly attends meetings and provides up to date reports of County Council business prior to all meetings. District Councillor Douglas Godwin also regularly attends and gives detailed accounts of local council issues or progress. He also provides professional levels of advice the Parish Council can use on local planning matters.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND INVOLMENT / LOCAL BUSINESS

The Parish area is fortunate to have venues offering a great service and provision to the community, opening up their business and welcoming all to events and special occasions they organise. These include Knighton on Teme Caravan Park and Commonwood Farm who hold regular events, bars, music, firework displays etc that are open to all. A huge thank you goes out to these venues and the organisers for all the hard work and community spirit you provide to the Parish and larger area.

Furthermore, the same goes to the Parish Rooms and all the organisers of events that it holds. Each year more and more events pop up providing a great opportunity for the community to come together and enjoy nights out or community shows and competitions. A further reference has to be made to the Read family new to Maes Court who hosted an Easter Egg hunt, organised by the Parish Rooms and sponsored by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is always happy to support the Parish Rooms and we congratulate all those involved in promoting and making good use of this community asset.

The old Talbot Inn, now the Old Hunting Lodge at Newnham Bridge is continuing its use of diversifying to offer a varied range of events for the community including 'Traitors' weekends and Indian food nights. These are helping to maintain a much loved historical building very much on show within the Parish.

Another business within the Parish deserved of acknowledgement is the new Parkes' Garden Centre the old Taltrees site. Ryan Parkes has worked hard to set up his business in time for

the summer and he is wished well for his new venture that provides a great source of garden products for the wider community.

Tenbury Young Farmers and their helpers are a huge influence in this rural area and provide a great network for children and young people to engage and learn with.

They again hosted a bonfire and firework event in Tenbury working relentlessly before and after to make a spectacular event for the community, worthy of a special mention and thanks. Fireworks are a controversial subject to some and as the event was hosted as far as possible from livestock and equestrian land, the parish sponsored the event with a donation to help fund it.

COMMUNICATIONS

Agendas, minutes, the annual report and other documents of interest, are posted on notice boards around the parish area, outside the Parish Room and entered on Knighton on Teme Parish Councils own dedicated webpage that can be found at <https://knightonontemepc.gov.uk/>

The Parish Council website will regularly feed information and minutes from meetings onto the site for public viewing. It also incorporates a means of contacting the parish clerk. The use of the website will bring parish news to a wider audience where we can encourage community feedback and reporting on local matters.

The Worcestershire edition of County Association of Local Councils (CALC) is circulated to all Councillors via email which is also used for agendas, attachments and draft minutes.

Occasional articles, helpful advice plus news items are published in Temespan.

PLANNING AND HOUSING

This process is seen as adding a valuable local dimension to planning approval procedures, the Public Question Time at the start of each meeting gives the opportunity for parishioners to give their views to the Council before it discusses an application.

Planning application documents are made available via the planning portal for all councillors to view and copies are available during the meeting so that they can be seen by everyone present, this works satisfactorily. Most Parish Councillors are well versed in matters of planning having served the community for many years making well balanced decisions that have never been challenged.

Last year the Council met all planning application deadlines during the consultation period.

There were 9 planning applications received during the last twelve months. Of these applications the Parish Council supported 8 and had objection to 1, some of which were accompanied with recommendations or conditions to ensure that the best possible planning decision was made.

There were also three MDHC Planning Committee hearings at The Council House in Malvern where the Chairman represented the Parish Councils decision:

1. The Parish Council supported planning in principle for three houses at Mayview / Wyrebrook. Malvern Hills Planning Department and the Committee voted against, planning was later approved at Appeal.
2. The Parish Council had objection to planning for two houses at the Old Station House Newnham Bridge. Malvern Hills Planning Department and the Committee voted in favour. Land sold and secured by neighbouring properties.
3. The Parish Council supported planning for. Battery Energy Storage System at Knighton On Teme. Malvern Hills Planning Department and the Committee voted in favour of the plans.

In relation to the controversial BESS planning applications, the Parish Council was all along under close scrutiny and has been judged to have acted with total compliance. The support for the planning came not only from democratic opinions of the majority of the electorate within the Parish but also from a combined necessity for creating wider good for the communities. Together with this level of support and necessity plus knowledge from the huge amount of research on similar planning, it gave the Parish Council foresight that this project was inevitable. The Parish Council correctly directed its efforts in getting the best possible outcome for the Parish community with the very best of provisions on the development including increased biodiversity, reduced noise and make the site as safe and indiscernible as possible. Any other approach could very easily have seen the worst possible outcome with minimal efforts by the developer to screen or make the site as safe and fit for the environment it will sit.

