Bournheath Parish Council

Minutes for 14th October 2026, 7.00pm, Bournheath Village Community Centre

In attendance

Parish Councillors (Cllr):	Louise Colley (Vice Chair), Matthew Guest, Sophie Moir and Maria Stepin.
District Councillors:	None
County Councillor:	Mark Dunkley
Clerk:	Ro Hardeman
Members of the public:	None
Other attendees:	None

1. Apologies:
   Cllrs Gary Davies, Phil Hughes, Karen May, Simon Nock (District Cllrs).
   Resolved to accept apologies from Cllr Davies and Cllr Hughes due to personal circumstances. Cllrs May and Nock were absent due to a meeting clash with a full cabinet meeting at Bromsgrove District Council.

2. Declarations of interest:
   Vice Chair asked all members present to declare any personal or prejudicial interest on any items on the agenda. No declarations.

3. Dispensations requested: none required.

4. Planning
   No new applications submitted or decisions to be reviewed.

5. County Councillor and District Councillor Reports
   a) Worcestershire County Council - Cllr M Dunkley
      i) County Council update – County Council is currently reviewing budgets for the next year and a 5% increase in council tax is likely.
      ii) Parish resident requests update – the following update was submitted by e-mail:
         (1) Traffic signs (horse riding)
            After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk will email Cllr Dunkley a site map of the proposed sites for the new horse-riding signs. Cllr Dunkley also supplied 10 signs from the British Horse Society, which will be made available to residents for them to place in front of their homes.
            Clerk – to submit proposed sites for the horse-riding signs.
            Clerk – to write to residents with the offer of the horse-riding signs for display.

         (2) Claypit Lane reinstatement of original road width
            Cllr Dunkley confirmed that County Council will be undertaking some drainage works (jetting two drains) before the road can be cleared. Once the drainage works have been completed, he will then instruct the district council to clear the road of any remaining debris.

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(3) Funding request – new village noticeboards
Cllr Dunkley confirmed that he has raised a request for the £1,000 donation towards a new noticeboard and funds should be with the council shortly.
Clerk – to confirm when the monies have been received.

b) Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), Cllr May, and Cllr Nock
Cllrs May and Nock were absent due to full cabinet meeting at BDC. A report was submitted and attached as appendix A.

6. Approval of Minutes from 9th September 2026
It was unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2026 be signed as a correct record, the Vice Chair duly signed.

7. Vice Chair's report
The Vice Chair thanked those involved in the production and distribution of the Autumn Newsletter.

Speed Watch continues to monitor the roads and is pleased to report that the number of drivers speeding has reduced compared to last year. However, there has been one incident involving an unhappy driver.

8. Reports from community associates:
a) Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Cllr Guest reported that, as winter approaches, there has been an increase in more opportunistic criminal activity, including two incidents of trespassing and a car theft in a neighbouring village. It was also mentioned that there has been an increase in the number of vans being broken into. The village is now formally part of the Local Neighbourhood Group.
Clerk – to update the Parish on the increase in opportunistic crime during the autumn and winter months.

b) Village Community Centre
Cllr Colley reported that regular events continue to be well attended. Building work continues with the new guttering and downpipes already installed and work to replace the old porch underway. Upcoming events to look forward to include the Pumpkin Trail and Halloween event (30th October) and the Christmas Fair which is due to be held at the end of November.

c) Footpath's Warden Report
No report due to absence.

9. Community Project Reports
a) Flood Prevention
No issues to report.

b) Bournheath Village Community Centre (BVCC) lease
BDC has confirmed the Title Deeds for the land held by the Parish Council. With this information, the BVCC and Council can progress with the process of transfer of ownership.
Clerk – to obtain 3 quotes from legal providers for the transfer of title deeds.

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c) Remembrance Sunday – 8th November 2026
Cllr Colley has agreed to lead the act of Remembrance on Sunday 8th November.
Clerk – to order a new wreath.

10. Clerk's Parish report and Finance review
    a) Lengthsman update and Councillor requests
    The Clerk has been notified that Wendy has left the role and a new lengthsman has been appointed. The Clerk is due to meet with the new lengthsman when he is next working in the village (w/c 19th October).
    Clerk – to ask the lengthsman team to clean the white village gates.

    b) Authorisation of payments – approved.
    It was unanimously RESOLVED to ratify payments made in September under delegated powers.

    c) Bank reconciliation – attached as Appendix B
    The bank statement and accounts had been scrutinised by Cllr. Colley as part of the internal control process and all councillors agreed to their accuracy.

    d) To consider and approve the draft Budget for 2027/2028 financial year
    The draft budget including the proposed general reserve calculation and precept scenarios were presented to councillors for review. No changes are required.

    The draft budget will be updated to reflect the finalised figure for 2026/27 administration services. The finalised draft, with new reserve figures, will be issued to councillors prior to the November meeting.
    All Cllrs – to review the costs and calculations for the draft budget and the revised reserve calculations.

    e) Office correspondence – no items to report.

11. The role of Parish Councils in planning
    To discuss the planning process and the Parish Council's place in this and what work the Parish Council can do within the planning framework. The Clerk outlined the Council's position as follows:

    "The Council will review planning applications for which it has been formally identified as a consultee, or any application deemed to be significant due to its potential impact on the village's design, heritage, or green belt. In such cases, the Council will consider the proposal and provide a balanced, fair, and objective assessment based solely on relevant material planning considerations.

    Councillors who have a personal, financial, or prejudicial interest in any planning application under review must declare that interest and withdraw from the process. They will not participate in discussions, deliberations, or the formation of any formal Council response."

12. Reports from Parish Councillors
    No items to report.

13. Consider and approve office staff appraisal for August 2025-July 2026.

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The staff appraisal was approved by the Council with a rating of good. As part of this, a request was made to include a contingency budget for overtime of up to 24 hours per year (equivalent to 5% of contracted hours).

