

**Minutes of the Kempsey PACT meeting held at the Community Centre on Tuesday
19th May 2026 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: (23) Ann Smith(Chairman), Cllr Martin Allen (County Council), Cllr David Harrison (MHDC), Cllr John Michael (District Council), Cllr Rob Gardener (Parish Council), Cllr Mike Biddle (Parish Council), Cllr John White (Parish Council), Joy Clee (Churchwarden), Simon Bott (CIC), Denise White (WI), Rev Kat Mepham (Vicar), Penny Warren (WI), Ian Fenton, Helen Fenton, Sally Linsey (Cornflower Club Peter Benham, John Baker, Brian Hewlett, Jan Harrison, Trevor Geens, Gary Jacobs, Dave Bevan, 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: Ashley Smith (PCSO), Pete Meredith, Cllr Chris Waller (Chairman Parish Council), Bryony Baynes (Headteacher KPS), Cathy Garner (Community Builder), Maxine Hemming, Chris Gillies, Margaret Gillies, Linda Jenkins.

3.Minutes: Copies of the minutes of 17th February meeting had been circulated prior to this meeting, distributed at the meeting and were approved.

** Since the last meeting, Denise White and Maxine Hemming have joined the Governing Body of Kempsey Primary School*

4.Reports from County, District and Parish Councils:

COUNTY COUNCIL

County Councillor Martin Allen gave the following report.

CHANGES AT COUNTY HALL

As you know the county council elections were held last May 2025, it brought sweeping changes. Reform swept into power. Jo Monk was their leader until she was ousted by Alan Amos.

Five Reform members have now left Reform and formed their own party.

Last Thursday it was the County Councils AGM, during which the Conservatives, LibDems, Greens, and some Independents took over running the council. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have now reluctantly left this coalition on instructions from their HQ in London.

BUS TRAVEL FOR OUR VETERANS AND SERVING MEMBERS OF OUR ARMED FORCES

Following years of disappointment and false promises, finally my wish for our Veterans and current serving members of our armed forces to travel free on buses within Worcestershire in line with the current pensioners bus pass commenced on the 13th of April.

PAVEMENT IN THE ALLEY LEADING FROM THE SHOP REPAIRED

I am delighted that following my request to Highways to get the newly laid footway repaired following National Grid bodge, National Grid have been forced to repair it.

MEETING WITH KEMPSEY SCHOOL AND POLICE

In April, I arranged a meeting with the Police, School, WCC and MHDC to discuss the issues with parking and traffic flow. The Police and WCC are now looking at imposing new restrictions near the school.

ISSUES WITH MHDC REFUSE VEHICLE ACCESSING THE FIRS

I understand that from a local resident at the Firs that again MHDC refuse crew had issues accessing The Firs. I have requested that MHDC let me know of any further issues experienced so that I can build a case to take to Highways for double yellow lines.

ECO PARK – GANDIES CAFÉ OPENS

I was delighted to be invited to the launch of our new café in the village. I wish Gandies every success.

NEW SECTION FLAG

I was delighted last Sunday to attend the Blessing of the new Section Flag for the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, I am pleased to report the event was well attended and I would like to wish the troop continued success.

#11226 SPEED REDUCTION REQUEST FOR PIXHAM FERRY/OLD ROAD SOUTH

As you will have seen by the exchange of emails, your request for the speed limit to be reduced on part of Pixham Ferry Lane and Old Road South is now being considered by WCC.

A38 ROAD CLOSURES

From 26th until 28th of May parts of the A38 from Earls Croome to School Lane, Ripple will be closed for road surface dressing.

From 28th until 30th of May parts of the A38 from Kempsey to Severn Bank in Severn Stoke will be closed between 2000 -0600 for road surface dressing.

The Parish Council refused two digital bus shelters offered by the County Council because they would be expected to bear the cost of maintenance.

There is no funding available for another road crossing in Kempsey.

Martin was thanked for his detailed report.

DISTRICT COUNCIL.

David Harrison.

97 planning applications up to April have been submitted during the last 12 months - May 2025 to 30th April 2026

The SWDP Review which has been worked on for over 5 years to determine where planning should go, and also the design and other constraints, was approved by the Planning Inspectors on 24th March after a 6 month Consultation and public enquiry. This is again for Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Worcester City BUT as there is a change of rules, a Further Plan has to be completed within 30 months (called the "LOCAL PLAN") taking the new rules of the new NPPF into account. This new LOCAL PLAN covering Worcester City, Wychavon and Malvern Hills has started to be assembled and certain documents have to be submitted by the end of September this year.

