Minutes of the Kempsey PACT meeting held at the Community Centre on Tuesday 3rd November 2026 at 12.30pm

PRESENT: (22) Ann Smith(Chairman), Cllr Martin Allen (County Council), Cllr David Harrison (MHDC), Cllr Chris Waller (Chairman Parish Council), Cllr Rob Gardener (Parish Council), Cllr Mike Biddle (Parish Council), Cllr Neil Stevens (Parish Council), Julie Stevens, Karen Jones, Kelvin Morrison, Bryony Baynes (Headteacher KPS), Alicia Burnett (Family Support Worker KPS), Penny Warren (WI), Rev Kat Mepham (Vicar), Sally Linsey (Cornflower Club), Jan Harrison, Brian Norfolk, John Linforth, Eve Linforth, Cathy Garner, Robyn Waller, Marian Walters (Secretary).

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

2.Apologies: Joy Clee (Churchwarden), Cllr John White (Parish Council), Cllr John Michael (MHDC), Denise White, Maxine Hemming, Nick Richardson (Platform Housing),

3.Minutes: Copies of the minutes of 25th August meeting 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.

WORCESTERSHIRE ON DEMAND BUS RIDES

Between 01.01.26 and 27.08.26, the service provided 7,337 rides in total, including112 by Veterans and 3,088 by Pensioners. I regard this as an overwhelming success and will keep pressing for more.

OLD VICARAGE CLOSE FOOTWAY

This work has had to be delayed; it is hoped it will be done in the spring subject to funding being available.

CHANGES TO PLANNING POLICY

The government has required county and district councils to change their planning policies, and the changes will be significant. In future, Officers will decide most applications and Councillors will be unable to challenge their decisions. Planning Committees will be reduced to 13 members.

Almost all planning applications will be decided by Officers, and local councillors will no longer be able to refer the applications to a planning committee. This is wholly contrary

to democratic principles, as unelected officials will be free of oversight by elected councillors.

PLANNING APPEAL 8TH SEPTEMBER

Thank you to everyone who attended the Bannut Hill planning appeal. Special thanks to David, John and Rob, who joined me in speaking up for Kempsey. We now await the planning inspector's decision.

COUNTY HALL FOR SALE, SHRUB HILL QUARTER OPTIONS

County Hall is now for sale, with the price available on application. The NHS was asked whether it wished to purchase some or all the land but emphatically declined. However, discussions are under way with the NHS about establishing a new Community Diagnostic Centre in the Shrub Hill Quarter on land owned by WCC. The centre would provide easier access to tests, scans and diagnostic services, helping to reduce pressure on hospitals and shorten waiting times.

In reply to a question regarding the 40mph speed limit at the Ketch roundabout, Martin said he had spoken to a Highways Safety Officer who said it was safe.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The government has decided that LGR in Worcestershire is most likely to continue, with a final decision before Christmas. So currently, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Council elections will proceed in May 2027.Elections to the shadow unitary councils would take place in May 2028, with a vesting day of 1 April 2029.

TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS ELLSDON, ELLSDON RISE AND POST OFFICE LANE.

In April, Kempsey school requested a meeting with several agencies, including the local police, a traffic sergeant and the person responsible for deciding traffic restrictions. Your two district councillors and MHDC were also invited. The headteacher made clear that she could no longer ask staff to patrol roads near the school.

Dangerous and inconsiderate parking continues despite police efforts to prevent it.

The meeting recognised the risk of children being run over and the difficulty ambulances and fire engines face in reaching homes and the school. Afterwards, MHDC, the Parish Council and other road associations were consulted on proposals for further parking restrictions near the school. None submitted comments.

Members of the public expressed views both for and against the proposals. After weighing these views, the police and WCC decided to introduce some new restrictions despite the objections. One restriction directly affects me and two neighbours: we will no longer be able to park outside our homes.

If these changes affect other areas, I am willing to meet residents and request that parking restrictions be considered there too.

Martin was thanked for his report.

DISTRICT COUNCIL.

David Harrison said that following the Local Government review, he was undecided as to whether or not he will stand as District Councillor next April. He was concerned that the hedgerow near the new development at Clerkenleap had legally been cut right back. He had been to a meeting with Rob Gardener to look at plans for the Welbeck site which includes 2205 houses, a school, shops and a pub. David had a meeting regarding the Saxon Meadows site which has been rumbling on for seven years and has not yet received a reply to the letter he sent to the enforcement officer. MHDC is losing many of its planning officers and is bringing in many agency workers.