Clerk - to review and determine the most appropriate way to finance the 24-hour overtime contingency.

The meeting concluded at 9pm.

Approved by _____

Print name _____

Date _____

Bournheath Parish Council

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Appendix A: Belbroughton and Romsley District Councillor's Report:

(Belbroughton, Bournheath, Clent, Fairfield, Frankley, Hunnington and Romsley)

1. Purpose of the Report

This joint update is submitted on behalf of **Cllr Simon Nock** and **Cllr Karen May** to provide the Parish Council and residents with a definitive, high-level update on two critical structural matters affecting our area: the emerging **Bromsgrove District Local Plan**, and the situation regarding **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**. As your representatives, our priority remains securing technically sound, legally robust frameworks that safeguard our local communities.

2. Local Plan: Entering the 30-Month Fast-Track Framework

The District Council has reached a pivotal milestone in the plan-making framework:

- **Scoping Consultation Concluded:** The formal scoping consultation stage officially concluded on **Friday, 4th September 2026**. This stage successfully established the high-level strategy, broad visions, and methodologies for the district's growth up to the year 2044.
- **Next Stop, Gateway 1:** As part of the government's brand-new streamlined planning system, the council is formally progressing to **Gateway 1 in October 2026**. Passing this checkpoint formally triggers the strict, mandated **30-month timeline** to deliver a complete, adopted plan.

- **Site Allocations & Previous Feedback:** We reiterate that this initial scoping stage did not identify specific housing sites or draft definitive local planning policies. Those actions will take place during 2027. Residents are reassured that their extensive prior feedback from the massive Draft Development Strategy remains fully logged on the system and will automatically carry forward into the site allocation phase next year; there is no requirement to resubmit them.
- **Infrastructure-First Evidence:** To securely withstand legal challenges from speculative developers, officers are currently constructing an iron-clad evidence base. Future housing distribution will be dictated by a legally rigorous Green Belt review alongside the physical capacity of our highways, school places, and GP surgeries.

3. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Navigating the National Pause

We must update the Parish Council on major institutional developments regarding the proposed restructure of Worcestershire's councils:

- **The Central Government Directive:** Following the earlier announcement that Worcestershire's seven existing councils would be replaced by two new unitary councils by April 2028, the Secretary of State, Angela Rayner, launched an **immediate review and pause** of the ongoing LGR transition programme across 14 areas, explicitly including Worcestershire.
- **Cancellation of the Extraordinary Meeting:** As a direct result of this national intervention, the Extraordinary Full Council meeting originally scheduled for 23rd September 2026 to consider establishing a Voluntary Joint Committee was officially cancelled.
- **Current Administrative Landscape:** Strategic uncertainty remains following the pause. Leaders from across the county are working collaboratively to clarify the local impact of this national change in direction, and councils are seeking guidance regarding the significant implementation funds previously earmarked for the transition.
- **Operational Continuity & Democratic Certainty:** The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has issued clear directives that our absolute focus remains "business as usual"—ensuring the uninterrupted, day-to-day delivery of local services for our residents. Furthermore, central government has confirmed that the scheduled **local elections in May 2027 will go ahead exactly as planned** on our existing Bromsgrove District council boundaries.

4. District News: Creating a Better Bromsgrove

- **Nailers Yard Regeneration:** Progress continues on the former Market Hall site redevelopment, now officially coming to life as **Nailers Yard**. Council Leader Karen May recently confirmed that commercial interest is strong, with businesses committing to lettings before completion. This £14.5m Levelling Up project will bring vital jobs, community space, and footfall into the heart of the town centre.
- **Aston Fields Investment:** Highlighting ongoing economic confidence in the wider district, a major new Sainsbury's supermarket officially opened at Brook Retail Park on **Thursday, 1st October 2026**, creating approximately 100 new local jobs.
- **My Neighbourhood Survey:** The annual *My Neighbourhood Survey* recently closed on 21st September. The data collected is currently being processed to help the council understand localised community experiences and guide future service improvements across our villages.

5. Immediate Next Milestones

Following the transition through Gateway 1 this month, the Local Plan moves into late 2026 technical infrastructure testing and data compilation phases. We anticipate returning to the public in **Summer 2027** for a comprehensive consultation regarding preferred policy directions and specific site

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options. We continue to monitor the LGR situation closely and will bring further clarity to the Parish Council as soon as practical next steps are issued by central government.

Cllr Karen May and Cllr Simon Nock
Belbroughton & Romsley Ward Members
October 2026

Appendix B: Bank Reconciliation Statement – September 2026

Bournheath Parish Council
Bank Reconciliation Statement

Opening date	**01 September 2026**
to closing date	**30 September 2026**

	Current a/c opening balance:	**01 September 2026**	**£**	**23,899.06**
6	WCC lengthsman July and August		£	305.00
31	BDC lengthsman - July		-£	210.00
32	BDC lengthsman - August		-£	156.00
33	BDC Rec Ground rental		-£	67.40
34	Expenses - L Colley Planter		-£	18.00
35	CALC Training		-£	48.00
36	WPension Fund Sept		-£	212.51
37	HMRC Sept		-£	69.72
38	Administration Services - Sept		-£	833.30
39	ICO Data Protection fee		-£	47.00
40	Unity Trust Bank charge		-£	7.00
equ	balance C/F		**£**	**22,535.13**

Opening Balance as at	**01 April 2026**	**£**	**22,206.36**
Add receipts for period		£	10,150.63
Less payments for period		-£	9,821.86
Equ closing balance as at	**30 September 2026**	**£**	**22,535.13**

Bank balance	**£**	**22,535.13**