

Hill Croome Parish Council

January 2026 No.23

I write this document with the threat of a significant snowfall promised in the next twenty four hours. Recent news bulletins have shown us frosty fields and some rather more wintery scenes up north, but is the hype and press coverage really proportionate? Health and Safety Legislation has set new standards and the Authorities run scared of legal redress due to their failure to act, but really, do we need reminding to keep warm and dry? Are slippery roads a new thing?

I wonder how those of us ever survived to middle age and older, without the diatribe of warnings and advice and the social media frenzy. That said, keep warm and dry and remember, frosty conditions can be slippery underfoot!

Drainage Work

Many of you will have seen the recent work at the entrance to Ash Lea, where the road was dug up and the existing drain uncovered. The intention was to create a new manhole, before redirecting the surface water from outside The Stores to the roadside drainage ditch. This would then lessen the load on the drain at the corner of Ash Lea, reducing the risk of flooding. That was the plan. However, once the drain was exposed they found a length of asbestos pipe, probably the result of an earlier repair. This immediately put a halt on the work. A ground survey was undertaken using their magnetic device to identify the practicality of the scheme, due to the position of the high and low voltage cables that run under the road from the farm side. To allow for the extra water in the ditch it had been noted that it would require deepening, but the original plan made no mention of the depth of the cables.

The result was a further nail in the proposals, because the required depth of the ditch would leave both cables exposed to the elements!

Sometimes you have to accept defeat and find another way. A site meeting is due later in January when alternatives will be discussed.

Fingers crossed.

An old favourite

As a dog owner we take on responsibilities for the health and welfare of our pooches. Most do the right things, including ensuring that their animal does not foul footpaths and the highway, and if they do, pick up the deposit and either take it home or place it in the bin provided. Not hard!

However, despite it being a lawful requirement there has been a recent increase in the mess left behind, be it on footpaths or the back lane. Not only does this potentially impact on the health and welfare of other animals, including dogs, it is grossly unfair to dog owners and non-dog owners alike who should not have to tolerate other folks' mess.

Damage to the Countryside

The late autumn brought with it an outbreak of vandalism and damage across the Parish and surrounding areas where 4x4s and dogs were used to pursue hares and other wildlife in the name of sport. Whilst an age-old 'tradition' in some quarters, such activity is unlawful and fails to recognise property boundaries. The effect of this leaves crops damaged, fences and gates broken and hedgerows snapped. Whilst approaching these individuals is discouraged, any such activity should be reported on 999 if ongoing and vehicle details obtained where possible.

Planning

The Parish Council Planning Policy is clear in that it acknowledges one person's desire for an extension or new build may not be to everyone's taste but objections or observations will be made when it is considered in the public interest.

Unfortunately, recent Planning Policy has been used to undermine the objection process and it is apparent that the Government Inspectorate has an agenda to facilitate building almost regardless of the impact on local infrastructure and existing properties. A disturbing development allowing exploitation by some applicants.

Cotterill's Charity No. 241,526

The charity exists in the Parish for the benefit of persons resident who are '*in conditions of need, hardship or distress*'.

The Parish Council nominates one of the Trustees, the others being members of the Parish with knowledge of the Parish and its residents.

Any Parishioner can apply to the Trustees to bring to their attention circumstances that may result in assistance being provided, be it gifts in kind or grants of money either for themselves or others.

It can be difficult to assess where there is a need for help and the Trustees welcome any approach to ensure the Charity works for the community.

Trustees

Barry Swinbourne, Janette Keetley and Kevin Clough

Finances

It is good to report that Parish Council finds itself in a sound financial position as we move towards a period of uncertainty. This was alluded to in the previous newsletter when the change to the Unitary Authority was discussed and the potential for a significant impact on ourselves and our ability to provide services to the Parish.

It was noted that the annual Precept – the only source of income for the Council – would continue to be reviewed and increased annually to reflect costs and to prepare for when a paid Clerk is employed.

This year the total Precept income approved was £4780, an increase of £500 on the previous year. This equates to an average increase of £8 per household. It is anticipated that a further similar increase will be required in future years.

Please remember that anyone can ask to see the accounts by arrangement with the Clerk.

Meetings

The Parish Council is 'your' council, doing things for you and the community. Whilst being a Councillor is not for everyone, having a say and potentially influencing what happens in the future is something to be embraced. The Chairman is always keen to welcome parishioners to our meetings and where possible is open to contributions and comments from the floor. Recent meetings have seen valuable thoughts expressed leading to new signage and alternative views being considered.

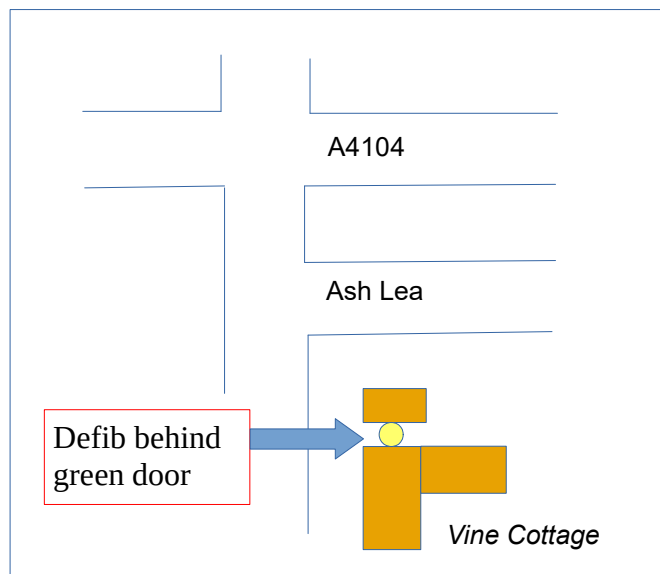
The agenda for meetings can be found on the website and noticeboard. Should you have any matter for consideration please ensure the Clerk is notified well in advance to allow it to be included in the agenda.

Dates for 2026

Meetings are always held on Mondays at 7.30pm at Earls Croome Village Hall and this year will be:

- 2nd February - Ordinary Meeting
- 13th April - Finance Overview pre-end of year
- 11th May - Annual Meeting with Annual Parish Meeting
- 27th July - Ordinary Meeting
- 21st September - Ordinary Meeting
- 16th November - Ordinary Meeting

Defibrillator Location



In the event that the Defibrillator is used, please ensure that it is returned with all its parts to the Clerk. Replacement parts are expensive and time sensitive so will require reorder.

Contact details for the Parish Council

Website

Hillcroomeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Please be aware some search engines, in particular 'Bing' refuse to locate the site

Email

clerk@hillcroomeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Postal Address

The Clerk
c/o Vine Cottage
Baughton,
Earls Croome
Worcestershire
WR89DQ

Please note that the Clerk is not a full time appointment and there may be a delay in any response to communications received.