

**Minutes of the Kempsey PACT meeting held at the Community Centre on Tuesday
17th February 2026 at 12.30pm**

PRESENT: (28) Ann Smith(Chairman), Cllr Martin Allen (County Council), Cllr David Harrison (MHDC), Cllr John Michael (District Council), Cllr Chris Waller (Chair of Parish Council),Cllr Mike Biddle (Parish Council), Cllr John White (Parish Council), Denise White, Rev Kat Mepham (Vicar), Ash Smith PCSO, Pete Meredith Rural Business Officer West Mercia Police, Susan Bott, Jenny Hughes, Malcolm Holland, Peter Benham, Brian Hewlett, Jan Harrison, Trevor Geens, Gary Jacobs, Sue Jacobs, Wendy Coen, Newton Coen, Chris Gillies, Margaret Gillies, Claire Hinks, Kath Padden, Andy Hay, Marian Walters.

1.Welcome and Introductions: Ann Smith welcomed everyone to the Community Centre and thanked them for attending. Everybody then introduced themselves.

2.Apologies: Cllr Rob Gardner, Bryony Baynes (Headteacher KPS), Sally Linsey (Cornflower Club), Joy Clee (Churchwarden), Simon Bott (Lengthsman), Cathy Garner (Community Builder), Maxine Hemming, Penny Warren (WI)

3.Minutes: Copies of the November 2025 meeting minutes had been circulated prior to this meeting, distributed at the meeting and were approved.

4.Reports from County, District and Parish Councils:

COUNTY COUNCIL

County Councillor Martin Allen gave the following report.

COUNCIL TAX AND THE BUDGET

The government have informed WCC that they may raise council tax by an additional 4%, so a total of £8.99%.

The legal deadline for WCC to vote through a budget is the 11th of March, or 1st of April if the Secretary of State becomes involved.

The budget meeting has been set for the 26th of February, with a reserve date of 6th of March.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Last year I said that WCC intended to build a new High School. The new administration has now said no to this project.

At the WCC Cabinet meeting 05/02/26 the Cabinet noted that currently the sufficiency of secondary school places for Worcester City secondary pupils will be provided through the expansion of Bishop Perowne CE Academy and Tudor Grange Academy

Worcester and then through the surplus places at other secondary schools, namely but not exclusively Dyson Perrins CofE Academy (the closest alternative school to Christopher Whitehead Language College) and Pershore High School (the closest alternative school to Nunnery Wood High School).

The same report states that Hanley school will be full after 2029.

SCHOOL PLACE NUMBER

At the same Cabinet meeting held in February 2026, the Assessment of Sufficiency of Education Provision in Mainstream Schools was presented and discussed. The Worcestershire County Council (WCC) education department has acknowledged that Kempsey School is currently oversubscribed and unable to accommodate all applicants.

When inquiring about the arrangements for students who would typically attend Kempsey, WCC advised that these children will be required to attend the nearest school with available places.

Additionally, I sought clarification regarding the construction timeline for the new two-form entry school near Taylors Lane. WCC indicated that the projected opening date is September 2030, with funding part sourced from Section 106 contributions.

The report also stated that Upton and Welland schools had enough student places available.

UNITARY AUTHORITY

I have no more news apart from a final round of consultation has gone out. As I have said before, the government have said they will announce by the end of July what is to happen. I have abstained on every vote.

HEAD OF HIGHWAYS TO ATTEND A MEETING WITH KPC

I have asked Cllr Karl Perks, who is the head of highways to come and explain to you why WCC will not install a controlled crossing near the shop.

He has agreed to come and talk to us on Thursday the 19th of March at 1400.

REQUEST FOR DOUBLE YELLOW LINES SQUIRES CLOSE/SQUIRES WALK ENTRANCE

This has now been done.

REQUEST FOR DOUBLE YELLOW LINES AT CORNER TO DOCTORS SURGERY.

This also has now been completed.

DEMENTIA CAFÉ

A new dementia café has started, based in Upton's Rugby Club, it meets every other Tuesday morning from 1030 – 1200, yesterday, both Upton Town Councillor Rebecca Rollinson and I were invited, and I was pleased to see how many people attended, there were games, laughter and I was really pleased I went.

If you would like any other information, please contact Deb Ashwell of Ashwell Home Care Services by either telephoning 01684 778750 or by email info@ashwellhomecareservices.co.uk

COMMUNITY CAFÉ

I was delighted to provide £1000 towards the new community café, my thanks go to Clare our deputy clerk and everyone involved, who have worked so hard to make it a huge success.

