

DEFFORD & BESFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Besford Annual Parish Meeting - 21st May 2025

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting (Besford) held on Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 6.30pm at Besford Court Hall.

Present: Parish Council Chairman I Stephens, Vice Chairman S Rees and Cllrs: D Lamont, L Peake, J Robinson, Ian Spiers and G Marshall, District Cllr P Middleborough and 4 members of the public

Apologies were received from: County Cllr A Hardman and the Police

Reports received are annexed to these Minutes – received from:

- Defford & Besford Parish Council – Chairmans report
- District Cllr's report

Police Report: It was reported that during the past 3 months 2 crimes had been committed, 1 vehicle interference and 1 burglary

Reports are available from the Clerk: clerk@defford-besfordparishcouncil.co.uk

Defford & Besford Parish Council

Chair's report for the Defford and Besford Annual Parish Meetings

This year your Parish Council has continued work to improve the amenities of the village.

Councillors: We now have a full complement of councillors; we welcomed two new councillors in November including a resident from Besford meaning we now have a representation from both villages within the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Watch and Smart Water: Through the determination of one particular councillor supported by the Wychavon Community Safety Team and other members of the Parish Council we have successfully rolled out Smart Water across the Parish. With 215 out of 295 kits having now been registered we have been able to install new Smart Water Street signage in addition to the existing Neighbourhood Watch signs. Local homeowners will continue to be able to sign up to SmartWater (using the remaining stock we have available). Parish Council Notice Boards show details of how to obtain a SmartWater kit.

These schemes act as a strong deterrent criminals, make us all safer in our communities and enable the police to return stolen items to their rightful owners should thefts occur.

Millenium Green: Although there have been no significant enhancements to the Millennium Green this year we have continued to complete routine maintenance work including ensuring the green is safe for all to use. The new picnic tables have been concreted in and we are replacing broken wooden benches with more durable and environmentally friendly ones made from recycled plastic.

Lengthsman: The Parish lengthsman who alongside other routine work has worked hard to keep the footpaths clear of vegetation, ensure we can see at junctions round the grass and cleaned the drains. The work is never ending especially with the changes in the climate and we do our best to keep on top of priority work within the budget available. We'd also like to remind residents that if you have hedges or vegetation boarding footpaths or road signs it is your responsibility to keep them appropriately pruned.

Footpaths: If you walk the footpaths and see a problem, please report it on the county council's website and let us know via the parish website as our footpath warden may be able to deal with it.

Planning: We have continued to review planning applications trying to balance increasing housing stocks which will benefit the villages and those which we feel may cause issues. We are expecting more houses to be built within the village as is happening in every settlement in the country. We wish to encourage a range of properties to be built to support existing services and provide a thriving community for the future.

Road safety: This year we have focussed on improving road safety around the village and there will soon be new electronic speed signs in both directions on the A4104 through the village and improvements to the 30mph signage on Upper Street and Harpley Road.

I would like to finish my year as chair by saying a big thank you to the other councillors who are so supportive and work hard to improve our communities. Also, to the support provided to us by our District and County Councillors. Finally on behalf of the whole Parish Council I'd like to thank Cllr. Soukup for his contributions especially his leadership of the Millennium Green as he steps down as a Councillor at the end of this year.

Besford & Defford PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING 21st May 2025

Wychavon District Council Report

Key issues for residents

During the year Wychavon services have continued to be run in the efficient manner expected by residents. Waste collection remains unchanged but there are impending changes due to Government policy for a separate waste food collection service on the horizon for 2028.

The planning service is very busy with many applications coming in across the district. The applications for the Eckington ward were as follows

	Besford	Birlingham	Defford	Eckington	Strensham	Total
Planning Applications	11	9	11	31	10	72
Approved	8	6	9	28	7	58
Refused	0	1	1	0	0	2
Withdrawn	0	1	1	0	1	3
Pending decision	3	1		3	2	9
Pending decision from previous years	0	0	1	1	1	3
Enforcement	0	0	0	2	0	2
Enforcement from previous years				1		1

The review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan by the Independent inspectors has finished and their conclusions will emerge towards the end of the year.

POLITICAL CHANGE

The election of the Labour Government last July has resulted in the impending abolition of Wychavon in 2028 when a unitary council will

provide services. On the 31 March 2028 Wychavon council along with Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Redditch, Malvern Hills and Bromsgrove councils, along with Worcestershire County council will cease to exist. The service provided by all the councils will be run by a new council covering the footprint of the existing Worcestershire or two councils, one covering the north of Worcestershire and the other covering the south of Worcestershire.

The Government will decide in November what will happen.

Worcestershire County Council

Following the May 2025 County Council elections the Reform Party are the largest party at County Hall. Wychavon awaits to find out how the council will be controlled.

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