Kempsey has a Parish Plan approved in November 2017 and should be updated as soon as possible. £10,000 is available from Malvern Hills as a grant to get this underway, but Malvern Hills District Council will soon cease to exist and we, as a parish, must not lose this funding.

The flood defence at Severn Stoke is going ahead and a lot of work has already been done. David is concerned that a lot of water comes off the M5 motorway which can cause problems when it reaches the A38. David is hoping to have a meeting with Matt Maginnis, Flood Risk Manager, from Worcestershire County Council to prevent back water coming onto the A38. In reply to a question, David said the water level across the Ham area would only rise by a millimetre from the Callow end side of the river to the A38 side when the Severn Stoke flood defences are in place similar to that at Kempsey.

John Michael. John is the resident representative for Platform Housing so please advise him of any problems. He had recently helped a resident when her home was flooded. He met with Platform Housing who put the matter right and awarded the resident compensation. Mud on the Marlbank carriageway has been cleared along with some rubbish. Government re-organisation is expected in June, elections for new councillors will be held in 2027 and MHDC will cease to exist in 2028. This will inevitably put a lot more pressure on Parish Councils.

John is Chair of the Malvern Hills Trust and the Malvern Hills Bill Select Committee hearing began on 20th January. The Committee will hear evidence from the Trust and provide individuals and bodies directly and specially affected by the Bill with the opportunity to give evidence about the Bill's specific provisions and to seek any amendments.

The Trust welcomes this process which should help to ensure that the proposed new legislation is fit for purpose, and that it will improve the Trust's ability to care for the Hills long into the future. Whilst the Bill will help the Trust care for the Hills and Commons, it is important to understand that its obligations will not change and the right of the public to enjoy the Hills will not be affected. The Select Committee stage ensures full transparency and accountability of the proposed Bill and is a crucial stage

in the Parliamentary process. We welcome the Committee's scrutiny because it helps ensure the Bill is fit for the long term. The aim is simple: clearer rules so we can care for the Hills better, while public access and our purpose remain the same.

PARISH COUNCIL

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Rob Gardener gave the following report.

The SWDP Review has now been adopted which should significantly help to resist further housing applications on sites not allocated for development in the plan. The Worcester-Kempsey Significant Gap has been confirmed and, while a new policy does allow for minor developments within it, the overriding purpose is to keep it open and free from development to prevent the merging of the two settlements. On that basis, it is difficult to accept the continued and inconsistent allocation of a two-hectare employment site at Open Barn Farm within the gap, although the Review Inspectors do recognise that this is an anomaly which could be reconsidered. This would be when the newly adopted review is itself reviewed since it was prepared under an earlier version of the National Planning Policy Framework, not that now in place.

The time frame for an appeal to be made against the refusal of outline planning permission for up to 99 dwellings between Bannut Hill and Napleton Lane expires on 8th June 2026.

The planning application for the new Community and Sports Centre is still creeping forward. There are issues regarding protection of the oil pipeline which crosses the site and the preparation of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to support Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, both of which are in the process of being resolved. More problematic is that WCC Highways have now recommended that the application be refused planning permission since it has not been shown that the use of the centre would not cause traffic and safety issues on the local highway network. However, the decision is for MHDC and in view of the longstanding policy commitment to the development and considerable public investment the Parish Council is putting forward counter arguments. Moreover, the application is to now include a detailed design for a pump track, not simply a site for one. This is based on the successful submission by Clark and Kent, who built the track at Battenhall, following a competitive tender.

The Parish Council also made a successful bid for £90K to construct an IT and Youth Hub at Plovers Rise, next to the existing Youth Centre. This cost estimate was based on an earlier suggested design. However, having gone out to tender, none of the bidders could get near that figure but, since MHDC wish to actively support the project, they have undertaken to fund the whole thing.

Trees at the rear of the Youth Centre have been reduced in height to help the efficiency of a range of solar panels to be installed on its roof. This is also the result of a successful bid for funding from MHDC and, following a successful tender, the scheme is going forward and will commence in June.

A further bid is being made to refurbish the sports pavilion and improve facilities. Chloe Joy, the appointed manager, is hoping to expand the Pavilion Café to additional opening day(s) and events and Claire Witton is working closely with her.

Finally on the Parish Council's immediate projects, a grant has been offered towards a replacement bridge on The Rocky.

