



**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**  
**Guarlford Parish Council & Madresfield Parish**  
**Council**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Published 23 March 2026**

**This review will consider whether to amalgamate Guarlford Parish Council and Madresfield Parish Council to create a new single parish council for the area**

Respond online at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CGR2026/>

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	page 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Aims of the review</i></li><li>• <i>Why undertake a community governance review?</i></li><li>• <i>Scope of the review</i></li><li>• <i>Background and Detail</i></li><li>• <i>Who will undertake the community governance review?</i></li></ul>	
CONSULTATION	page 5
TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW	page 6
PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE REVIEW	page 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Relevant legislation</i></li><li>• <i>Parish governance</i></li></ul>	
HOW TO CONTACT US	page 8
PUBLICATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE	page 8
APPENDIX	page 9

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Aims of the review*

Following requests from Madresfield Parish Council and Guarlford Parish Council, Malvern Hills District Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consider amalgamating Guarlford Parish Council with Madresfield Parish Council.

The review will not automatically mean there will be changes to the parish councils, but it will see if there is a case for change and allow residents, councillors and other stakeholders to express their views.

### *Why undertake a community governance review?*

On 22 January 2026 Guarlford Parish Council resolved “*To investigate the process for Guarlford Parish Council and Madresfield Parish Council to amalgamate, with a*

*view to forming a new joint parish council subject to the response from consultation with parishioners.”*

On 17 February 2026 Madresfield Parish Council clerk requested a Community Governance Review to consider amalgamating Guarlford and Madresfield Parish Councils.

A Community Governance Review provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area.

A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the district to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election: council size, the number of councillors to be elected to council, and parish warding) and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

The government has emphasised that ultimately, recommendations made in Community Governance Reviews are to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

### **Scope of the review**

The District Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review to consider whether governance arrangements within the above stated parish ward are:

- a) Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area
- b) Effective and convenient to the community in that area

In doing so, the review is required to take into account:

- a) The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and
- b) The size, population and boundaries of the local community or parish

Specifically, the review will consider:

**This review will consider whether to amalgamate Guarlford Parish Council and Madresfield Parish Council to create a new single parish council for the area**

In their request, Guarlford Parish Council clerk stated that due to the pressures of attracting councillors and cost of running a parish council, Madresfield and

Guarlford, both very small Parish Councils, would like to consider amalgamating. Both parish councils have a history of uncontested elections and co-option of councillors into vacant seats. Both parish councils struggle to fill all seats.

### **Background and Detail**

Madresfield Parish Council and Guarlford Parish Council are currently two independent Parish Councils with no warding or grouping arrangements. A map of the parish boundaries is available in appendix 1. The parish councils share a boundary to the south of Flasher’s Wood on the Madresfield Estate.

Both parish council areas fall within the following electoral areas:

- Malvern Hills District Council ward of Powick & The Hanleys
- Worcestershire County Council division of Powick & Longdon
- UK Parliamentary Constituency of West Worcestershire

Guarlford Parish Council is a levy paying and voting area of **Malvern Hills Trust** (also known as Malvern Hills Conservators). Madresfield Parish Council is not a levy paying or voting area of Malvern Hills Trust. Malvern Hills Trust annual precept for 2026/2027 for Guarlford is £6823.40. Local Government electors from Guarlford parish elect 1 Trustee.

<b>Madresfield Parish Council</b>	
Registered Local Government Electors	123
Number of Councillors	5
Ratio of Councillors to Electors	1:25
Staff	1 part time
Precept	£2252.00

<b>Guarlford Parish Council</b>	
Registered Local Government Electors	211
Number of Councillors	7
Ratio of Councillors to Electors	1:30
Staff	1 part time
Precept	£7000

The average councillor to elector ratio in Malvern Hills across all parish and town councils is 1 councillor to 139 electors.

A list of each parish council’s assets and their budgets for 2026/2027 are provided in the appendices (appendix 2 – 4).

At the scheduled local government elections in 2023, 2019 and 2015 neither parish was contested. There have been no by-elections within this time frame.

All members were elected at uncontested elections or co-opted into their post. In 2019 councillors from Malvern Hills District Council were appointed as temporary councillors for Madresfield Parish Council under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 as the parish was inquorate and unable to act.

***Who will undertake the community governance review?***

As the principal authority, the District Council is responsible for undertaking any Community Governance Review within its electoral area.

Final recommendations, should changes be recommended, will be made to Full Council for adoption and creation of a Community Governance Order.