DISTRICT COUNCIL.

David Harrison said the public consultation of the SWDP ends at 5.00pm today. The main modifications should go ahead leading to a five year housing land supply. This will prevent a lot of further housing applications on sites not allocated for development. MHDC will not be raising Council Tax for two years.

He warned that people who drive into flood water and get stuck, are not covered by insurance and the AA/RAC will not rescue them. They have to organise removal of their vehicle themselves.

MHDC is working with police to catch the people who recently smashed windows at the St Peters fish and chip shop.

He had a confrontation with the developers at Brookend Lane regarding problems caused by the mud and traffic issues. David asked that people email him asking for the re-instatement of the grass verges churned up by large contractors vehicles near the site and the re-sowing of wild flowers. He thanked Claire Witton for her work at the Community Café.

John Michael said MHDC has been consulted on Local Government re-organisation but the government will make the final decision. Highways department says the problem of flooding in Old Road South near Meadow Close is due to tree roots. John will chase this up. The contractors building a new property close to the shop whose vehicles were causing a huge problem, have been very co-operative and now park their vehicles partly on the pavement thereby avoiding the many previous holdups on the A38.

John is the resident representative for Platform Housing so please advise him of any problems.

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman Chris Waller gave the following report.

Projects

Pavilion Community Café at Plovers Rise opened on 13 February. The project was originally conceived and developed by Cathy Garner with the new kitchen and seating area being realised by KPC's Deputy Clerk Claire Witton. KPC are currently recruiting for a Café Manager to lead the team of volunteers operating the café. It will be open each Friday through the spring with openings likely to be extended in the summer, with purchases by card only. Part funded by the MHDC Rural Fund with a contribution from County Cllr Allen.

Pump Track at Old Road South. Tender launched on 5 January, now closing on 23 February with a bid value of £100k in a two stage construction project. A tender bid Evaluation Panel has been established and the groundworks start date deadline has been extended by MHDC to 31 May 2026. The project remains dependent on planning permission approval before this deadline.

IT & Youth Hub at Plovers Rise. New small building adjacent to the Youth Centre. Currently receiving bids to submit to MHDC in preparation for groundworks deadline of 31 March 2026.

Energy Efficiency improvement at the Youth Centre. On track to install solar panels and battery storage by summer this year.

The above three projects are part funded by the MHDC Legacy Grant Scheme.

Rocky bridge replacement Awaiting the outcome of a funding application, expected in March.

New Community & Sports Centre at Old Road South.

Progress was made on planning application M/25/00408/FUL, with Worcestershire County Council Highways indicating a likely no-objection to Phase 1 of the PFL project, subject to conditions to be indicated to the Planning Case Officer. To address Highways concerns, the proposed overflow parking area has been removed entirely from the application plans, which have now been updated on the MHDC planning website. Work continues to respond to statutory consultees, including revisions to site access to protect the oil pipeline, further information on drainage, flooding, sport and fire safety, and the development of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to support Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Other matters.

Parish councillors have formally turned down the opportunity to be paid allowances from Parish Council funds and have opted to remain as unpaid volunteers. Various actions are in hand to improve bank interest received and optimise KPC's VAT position. KPC's budget for 2026/2027 has been set at £270,920 with a precept request of £186,172 to MHDC.

A summary of the monthly Full Council meetings is now being published at KPC's website in advance of the approved minutes being published. We will be changing KPC's email address shortly to comply with new regulations. We are currently advertising for a Lengthsman.

Love Kempsey Working Party is organising a Daffodil Weekend on 21–22 March 2026, including a drop-in event at St Mary's Church and targeted action in areas where bulbs have failed to grow. Progress was reported on a decorative sign, subject to liaison with WCC Highways, and plans were agreed for a larger, more brightly lit Christmas tree for 2026/27.

All three community buildings remained well used. The Heartstart team have held CPR and defibrillator training sessions at the Community Centre. Repairs to address damp and potential roof issues at the Community Centre and the Pavilion are underway.

Kempsey Tennis Club has successfully secured funding for court resurfacing and improved lighting and the cricket club agreed will be starting a junior team at Plovers Rise in the coming season.

The YMCA continues to run evening sessions at the Youth Hub at the Youth Centre, Plovers Rise, once per week. Platform Housing is contributing £1500 for internet gaming equipment for these events.