HIGHWAYS

Requests for attention to potholes and gully problems are reported to the relevant department. They are assessed by the Highway Department to ensure they meet their criteria and are repairable at public expense. The parish have continued to report any matters requiring attention to the highways department, plus further reports for road sweeping to maintain clean kerbsides and drain cleaning on the main roads.

This year there have been 16 highways matters that have been reported, some of which are protracted matters and ongoing.

This year we have continued to promote the use of the existing litter bins within the parish area and to encourage dog owners to pick up their dogs mess.

There were two Litter Pick events during the year. Both the Autumn and Spring litter picks were well attended with members of the community taking to the street in their own time collecting litter as they went. Again, the most litter was collected from the A456 through the parish area, the lay-by near the Talbot yet again being identified as the biggest hot spot for litter and fly tipping. Members of the 'Keep Tenbury Clean and Green Group' continue to support keeping the Parish clean and report any major fly tipping.

The Lengthsman Scheme operated extremely well through the year. Under this scheme the Parish Council takes direct responsibility for minor highways problems such as clearing gully grates, digging out blocked gullies, clearing verge grips, advising landowners and frontages when their ditches need cleaning or where overhanging vegetation needs cutting back, cleaning and clearing signs and similar tasks. The tasks are carried out by the appointed contractor directed by the Clerk, and part of the costs are recovered from the County Council.

The reporting is being upgraded so Worcester Council can have greater accountability for the work undertaken.

Speeding traffic has again been a priority and ongoing problem along the A456 through Newnham Bridge, this section of road accommodates two main arterial routes onto one road until it meets Burford.

Highways and the Parish Council are constantly reviewing the use of deterrents and new means of traffic calming measure on this route. Since the installation of two new solar powered LED speed activated signs the data and observations have shown that these are making a significant impact on speed and traffic noise. The main issues of speed are now generally late at night or during the early hours when there is little chance of any enforcement.

It has also been highlighted that there are rising instances of speeding away from the main roads. Concern has been raised about speeding on smaller narrower lanes around the parish area which brings with it danger to walkers, horse riders and dog walkers. The local policing team have been asked to assist with this matter WCC highways have been asked to review speed limits in the Parish and consider lowering them at key high risk areas.

The Parish Council continues to encourage landowners to maintain their land that borders highways and neighbouring properties. The Parish Council has again published an article in Temespan to encourage landowners to cut their hedges and carry out maintenance during the cutting season. There has been a marked difference and drop in the amount of reports pertaining to overgrown hedgerows and trees however some reports and instances have been of significant disruption and threat to highway users. The Parish Council thanks those landowners who are maintaining their hedgerows and encourages more to do the same, in doing so they are adding to harmony within the community.

LOCAL POLICING PLAN

Police Community Support Officer Lee Durrant continues to support and interact with the Parish Council. It was agreed that the Parish Councils three point local policing plan for the next twelve months would be:

- a) rural crime
- b) unlawful fly tipping
- c) rural speeding

These are the priorities that the local community will expect police to concentrate on within the Parish during the next year.

FINANCE.

The internal audit system introduced a few years ago continues to operate efficiently. Payments during the year totalled £15,803.00 (previous year £14,171.26); The Precept for the year £11,000.

Donations to local providers of services totalled £800: £100 to Teme Span, £200 towards the annual bonfire/Tenbury Young Farmers, £100 Lindridge School, £150 Knighton on Teme Cricket Club, £150 Knighton on Teme Parish Rooms – children's event, £100 Knighton On Teme Caravan Park – events.

PARISH ASSETTS

Currently the Parish Council has two defibrillators located at the Parish Rooms and Knighton On Teme Caravan Park. This year both have again been serviced and received new housings, KOT caravan park providing a wonderful ex-telephone box to locate theirs.

This year the Parish Council agreed that a third unit would be purchased to serve the community of Newnham Bridge. To accompany this, there will be efforts in the coming year to replace both the existing defibrillators upgrading them to newer models. We will then have three new defibrillators to service the community.

Two new Parish Council notice boards have been installed this year, one at the Parish Rooms and one at Wyrebrook.

PARISH COUNCILLORS

During the year we have seen the resignation / retirement of long term Cllr Roger Lear who has been a valued councillor and point of contact for community spanning over a decade.

Following the advertisement for co-option of new councillors the following were agreed and welcomed to the Parish Council:

Mark Hardisty

Carl Fordington

Christopher Bufton

Cllrs Hardisty, Fordington and Bufton join the elected councillors: Duane Hubbard (Chair), Jonathan Barnes, Emma Mapp, Jonathon Bradley, Huw Bevan and Janet Spilsbury to make a full council.

Mrs Rachel Lambert remains the Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

D Hubbard

Chairman of Knighton on Teme Parish Council