**CONSULTATION**

Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, in line with legislative requirements, the District Council will take full account of the views of local people. Including the consideration of alternative proposals submitted during the consultation. The District Council will comply with legislative requirements by

- Consulting local government electors for the area under review
- Consulting any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the principal council to have an interest in the review
- Consulting the County Councillors
- Taking into account any representations received in connection with the review

Therefore, the consultees as a minimum will be:

- The residents of Madresfield Parish Council and Guarlford Parish Council
- The District and County Councillors for the relevant electoral areas
- Worcestershire County Council
- Madresfield Parish Council
- Guarlford Parish Council
- Local Government Boundary Commission for England
- Malvern Hills Trust

When taking account of written representations, the District Council is bound to have regard to the need to ensure that community governance within the area under review:

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- Is effective and convenient

In order to ensure that this review is conducted transparently, as soon as practicable the District Council will publish its recommendations and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

In accordance with the Act, representations received in connection with the review will be taken into account, and steps will be taken to notify consultees of the outcome of the review by:

- publishing them on the Council’s website at [www.malvern hills.gov.uk](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk)
- posting public notices in the relevant areas
- posting information on social media pages
- placing key documents on public deposit at Council Offices
- requesting that the Parish Council publicises them too
- publishing information in the local press

Consultation responses will be anonymised and published for public inspection. Malvern Hills District Council’s privacy notice is available from <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/privacy-policy>

### **TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW**

A Community Governance Review will be concluded within a twelve-month period from the day on which the review commences. A Community Governance Review commences when the Council publishes its Terms of Reference, and it concludes when the District Council publishes the recommendations made in the review.

Action	Timetable	Outline of action
Compiling Terms of Reference	March 2026	
Publication of Terms of Reference	By 23 March 2026	District Council Publishes TOR and notifies stakeholders, clearly defining extent of the review.
Consultations – invite initial submissions	23 March – 4 May 2026 6 weeks	District Council undertakes a full consultation requesting support for /or alternative proposals
Preparation of Draft Recommendations	May 2026	District Council consideration of submissions received
Publication of Draft Recommendations	1 June 2026	
Consultation on Draft Recommendations	19 June - 31 July 2026 6 weeks	

Final Recommendations are prepared and published	By 21 August 2026	District Council considers the results of consultation and prepares Final Recommendations
Final Recommendations are considered by Council	22 September 2026	District (full) Council adopts Final Proposals
Council publishes an Order if changes are proposed and agreed	Thereafter	District Council publishes an order concerning Parish matters
Reorganisation Order comes into effect	1 April 2027	
Next election held under new electoral arrangements (if agreed)	6 May 2027	

## **ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS & CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS**

Consequential matters resulting from any recommended changes which will be considered and consulted on during the review include:

- the number of parish councillors if a new parish council is recommended
- the name of the new parish council if a new parish council is recommended
- the date of the next ordinary elections and the electoral cycle
- parish council assets, property, rights and liabilities
- the parish council precept
- provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters

## **PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE REVIEW**

### ***Relevant legislation***

In undertaking a Community Governance Review, the District Council will apply the guiding principles as appropriate from the following legislation and guidance:

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- The Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (MHCLG) 2010
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils)(England) Regulations 2008

### ***National Association of Local Councils (NALC)***

The legal minimum number of parish councillors is 5. There are no rules relating to the allocations of councillors; recommendations on the number of councillors will be made on a parish-by-parish basis. NALC recommend that the practical minimum number of parish councillors is 7 for parishes with up to 900 electors. Aston Business School research identified that parishes of <500 electors generally have 5 – 8 councillors.

### ***Parish governance***

The Council believes parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level. The Council wants to ensure parish governance in our district continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it.

Furthermore, it wants to ensure there is clarity and transparency to the areas parish councils represent. It wants to ensure that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

The Council is committed to ensuring the Review leads to parish councils that are based on areas which reflect community identity and interest, and which are viable as an administrative unit.

### **HOW TO CONTACT US**

If you would like to say how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference, please submit your comments to:

**Electoral Services  
Malvern Hills District Council  
Avenue Road  
Malvern  
WR14 3AF**

Email - [elections@malvern hills.gov.uk](mailto:elections@malvern hills.gov.uk)

**We can receive comments by letter, email, or online at:**  
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CGR2026/>

### **PUBLICATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These Terms of Reference will be published online at  
<https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/about-your-council/public-notice-and-consultations>  
and will be available for public inspection at the above address.

Notices advertising this Community Governance Review and the availability of these Terms of Reference will also be posted within the parish.