PARISH COUNCIL

Chris Waller, Chairman, gave the following report.

Headline news is that the new Community and Sports Centre at Pixham Ferry Lane has received planning permission but passing bays will have to be constructed by Taylor Wimpey along Pixham Ferry Lane as part of their obligations arising from permission for the Lygon Green housing estate. There were twenty four conditions some of which were ecology requirement, biodiversity, archaeological investigations, badger monitoring etc and the Parish Council is indebted to the MHDC planners for their support. The pump track is going forward and work will start later this year. A name "Pixham Park" has been proposed which has to be agreed by MHDC. The Community Café is thriving and is now open on a Sunday morning as well as all day Friday. Parking is getting difficult with both adult male and female football teams using the pitches. A height barrier is being installed later this month to prevent travellers driving onto the field. Work has started on the installation of the new IT and Youth Hub, a stand alone modular building next to the Youth Centre. The drains are in, pads are down and the building will arrive the week after next after which it will be connected to the services. This will provide a space for computer games etc for young people and Platform Housing kindly provided the funding for the equipment. The Hub will also provide digital support sessions for residents to help them navigate IT. Fifty solar panels on the Youth Centre are working and will improve energy efficiency. 80% (£40K) of the funding for these came from MHDC legacy grant scheme with the Parish Council contributing £10K. Repairs to the pavilion roof will be carried out and lights need to be replaced which may mean the café has to close while this work takes place. Tim Hughes, our lengthsman, has given in his notice and an advertisement for a new one is out. The Parish Council has recently lost another councillor bringing their number down to seven. This is worrying, as Parish Councils have to have a minimum number of five members in order to operate or they have to close. All councillors now have to sit on every committee in order to ensure each meeting is quorate. Chris encouraged everyone to consider joining the Parish Council and it is hoped there will be more interest before the council year ends in April 2027. Sharon Dunn, the clerk to the Parish Council, is on medical leave until the end of the year and Claire Witton will be acting clerk during Sharon's absence and the Parish Office will only be open on Monday and Tuesday each week.

Rob Gardener, Chair of the parish council's Planning Committee gave an update on a number of planning matters.

Rob also referred to the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions which had come into force on 31st October 2026. Its effect will be that officers will have more power to decide planning applications themselves and the ability of elected members to require them to go to a planning committee if there is local objection will be severely limited. This is intended to speed up decisions but is seen widely as undemocratic. However, he pointed out that Malvern Hills, like most local planning authorities, already has an extensive scheme of delegation to officers and generally only the most contentious applications go to a committee. In addition, the scale of development which must be decided by officers is not as large as had been rumoured. For instance, housing proposals are limited to up to 9 dwellings rather than the 99 once thought. Even so, even for large schemes officers are likely to have the final say.

He also confirmed that the appeal decision on the Napleton Lane application had still not been received, which suggests that the outcome is not perhaps as clear cut as might have been anticipated. However, it is worth noting that under the new scheme of delegation it is likely that permission would have been granted by officers since they had recommended approval.

More planning applications are coming forward for Hopfields, a large part of the Worcester South Urban Extension. This should help to meet the required 5-Year Housing Land Supply which is a constant concern if proposals on unallocated greenfield sites, like Napleton Lane, are to be resisted. Phase 1b, a plot alongside the A38 opposite the Listed Clerkenleap Farmhouse, was currently being considered for 246 dwellings, including affordable housing. Despite wanting development to take place, the parish council wants it to be of good quality as the adopted design guide for Hopfields has proposed. We had raised a number of detailed objections and, we believe, made constructive comments. It was encouraging that these were the basis of the discussion at the recent meeting with the developers' agents and amendments are expected.

Finally, the Hopfields developer, Vistry, has asked the 3 South Worcestershire Districts to reduce the level of financial contributions it was required to make. These were secured by a S106 legal agreement before outline planning permission had been granted and are intended to support, for instance, highways infrastructure, healthcare, primary and secondary education facilities needed to support the development and its future residents. Originally amounting to over £35.25 million, they are indexed linked and have already grown to by a further £6.75 million and are calculated to grow by further £18 million over the lifetime of the development. Vistry claims that the scheme can only support a maximum contribution of £22.6 million and has asked for about £19.25 million to be removed. With the request comes a warning that the development may not otherwise be viable in which case houses will not be built and the important contribution to meeting the 5-Year Housing Land Supply threatened.

