

MARKET WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Market Weston Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 12th June 2025
7.00pm in Market Weston Village Hall

Present: Cllrs: P Freeman, D Fulcher, P Barham, M Martin & D McNeill.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received, and agreed by the Councillors from Cllr A Hall, WSDC C Bull & SCC. Cllr J Spicer

2. Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

2.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda. None received.

2.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests. None received.

2.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act. N/A

3. Meeting Open to the Public

There were no members of the public present.

4. End of Year Accounts, to include the Annual Governance Return (AGAR).

4.1 To receive Annual Internal audit Report and discuss the report of the Internal Auditor and note any recommendations made.

The accounts were found to be in good order. However with reference assertion 5 of the Annual governance Statement of the AGAR, it was agreed that the council would tick 'No' as there was no formal assessment of the council's risk assessment documentation for the year under review. It was noted however that, the documentation was seen and adopted by council at the May meeting in 2025 for the coming year and details, in general terms the risks associated with the functioning of a smaller authority and the measures the Council will undertake to mitigate these risks.

With reference to Annual Governance Statement 7 of the AGAR, the Council decided to tick 'No' to assertion 7 as although, they considered all the recommendations and comments raised from the Internal Audit Report and had actioned some of the recommendations, there were still some actions outstanding. These were (i) Adoption of a general reserves policy. (ii) Adoption and publication of a Publication Scheme (under the Freedom of Information Act) (iii) Adoption of polices to show compliancy with GDPR. Cllr McNeill will do some work on a Reserves Policy and the Clerk will ensure the other matters are addressed, by the council, in the coming year.

The Council, in addition to the above, are aware that there was no formal assessment of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulation documentation for the year under review. It was noted that these documents were reviewed at the May 2025 Parish Council Meeting.

As recommended by the internal Auditor the Clerk will do some work on the internal control document, for consideration at a future meeting. The Council will also consider the recommendation made of including, within the body of the minutes, the actual budget being set alongside reasoning for such a budget, thereby ensuring transparency in the budgetary process followed by the Council. In addition it was suggested that we do some work around how we record any reserves/ earmarked reserves that we hold within our budget. **Action Cllr McNeill/Clerk**

4.2 To approve and sign section one, Annual Governance statement, of the AGAR 2024-25.

Section one the Annual Governance statement, of the AGAR 2024-25 was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

4.3 To approve and sign section two, Accounting Statement, of the AGAR 2024-25.

Section two, the Accounting Statement, of the AGAR 2024-25 was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.

4.4 To accept and sign the Certificate of exemption 2024-25 for submission to the external auditor.

The Certificate of exemption, of the AGAR 2024-25, was agreed, approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk. The Clerk will submit this, alongside an explanation as to why 'No' has been ticked in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement, to the External Auditor within the timeframe permitted.

4.5 4 To note actions to be taken to be compliant with the Publication Requirements – Transparency Code.

The Clerk will ensure the Publication - Transparency Code requirements are met by ensuring the documents/notices required, by the Accounts and Audit Regulation 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller authorities) Regulations 2015, and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities are published/uploaded, within the required timeframe.

5. To Discuss request to add additional name to War Memorial.

5.1 To receive an update from Cllr Freeman regarding the request to add Arthur Drivers name to the War Memorial and to agree the application for submission to the War Memorial Trust for funding.

Cllr Freeman provided the Councillors with the following information: The Market Weston War Memorial was erected in 1919 to honour villagers who died in WWI, funded by public donations. A separate Roll of Honour in the Church lists all who served in both World Wars, including Arthur Driver, the village's sole WWII casualty. In 2001, the Memorial was refurbished and re-dedicated, with "Still Remembered 2001" added. Further repairs took place in 2018 with a War Memorials Trust (WMT) grant. A proposal to add Arthur Driver's name was rejected due to "lack of evidence" At that time. The Memorial became Grade II listed in 2018.

Despite WMT's earlier objections, new evidence confirms Arthur Driver lived in the village and died as a Japanese POW. When re-approached, WMT accepted the evidence but raised further concerns, including lack of proof of village support and perceived duplication with the Church Roll of Honour. They also noted that since the Memorial is in "Good" condition, funding would likely be refused. However, and importantly, WMT approval is not required unless we seek funding. Nor is formal Church consent necessary—Market Weston Parish Council is the custodian. It was considered to be a courtesy however that we seek the Parochial Church Councils (PCC) approval, this has already been given informally. Due to its listed status, Listed Building Consent is understood to be required for any inscription. However, following consultation with Claire Johnson (Senior Conservation Officer, West Suffolk Council), it has been confirmed that Listed Building Consent is not required, provided the lettering matches existing text. Cllr Freeman reported this has been confirmed in an email from the Conservation Officer..

Two local stonemasons have provided quotes and design mock-ups. The proposed addition is:

1939–1945 Arthur Driver

The proposed inscription for Arthur Driver would be placed below the "step" of the existing granite column, visually separating him from WWI names and indicating his role in a different conflict.

Both stonemasons (Bierton & Woods and H. Brett & Son) would:

1. Conduct a site visit to take a rubbing and match the existing lettering style.
2. Return to complete the inscription.

The quotes for these works are:

Bierton & Woods: £450 + VAT

H. Brett & Son: £580 + VAT

In principle, the Parish Council support the addition of Arthur Driver's name, once formal agreement from the PCC has been confirmed.

5.2 To discuss options for alternative funding streams if the above application is unsuccessful. As previously noted, it was highly unlikely that funding would be available from the War Memorials Trust. The Parish Council therefore agreed it would be appropriate to fund the work from its own reserves. Some savings will be made following West Suffolk Council's decision to stop emptying

dog waste bins, and the Clerk will contact Cllrs Bull and Spicer to enquire about the possibility of additional grant support.

It was therefore proposed that the project to add Arthur Driver's name to the War Memorial should proceed, with Bierton & Woods appointed as the contractor. The aim is to complete the work in time for this year's Act of Remembrance in November, pending final confirmation from the PCC. Cllr Freeman will prepare an article about the project to be included in the magazine, this will be shared with the Clerk who will upload this information to the website. **Action Cllr Freeman/ Clerk**

6. Date of next meetings: 17th July 2025, 7pm in the Village Hall

7. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items:

7.1 Personnel Issues. None.

7.2 Legal Issues. None.