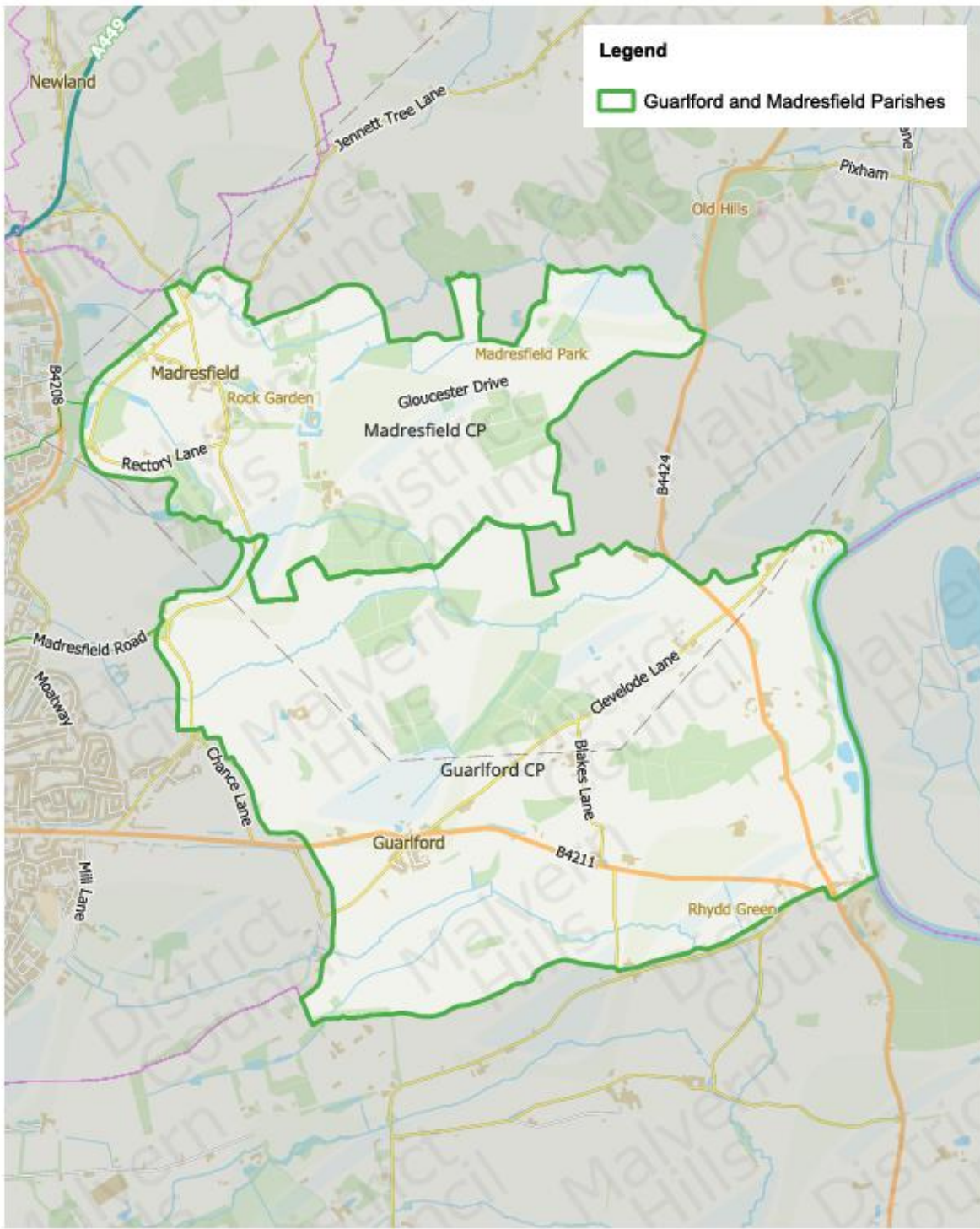
**Date of publication – 23 March 2026**

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1 - Map of the Guarlford and Madresfield Parish Council areas.

Interactive maps are available from <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/index.html>

## Community Governance Review - Guarlford & Madresfield



Date: 09/03/2026  
Produced by: Alexandra Millward

Scale @ A4: 1:25,000  
300 0 300 600 900 m



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**Appendix 2 – Madresfield Parish Council Asset Register****MADRESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL****ASSET REGISTER (March 2025)**

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>	<b>Date of Purchase</b>
<b>Street Furniture</b>		
1 x Noticeboard	£368.05	03/12/2004
1 x Throw line	£56.93	13/03/2009
1 x Picnic Bench	£332.00	24/09/2009
2 x Seats	£841.62	24/09/2009
1 x Pond platform	£399.74	24/09/2009
1 x Telephone kiosk	£1.00	22/09/2016
1 x Litter Bin	£150.50	20/11/2023
4 x Village Gates	£665.00	29/11/2023
1 x Noticeboard	£651.54	18/03/2025
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,098.33</b>	

**Appendix 3 – Madresfield Parish Budget 2026/2027**

**MADRESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**DRAFT BUDGET FORECAST  
YEAR END 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2027**