Rebecca Lashley is a guest speaker at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 21st. She works with the County Council's Green Infrastructure Partnership to find ways to maximise biodiversity benefits. Simon Bott will also give an overview of the activities of Kempsey's CIC.

A question was asked if the Parish Council or District Council had contacted Morrisons regarding the number of times the village shop is closed, often due to staff shortages. Neither council had contacted Morrisons and there has been no feedback either. More cameras have been put inside the shop.

5. Reports from School, Police and Church.

School. Bryony Baynes, Headteacher sent the following report.

As always, the summer term is a particularly busy one here at Kempsey Primary School, and this year is certainly no exception.

Our Year 6 pupils have just completed their SATs tests, which they approached with great maturity and resilience, and we are very proud of them. Meanwhile, our Year 2 children are currently in the middle of their assessments, and they too are working extremely hard.

We are also in the process of significant staffing changes. One of our class teachers is leaving at the end of the academic year, and I'm pleased to say that we were inundated with applications for the vacancy. We received over 80 applications and have shortlisted six very strong candidates. Interviews are taking place tomorrow, so we are hopeful of appointing an excellent addition to the team.

Looking ahead, we have now been allocated our new Reception pupils for September. We are expecting 60 children to join us, with one outstanding appeal still pending. We are very much looking forward to welcoming these new families into our school community.

As you will know, this term is full of key events and celebrations. We have trips, productions, and our leavers' service for Year 6 to look forward to, alongside favourites such as Sports Day and the Colour Run. These are always highlights of the school year and provide fantastic opportunities for pupils to celebrate their achievements.

Alongside these events, staff are working incredibly hard behind the scenes. End-of-year reports are being written for every pupil, and assessments are being completed and marked, all while maintaining the energy and excitement of the final term.

Finally, I would like to share that Mrs Wallis, our Office Manager, will be leaving us after over 19 years of dedicated service to Kempsey Primary School. Many of you will know just how central she has been to the smooth running of the school and to supporting families over the years. She will leave an enormous hole, and we are currently in the process of trying to recruit someone to follow in her footsteps.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of the school.

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

Church. Rev Kat was pleased that the Daffodowndilly weekend, which was centred in the church, had been a success and the church enjoyed massive Easter celebrations. The summer fete is taking place on Saturday 27th June and the first meeting to agree plans had brought in lots of new ideas and support. There is to be a grand draw again this year and the tickets will be delivered in the near future. The bottom area of the graveyard is to be consecrated by a bishop in the coming months. We have an ongoing problem with dog fouling in the churchyard despite several notices asking that dogs are on the lead at all times. The toddler group continues to grow with 34 present on Monday along with their parents. The Wednesday evening youth club which takes place from 7.00-8.30pm, now has 30 members from 11 years upwards, who enjoy a good mix of activities. Volunteers would be most welcome to help.

6. Kempsey CIC. Simon said the Daffodil weekend had made £700 and this had been distributed as follows. £300 towards the graveyard working group, £300 towards the stained glass window repair fund and £100 given to the WI charity St Richard's Hospice. It is Simon's wish that daffodils are planted all the way from Kempsey to Severn Stoke and he is hoping to recruit volunteers from various organisations to help. Kempsey Parish Council and Severn Stoke Parish Council will buy the bulbs. Simon had met the man from MHDC who cuts the verges and thanked him for protecting the daffodils in the Spring and his thanks were much appreciated. Lovely Jubbly will be present at the church fete and the school fireworks again this year. Simon asked if anyone was willing to interview people for the Oral History Project as volunteers were much needed.

7. Community Builder activities. Cathy Garner who was our Community Builder sent her apologies for this meeting. She sent Marian the following message. *The post was only funded until December 2025. The Parish Council applied to extend it and were granted a further three months' funding. I understand the MHDC funding pot no longer exists, so there are no funded Community Builder roles anymore. I let the Parish Council know that, while I was very happy to bring money into the parish, I did not feel comfortable taking funding from the parish precept (this was an idea that, I think, had been discussed at KPC, at least informally, if not formally). So my role came to a natural, slightly belated, conclusion at the end of March and I am keen to feed back to PACT at some point in the future.*

9. Any Other Business.

* The loose wires in the ATM at the shop have now been fixed.

- * David Harrison said it was 73 years today that he and his family took over running the Farmers Arms.
- * Jan was thanked for providing tea and coffee.

10.Date of next meeting. Tuesday 25th August 2026 at **7.30pm.**

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.