

## **MINUTES**

**of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**  
**7.30pm at Hope Bowdler Village Hall**

### **001/25 - Present**

Cllr. G Watts - Chairman

Cllr. L Gray

Cllr. S Jones

Cllr. C Pugh

Cllr. T Madeley

Cllr. P Jenkins

Cllr., B Orme

### **Apologies received and accepted from**

Shropshire Councillor C Motley

### **In Attendance**

The Clerk and one member of the public.

### **002/25- Declarations of Interest relating to this meeting.**

Members are requested to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests they may have in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

No declarations were made.

### **003/25– Public question time**

No matters were raised.

### **004/25– Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 had been circulated and considered by the councillors. No objections were raised to the Minutes.

Cllr. Gray **proposed** that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be approved by the councillors.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Jones

**Vote:** Proposal unanimously supported by councillors.

### **005/25– Matters arising from the Minutes of 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

114/24: The Chairman had not had an opportunity to discuss with Mr Hyde the vendor selling food and drinks from a van in the layby at the top of Sandford Avenue, in competition with the approved kiosk. He will investigate the matter.

120/24/1: The potholes in Wolverton which have been filled with concrete, which is now protruding above the remaining tarmac and causing a hazard, have not been fixed. The Clerk will raise it again with Fix My Street.

120/24/4: Highways have still taken no action over the part of the highway collapsing into the stream opposite Lower House Farm in Ticklerton. The Clerk will raise the matter again with Highways.

120/25/4. Mr Hall was requested to clear any blocked drains and ditches he noticed around the parish. Work to the value of £400 has now been billed, mainly for the ditches and culverts in Darby Lane and by the former railway bridge in Harton.

121/24: The new computer was delivered and installed on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It has a few teething problems which are being sorted out.

122/24: The Chairman has not yet been able to make contact with the new Chairman of Rushbury Parish Council, Mr Andrew Richards, about the proposed amalgamation, but will do so before the next meeting.

The Chairman advised he has been to the Craven Arms re-cycling centre on 5 or 6 occasions since the requirement to make an appointment had been invoked and found he was the only person there apart from the staff. Cllrs. Madeley and Jenkins reported they had similar experiences. It seems people are being put off by the rather complicated bookings procedure. Cllr. Orme reported many instances of fly-tipping have been reported locally on Facebook. The Chairman fears SC will maintain the re-cycling centre is not needed and will close it down.

**006/25– Reports: Shropshire Cllr. Cecilia Motley was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report.**

1. A recent government consultation asked for views on whether local government meetings should be allowed to take place online rather than face to face in exceptional circumstances. At the time I thought this referred to parishes/town councils but I believe originally the idea was to refer this specifically to local authorities. Nevertheless, a number of parishes have participated in the survey, Shropshire Council's Cabinet also discussed it and felt strongly that, as now, Cabinet or committee members dialling in should be able to participate in any debate but should not be allowed to vote unless they were physically in the room. We are not sure how well sighted the government is on the views and requirements of parish councils, which are more rural entities and don't exist in towns, but it would be sensible to opt for parity over decision making/voting both for Local Government, Towns and Parish Councils. I will let you know when we have a response.
2. Local Government Financial Settlement  
This was trailed as 'taking money from the rural areas to invest in deprived urban areas' and indeed we have heard that some rural authorities have had no uplift in the core funding element from government. It appears that Shropshire has had a 2.84% core funding uplift which amounts to some £12m, but overall we have lost £20m due to withdrawal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant (originally awarded to mitigate high costs of service delivery in rural areas). Against our 3.1% uplift some of the larger towns (eg Blackpool) have received a 9-10% increase in funding. We don't yet know what funding we will receive for social care costs so we don't yet have a full picture.

It appears that rural authority areas are losing out to urban – RSN has calculated that urban areas now receive 41% more per head than rural, and rural deprivation is not recognised. Unfortunately, we have also lost the Rural Services Delivery Grant, which was worth £9m to the Council and used to support the increased costs of service delivery in our rural county.

The Council has begun a consultation for £8.5m of new savings proposals including moving to three-weekly general waste collections, reducing opening hours at Shrewsbury Museum and Castle and switching off some streetlighting.

### 3. Devolution

Under the Conservative devolution plans, authorities had to have a joint population of at least 500,000 to go for a devolution deal and elect a mayor. Different messages seem to be coming from the government now insofar as a newspaper report that Angela Rayner would not insist on a 500k population if a single large authority under that population could demonstrate that it is well run, well supported and could exist on its own. As Shropshire is already a unitary council we are unlikely to be in the devolution front line, but all counties and district councils are expected to combine into unitaries. A large number of those councils are being allowed to delay elections in May so they can come up with unitary plans.

Once again, all these combinations will affect rural areas as counties and districts tend to be rural. However, the resulting unitaries are likely to have a strong rural bias which could help us all.

#### **007/25– Discussion of any planning matters.**

The Parish Council had served a Freedom of Information Request on Shropshire Council concerning financial aspects of the Oaklands Leisure and Camping site at Harton. The response from SC dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025 revealed: the site is now registered for business rates - probably prompted by the parish council's previous FOI enquiry. However, despite the fact the site has been operational for longer, the rating only commenced on 01.11.2022.

The date 01.11.2022 was entered into the Valuation List following an inspection by the Valuation Office Agency.

The tax payer at Oaklands has not made Revenue and Benefits aware of any further charges due, such as for the delivery of a large mobile home nor for the light industrial unit operating at the site. The parish council is advised that Shropshire Council officers will be making further visits to the property to ascertain whether a referral to the Valuation Office Agency for a Council Tax Band is appropriate.