<b>Year Ended 31 Mar 2025</b>	<b>Year End 31 Mar 2026</b>	<b>Year End 31 Mar 2026</b>		<b>Year End 31 Mar 2027</b>
Actual	Budgeted	Projected		Budget
£	£	£		£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
1,950.00	2,010.00	2,010.00	Precept	2,252.00
20.37	20.00	17.88	Bank Interest	20.00
1,711.00	1,600.00	1,752.00	WCC Lengthman Scheme	1,800.00
	0.00	0.00	Others	0.00
754.49	0.00	0.00	Grants	0.00
0.00	331.05	147.05	VAT recovered	0.00
<b>4,435.86</b>	<b>3,961.05</b>	<b>3,926.93</b>		<b>4,072.00</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
674.98	730.00	708.23	Staff costs	730.00
160.00	200.00	157.00	Post/Stat/Tel/Admin/Rent/Web	550.00
71.40	72.00	72.00	Bank Charges	72.00
496.60	540.00	635.63	Insurance	700.00
129.31	145.00	137.22	Subscriptions	140.00
50.00	60.00	50.00	Audit Fees	50.00
1,856.00	1,600.00	1,840.00	WCC Lengthman Scheme	1,800.00
200.00	200.00	200.00	Grants & Donations	200.00
651.54	200.00	55.00	Other Payments	60.00
147.05	20.00	29.16	VAT	80.00
<b>4,436.88</b>	<b>3,767.00</b>	<b>3,884.24</b>		<b>4,382.00</b>
1,166.28	1,249.96	1,165.26	Balance Brought Forward	1,207.95
<u>4,435.86</u>	<u>3,961.05</u>	<u>3,926.93</u>	Add Total Receipts	<u>4,072.00</u>
<b>5,602.14</b>	<b>5,211.01</b>	<b>5,092.19</b>		<b>5,279.95</b>
-4,436.88	-3,767.00	-3,884.24	Less Total Payments	-4,382.00
<b>1,165.26</b>	<b>1,444.01</b>	<b>1,207.95</b>	Balance Carried Forward	<b>897.95</b>
309.98	568.48	334.79	Current Account	4.79
<u>855.28</u>	<u>875.53</u>	<u>873.16</u>	Deposit Account	<u>893.16</u>
<b>1,165.26</b>	<b>1,444.01</b>	<b>1,207.95</b>		<b>897.95</b>

**Appendix 4 – Guarlford Parish Council assets**

- **A bench, a telephone kiosk and a notice board. It has no property, rights or liabilities**

## Appendix 5 – Guarford Parish budget 2026/2027

	2024/25 Budget	2024/25 updated for actuals	2025/26 Budget	2025/2026 updated for actuals	2026/27 Budget
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Precept	6500	6500.00	7000.00	7000.00	7000.00
Other:		8.79		8.00	8.00
Bank interest		2508.00	2432.00	2530.00	2530.00
Lenghman reimbursement	2128	268,3600	77.00	140.00	140.00
VAT repayment	66	1054.19			
Grapevine bus shelter					
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>8694</b>	<b>10339.3</b>	<b>9509.00</b>		<b>9678.00</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
Administration					
Bank charges	0	4.25	51.00		55.00
Insurance	320	294.47	320.00		320.00
Office expenses		429.16			500.00
Ink/postage/printing	200		145.00		
Other costs			30.00		30.00
Internal auditor gift	30				
Salary	3924	3535.46	4208.88		4221.00
HMRC on clerks wages		801.8			250.00
Subs NALC/CALC CPRE	250	192.8	250.00		250.00
Village Hall Hire	150	210	150.00		240.00
Atkinson and Co	260	268.8	260.00		312.00
Lenghman	2128	2288	2432.00		2530.00
<b>Other Costs</b>					
Churchyard					
Other Grapevine 50 CAB 50	50	0.00	500.00		500.00
House of Lords Petition		20.00	0.00		
Training	100	0.00	100.00		100.00
Traffic Signage		0.00	0.00		100.00
Repairs Mice	200	0.00	100.00		100.00
Village Hall Upkeep	600	0.00	600.00		600.00
Reserve for Elections	0	0.00	0.00		0.00
<b>Section 137 Payments</b>					
Charity					
Defibrillator pads etc.		47.01			0.00
Community gathering	100	244.74	243.00		250.00
VAT paid shown included in costs					
Total Payments		100	291.75		350.00
<b>RECEIPTS LESS PAYMENTS</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>2002.85</b>	<b>19.12</b>		<b>-430.00</b>
		<b>8212</b>	<b>8336.49</b>	<b>9489.88</b>	<b>10108.00</b>