Policing priorities:

Requested by the Safer Neighbourhood Team every three months, KPC has identified: (1) addressing anti-social behaviour at the Rocky, (2) tackling illegal and dangerous parking, especially near the doctor's surgery and shops, (3) reducing shoplifting in local shops.

Vacancies

KPC continues to have four vacancies for councillors and despite the recent activity and interest expressed on local social media, no new applications have been received.

Rob Gardener's Planning report

The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review continues along its path to adoption, and the sooner the better since once adopted it should help prevent – but not guarantee – resisting further speculative housing applications on sites not allocated for development.

The Inspectors have recommended Main Modifications (or changes) to the submitted plan, 83 in all, which they feel are necessary to make the plan 'sound', which is a legal requirement. They affect proposed policies, introduce a number of new policies and give Reasoned Justification why they are needed. These are undergoing public consultation which in fact ends at 5pm today.

The Parish Council has considered the various modifications insofar as they are likely to affect future planning in the parish. In the main, our view is that they do not significantly change things from the plan submitted. There are no new housing sites proposed in the parish although, unsurprisingly, the South Worcester Urban Extension – which is mostly in the parish and already underway – has been kept. Importantly, the Worcester-Kempsey Significant Gap has been retained but such gaps now have a policy of their own, not lumped in with Green Belts which concerned the Inspectors since they have different status. They have made it clear that the gaps are not to protect the countryside as such - they are a tool to keep the land open and essentially free of development to prevent settlements merging, which is what parishioners want.

That makes it all the more difficult to understand why the allocated 2ha. employment site at Open Barn Farm - right in the middle of the Strategic Gap alongside the A38 – is still proposed. It is clearly contradictory to the purpose of the new policy, and the parish

council has submitted representations as part of the consultation pointing out this anomaly and have asked for it to be removed.

Having mentioned the Urban Extension, the applications for early infrastructure to bring the housing development forward and to establish the Design Principles to be followed by future proposals on the largest parcel of land have yet to be approved. As well as the SWDPR being adopted, this housing has to start being built if the available housing land supply is to meet the required target. Again, without that being met year on year further speculative proposals might be successful since the government's 1.5 million housing target is influencing many decisions.

In that respect, rumours abound but we have not yet been told that an appeal has been made against the refusal of outline planning permission for up to 99 dwellings between Bannut Hill and Napleton Lane. It is likely but, in a way, the later the better and is another reason to get the SWDPR adopted as soon as possible.

5. Reports from School, Police and Church.

School.

Bryony Baynes was unable to attend but informed the meeting that there was a vacancy on the Governing Body for a Community governor and if anyone was interested to contact the school. Denise White said she was interested in becoming a governor and Marian Walters said she would inform Bryony later today.

Police. The police report is attached to the minutes as a separate document.

Pc Pete Meredith, a retired police officer, is a Rural & Business Crime Officer, working across South Worcestershire, as part of a larger dedicated problem-solving team to reduce crime in rural businesses and farms. Regarding the recent theft of a large horse trailer in Kempsey, he said many of these thefts are recovered from traveller's sites although this one has not been located as yet. There has been a recent spate of thefts of jewellery from properties in Crowle and Tibberton, but these were few and far between. Thieves have also been smashing key safes and stealing car and other keys although these incidents have mainly been in larger areas.

Church. Rev Kat thanked everyone who helped make the Christmas Fayre such a success. The 100days of January event held in church on Saturday 25th January had been a successful community afternoon with lots of games and delicious food being enjoyed by over 60 people.

Fund raising for repairs (estimated to be in the region of £120000+) to the stained-glass east window in church, is being launched on Friday 20th February. This is The Pocket Chorale Society performing in the village hall starting at 7.30pm.

6. Kempsey CIC. Simon was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report.

November's PACT meeting was just before the 2025 Christmas Fair at St. Mary's. We worked hand in hand with Severnside Parishes to stage the annual event and helped raise just over £3,000 to help with the community work undertaken by St. Mary's. The

event benefited from generous support from local businesses including Edwards Motors, Clerkenleap Garage, Mill Lane Nurseries, Platform Housing, Asda in Worcester and Tesco's St. Peter's. It was encouraging to see previous stallholders coming again to support Kempsey, and likewise their previous customers returning to stock up their supplies and goods – especially **Bransford Honey** and **Saints Preserve Us** produce. This meant that over £10,000 went to the church from two annual events.