Whilst the parish council is pleased that Shropshire Council's ratepayers are finally deriving some financial benefit from this site, it remains a fact that the owner does not have planning permission for many of the facets operating on the site, a fact the Planning Enforcement Team consistently ignore. It was agreed that the matter should be taken up with Mr Stuart Anderson MP.

#### **008/25 - Correspondence/Communications**

Councillors considered the following items of correspondence:-.

##### Highways

1. Fix My Street notification re concealed entrance signs needed at Mount View, Hope Bowdler
2. Road closure: 27.02.25 – Hazler Road, Church Stretton (tree trimming).

3. Road Closure: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Central Avenue, Church Stretton (replacement manhole cover)

General correspondence

4. Shropshire Council 2025/2026 Budget consultation
5. South Shropshire Area Committee – Minutes of meeting on 03.12.24
- 6 & 7. 2 emails from Mr Bacon, Henley Lane re damaged bench.
8. Invitation (sent via SALC) for nominations for people to attend a Garden Party on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
9. Request from Andy Chatting, county organizer of the National Gardens Scheme, Shropshire, for applicants to support the NGS charity by opening either individual gardens for 2025 or whole villages. Contact NGS by 07546 560615, website: ngs.org.uk

**009/25– Highways and Environmental matters**

009/25/1: Councillors were concerned that the removal of trees and shrubbery from the B4371, just above Hope Bowdler going in the Church Stretton direction, had created a very ugly looking area. The Clerk was asked to contact Highways to see if the parish council would be allowed to plant saplings in this area.

009/25/2: Cllr. Pugh reported that there is a massive pothole between Ticklerton Village Hall and The Saplings drive. It had been filled in several times, but was again causing damage to tyres.

**010/25 - Finance Report for part December 2024 – January 2025**

**Balance carried forward from November 2024** **£5,030.73**

**1. Payments to be made on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 from Precept Fund**

• HSBC bank charges to 05.01.25	£ 13.20	
• Clerk’s net salary for January 20 <sup>th</sup> 2025	£190.39	
• HMRC - PAYE on Clerk’s January 2025 salary	£ 47.60	
• Clive Martyn – website administration for 2024	£ 37.50	
• <u>Admin expenses incurred in December 2024 &amp; `</u> <u>January 2025 paid by Clerk and reclaimed by her.</u>		
• Contribution towards telephone/internet provision for Dec. 2024 /Jan. 2025 @ £20 p.m.	£40.00	
• Balance due to Andy Holmes for supply & setting up on new computer	£30.00	
• Electricity at Ticklerton Village Hall 18.11.24	£ 2.00	
• Travelling expenses @ 45p per mile 20.01.25 – to Hope Bowdler for PC meeting 34 miles	<u>£15.30</u>	
Total of Dec./January2025 admin. expenses	<u>£87.30</u>	£ 87.30
-		<u>£375.99</u>
<b>Balance of Precept fund c/fwd to February 2025</b>		<b><u>£ 375.99</u></b> <b><u>£4,654.74</u></b>

**Ring Fenced funds held by Parish Council**

<u>Environmental/Maintenance Fund bal. b/fwd from Nov. 2024</u>	£877.78	
LESS: Invoice dated 15.12.24 from Mr Ray Hall	<u>£400.00</u>	
	£477.78	<b>£477.78</b>

Neighbourhood Fund – balance b/fwd from November 2024

**£451.59**

The Chairman **proposed** that cheques to the value of £775.99 be approved for payment.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Jenkins

**Vote:** Unanimous in support of the proposal

**Total funds held by Parish Council following authorisation & presentation of the above cheques.**

<b>Precept Fund</b>	<b>£4,654.74</b>
<b>Environmental/Asset Maintenance Fund</b>	<b>£ 477.78</b>
<b>Neighbourhood Fund grant</b>	<b>£ 451.59</b>
	<b><u>£5,584.11</u></b>

**2. Bank Statement/Cash Book reconciliation.**

The verification of the Clerk's reconciliation between Cash Book and HSBC Bank Statements 158 and 159 was conducted by the Chairman.

**011/25 - Consideration and adoption of the 2025/2026 Precept Budget**

The Clerk had presented a draft Precept Budget for 2025/2026 at the November meeting. The Budget was now given further consideration and a Precept of £6,382 was agreed, made up as follows:

Clerk's salary w.e.f. 01.04.25	£2,986.88
Administrative expenses inc Broadband etc	£ 500.00
Insurance	£ 500.00
Hall hire for meetings	£ 140.00
Pay roll admin.	£ 120.00
Audit fees	£ 130.00
IT support & contingency expenses	£ 200.00
SALC affiliation fee for 2025/6	£ 250.00
Data Protection registration fee	£ 40.00
Asset & environmental maintenance	£ 500.00
Donations	£ 400.00
Website Hosting fee	£ 250.00
Website management fee	£ 25.00
Bank charges	£ 90.00
Fund for election expenses	£ 250.00.

**012/25– Any Other Business (for dissemination of information only)**

012/25: The Clerk advised that when she had drafted the list of Meeting Dates for 2025, which had been adopted, the April 2025 meeting was scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2025 at Ticklerton Village Hall. She has now discovered that the 21<sup>st</sup> April is in fact Easter Monday. Therefore, a Resolution to change this date to the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 was **proposed** by the Chairman, **seconded** by Cllr. Jenkins and the proposal was unanimously adopted by the councillors.

The Clerk advised that the Shropshire Council elections will be held on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2025. All the councillors of this parish council will have to stand for re-election if they wish to continue to be a councillor.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.35pm

**Date & Venue of the next Parish Council meeting.  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 7.30pm at Ticklerton Village Hall.**

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATED** \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT