



Clerk's Report – March 2026 (For April Meeting)

Personal Update & Capacity

Due to an immediate family bereavement this month, I have had to dedicate significant time to supporting my family. I have used a combination of annual leave owed and TOIL to minimise disruption to council operations.

From 1st April, my contracted hours reduce to 37 per week, which will allow me to attend all hospital appointments with my late sister's fiancé as he navigates cancer treatment without her support.

Despite these circumstances, I have continued to prioritise core council functions, statutory duties, and key community commitments. Some non-essential work including the school's mentorship programme has been temporarily scaled back to ensure Highley Parish Council continues to operate effectively.

Community & Partnership Work

- I have continued to support all scheduled community events, including the March village litter pick, which was very successful. Volunteers were provided with hot soup, bread, and cakes as a thank you for their time.
- I organised and attended the March Community Drop-In, ensuring residents had access to advice, signposting, and council information.
- I have been working closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Team, strengthening our operational relationship and improving communication channels. This has already resulted in more coordinated responses to local issues.
- I have continued to build strong links with Shropshire Council's Planning Team, ensuring Highley's concerns are heard and respected. This includes ongoing dialogue with enforcement officers and senior planning managers.
- Engagement with Halo Leisure's directors has continued, ensuring HPC remains a valued and influential partner in discussions about the Severn Centre and wider community provision.
- I have volunteered for further sessions with SYA all about youth to prevent closure of the club due to lack of volunteer leaders.
- Behind-the-scenes partnership work has significantly raised Highley Parish Council's profile. We are now being routinely consulted and copied into wider county-level initiatives, including work with STAR Housing on their tenancy changes and consultation processes.

Council Business & Governance

- I have begun preparation for financial year end including the final quarterly VAT return, internal audit and then preparation for the external auditors taking on the changes to assertion 10 that we have been preparing.
- Preparations are underway for the Annual Council Meeting in May, where working groups and committees will be reviewed and reallocated and all policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated.

Annual Parish Meeting

- Preparations continue for the Annual Parish Meeting on 14th April, to be held in the Community Hall ahead of Full Council.
- Refreshments will be served by the Guides from 5.30pm, with the meeting beginning at 6pm.
- Contributions of home-baked items or refreshments remain very welcome.

Housing Needs Survey

- Collation of data and communication with the Community Resource team has continued throughout March, and we anticipate the results will provide clear evidence to guide future development proposals.

Environmental & LNRS Working Group

- I continue to support the group with administration, coordination, and advice.
- The March litter-picking event was well attended and well received.
- Planning for future environmental initiatives is ongoing.

Events & Village Pride

- Work continues with the Events Team on Highley's entry for Best Kept Village 2026, including reviewing hanging basket locations and expanding the Highley in Bloom competition, watering plans etc
- Councillors are encouraged to attend the Carnival presentation this year.
- We will be requesting a Parish Council stall at the Carnival to promote our work and strengthen transparency and engagement with residents so please help support this in any way you can.

May I also express my sincerest thanks for your continued support and understanding over recent weeks. I am deeply grateful for the many messages, cards, and flowers that have been sent during this awfully sad time. My family has taken great comfort in seeing how loved my sister was, and once again, even in the darkest moments, our community has shown its light and kindness.

AP