The councils will undoubtedly commission their own Financial Viability Appraisal to test the claims. The parish council's position is that the development will continue to require the same additional infrastructure and create the same demand for more services which will still need to be met. They will not get cheaper over time and should not be met with public money, already in short supply. To do so might be seen as subsidising private business.

5. Reports from School, Police and Church.

School. Bryony Baynes introduced Alicia Burnett, a Family Support Worker who is working at the four schools across the HUET Academy Trust, providing an invaluable link between home and school. There are 385 pupils on roll at present and KS1 is at PAN (Planned Admission Limit) while KS2 is under PAN. The school is very busy in the lead up to Christmas with a nativity play, carol service and the PTFA's big money raising event on Saturday 7th November being their extremely popular fireworks evening. Last year it raised over £15K and this year the money raised will be spent on refurbishing the early years outdoor play area where the fencing has been condemned. Meetings had recently taken place regarding parking in the vicinity of the school and as a result, in the near future there will be a single yellow line on one side of Ellsdon. There is a vacancy on the Governing Body and anyone with a genuine interest in the school and is not the parent of a child in the school would be welcome to apply. Please let Marian (marian.walters@outlook.com/01905 820558) know. Kempsey Café is held in the school hall once a month on a Friday morning, when anybody is welcome to come along and meet the children from a particular year group who host the coffee morning. They and their parents provide home-made cakes and usually sing, have a couple of games or paper quizzes and it is a pleasure to see them mixing with older generations and showing them their work. The next one is on Friday 13th November starting at 10.00am until 11.15 am. There is no charge, but a donation towards St Richard's Hospice is always welcome. The children also make regular visits to The Lawns Nursing Home which both the residents and the children really enjoy.

Police. Unfortunately, Marian did not receive any response to her email from the police other than a reply from PC Dee Stanley saying she was away from her desk until 10th November. Normally they send her a report if they are unable to attend, but she didn't receive one this time.

Church. The Christmas Fayre will be held on Saturday 28th November starting at 1.30pm with lots of interesting stalls and a visit from Father Christmas. Please donate cakes for both the cake stall and refreshments, tombola prizes and bottles for the Pullman. The Wednesday evening Youth Club has a regular attendance of about 40 young people and volunteers are much needed to help with the activities. Please speak to Rev Kat if you are able to (revkat@severnside.church) Libbirty and Ellis, who run the Youth Club are very grateful to Cllr Allen who gave a donation to their funds. The church is doing its best to raise money for repairs to the stained-glass east window, the cost of which is about £200K. The Remembrance Day service will start at St Mary's at 10.45am.

6. Kempsey CIC. Cllr Neil Stevens gave a report as Simon Bott had to leave the meeting early. Work of the CIC is linked with the Parish Council, Kempsey Primary School and St Mary's church. Daffodil planting along the main road started on 16th October with 200 volunteers taking part. It is hoped to create a mile of daffodils stretching along the A38 and staff from McDonalds are planting them at Clifton this week. Lovely Jubbly are having a stall at the school fireworks at Plovers Rise on Saturday 7th November. CIC will be involved in the church Christmas Fayre on Saturday 28th November and the village Christmas tree will be lit up outside the village hall on Saturday 5th December at 5.45pm. CIC are involved in a project to install a Zip Wire for children, but finding a suitable area is proving difficult at the present time.

7. Update from Cathy Garner. Cathy gave a presentation detailing the ideas she set up during her two years as Community Builder and what has happened to them. The idea was to provide a vision to involve all parishioners to reduce social isolation. There were eight key areas some of which involve history, nature, art, a community café, a YMCA youth group for which they received three year funding, and a food bank to support nine Kempsey families. Please let Cathy (cathy@cathygarner.com) know if anyone feels able to donate to this and Mike Hoskins is willing to wipe clean any old digital devices in order that they can be passed on to anyone in need of one.

8. Publicity: Ann said many people are unaware of PACT meetings and a new member said it would be helpful if an agenda was put on Facebook to alert readers of what would be discussed. She asked whether putting up banners in the village would be a good idea, but after a short discussion, it was decided not to do so at the present time. Neil asked Ann to send him the posters and he will put them up.

9. Any Other Business.

* Thanks were paid to Nick Richardson (Platform Housing), for organising a litter pick a couple of weeks ago.

* West Mercia Police are holding a meeting at 12 noon on Thursday 12th November

* Jan was thanked for providing tea and coffee.

10.Date of next meeting. Tuesday 2nd February 2027 at **12.30pm.**

The meeting closed at 2.10pm.