We helped Cllr Stevens, the Parish Council and the Company Theatre Academy light the traditional Christmas Tree lights to mark the arrival of the Christmas Season. I'm told that Father Christmas put in an appearance, but for the fifth year in a row I managed to miss him!

We did a bit of team building and reward with a very enjoyable breakfast at Nuyards with '**The Graveyard Shift**' otherwise known as the Tuesday Group who are doing sterling work in the Churchyard to the benefit of everyone. Interesting to note that Nuyards are keen to support the Community planting around Kempsey. Given the drive to increase bio-diversity this could offer timely support.

Inspired by the multi-talented Susan Bott, several groups are coming together to trial **Daffodil Days** over the weekend of 21st and 22nd March. With St. Mary's Church, the School and our local Women's Institute getting thoroughly involved this could shape into another marvellous annual event in Kempsey.

Two representatives of the CIC attended an informal meeting with volunteers from neighbouring Parishes who organise Community Events in their own areas. It was useful to compare notes and share experiences, and the hope is that there might be some benefit to sharing resources thereby saving the anguish of fund raising to acquire assets such as gazebos and marquees. It was interesting to note that in the main, our neighbouring groups are focussed on one annual event for their area, while Kempsey's CIC seeks to work on a full programme of annual events and other activities.

Other Activities? Now we are getting slightly longer hours of daylight we are thinking about the next batch of interviews for Kempsey's **Oral History Project**. We will make personal approaches to suitable victims, but we are also interested to hear from local folk who were closely involved with the Lockdown Covid-19 measures in Kempsey; particularly **Foodbank** and **Food Distribution**. Hopefully it's something we won't need to see again in our lifetimes.

Daffadowndilly Days 21 & 22 March

Summer Fete 27 June

7. Community Builder activities. Cathy was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report.

A warm and heartfelt thank you to everyone who came to support the launch of Kempsey's new community coffeeshop last Friday. It was wonderful to see the space buzzing with conversation and connection. Huge thanks to our brilliant volunteers, and to Kempsey Parish Council for working so hard to secure the Rural Development Fund

grant that made this possible. Special thanks to Claire Witten who led the interior refurbishment and worked tirelessly to get it done in time, on a very modest budget.

Our next project has begun: an Art, History and Nature Trail in the village. We are collaborating with a local artist to create a willow hide and two or three further interpretation points, where local people can find information on history and biodiversity. If you're interested in local history or nature, please get involved by emailing communitybuilderkempsey@gmail.com.

Progress also continues on plans for the Pump Track, with tender documents coming in for review. It's great that there will soon be more opportunities for getting healthy and having fun in the outdoors.

As you know there are 70+ activity groups in the parish. I wanted to draw your attention to a new one: Our thriving "Come On In" coffee morning, led by Libby James and her fabulous team of volunteers at the Firs, is now hosting a singing group 12-1 on the first Monday of each month - do go along if you'd like to sing for fun.

For young people aged 12+ we have been running a YMCA-led Youth Hub for several months now, with a small, consistent group of young people. We're looking to grow this group, so do let any young people in your family know that it's happening 7-8.30pm on Mondays at the Youth Centre.

Plans are progressing for a Digital Hub at Plovers Rise, supported with government funding, to help bridge the digital poverty gap in our community. We are grateful to those who continue to donate devices they're no longer using and to our wonderful volunteers who repurpose them and who support people to use their devices and get things done online with ease!

Thank you for your ongoing support for these community initiatives and I look forward to welcoming you to your community coffeeshop at Plovers Rise on Friday - it's open until 5pm and quieter in the afternoon!

9. Any Other Business.

* Ann said there was going to be another Keep Britain Tidy campaign from 13th – 29th March. Support for this will be from individuals and if anybody wishes to borrow equipment they can do so by contacting the parish office. They can email Ann (annsmith1704@btinternet.com) when they have done it and she will arrange collection.

* Patterns are available for people to knit or crochet daffodils for the WI daffodil cascade which will be put up in church for the daffodil weekend. Contact Denise (denisejwhite1959@gmail.com) or Marian (marian.walters@outlook.com)

* Jan was thanked for providing tea and coffee.

10. Date of next meeting. Tuesday 9th February 2026 at **7.30pm.**

The meeting closed at 2.25 pm.