

**MINUTES OF
ALL STRETTON, SMETHCOTT AND WOOLSTASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING
held at Picklescott Village
Wednesday 28th September 2022**

Present

C'Ilr Dale; C'Ilr J Burton; C'Ilr P Starnes; C'Ilr Morris; C'Ilr Ecob
Shropshire C'Ilr D Morris
Two members of the public attended the meeting
Clerk : Mrs J Griffiths

Apologies

C'Ilr Philips who is away on holiday. and C'Ilr Hibbott-Morris who had work commitments.

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded all Councillors to declare an interest in any items on the agenda. No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Public Comments

One member of the public expressed concern that road repairs were taking so long to be actioned.

He also reported that badger activity was seriously undermining the roadway at Sallins Bridge. C'Ilr Ecob agreed to investigate and report on "Fix My Street".

The other member of the public reported pot holes in the roadway leading to the Larches, which had been reported earlier. C'Ilr D Morris agreed to chase this up.

4. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25th July 2022

It was then proposed by C'Ilr Burton, seconded by C'Ilr Dale and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th July provided a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising (not included on the Agenda)

There were no matters arising not covered on the Agenda.

6. Correspondence

The Clerk forwards all correspondence as it is received.

The Clerk told the meeting that any books of condolence in the Parish should have been closed at 5pm on Tuesday 20th September and should be kept until we here from Shropshire Council where they are to be delivered ready for binding with all other Shropshire Condolence books.

7. Planning

(a) Clerk to report decisions on applications previously discussed:

22/01139/FUL – Holly Bush House, Church Stretton

Erection of domestic machinery store, widening of existing access from highway (part retrospective) This application was received between meetings. Members of the Parish Council attended a site visit. The Parish Council objected to the application. The Clerk told the September meeting that this application was granted on 15th August the decision notice was forwarded to all Councillors on 15th August

(b) Clerk to report on application received between meetings

22/02568/FUL -Home Field, Batchcote

Erection of side garage extension, single storey rear extension, external wall thickening to improve thermal performance and alterations to create first floor accommodation. This application was received and forwarded to Councillors It was agreed that the Parish Council would comment that they have no objection to this application. The application was approved on 1st September and the decision notice forwarded to all Councillors on 2nd September

22/03678/FUL – The Bottle and Glass, Picklescott

Conversion of detached office/garage building to guest accommodation, to include erection of extensions and increase in height to form first floor. This application was received on 12th August and forwarded to all Councillors. C'llr Starnes forwarded the following comments to the Clerk:-

The proposal seems to be reasonably modest in scale and the Parish Council see no reason to object in principle, but it should be noted that there is a very close neighbouring property (Scoflet). There is a bathroom window shown in the north first floor part of the proposed accommodation directly overlooking Scoflet. This window should be omitted and replaced by a roof light or window on the east side - where the neighbouring house is much higher and further away and would not be overlooked. The plan marks the east and the north boundary as having a mature Leylandii hedge on the side of both adjoining neighbours. In fact the Leylandii is only present on the eastern boundary. The nearest northern neighbour would be seriously overlooked - this can be sorted out prior to building works starting.

The Clerk circulated the comments to all Councillors and it was unanimously agreed that the comments be posted on the planning portal.

The Clerk told the September meeting that this application was shown as “pending consideration”

(c) Applications discussed at the meeting

22/03958/FUL – Ding Dong Cottage, Lower Wood

Erection of replacement garden room extension. This application had been received and forwarded to Councillors on 6th September. It was proposed by C'llr Morris, seconded by C'llr Burton and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would not comment on this application.

8. Highways

C'llr Dan Morris told the July meeting that he would take up the comments of the meeting that the Picklescott-Dorrington road should be included in a resurfacing programme with Shropshire Council.

The Clerk had received ta notice of 2023/24 Planned works which include U5705 – Womerton to Woolstaston – surface dressing. The road from Picklescott to Dorrington was not included in this programme.

The Clerk had received a road closure notice for Starr Lane, All Stretton closure 7th - 8th November for rectification of a core defect in the carriageway. This had been circulated to all Councillors on 9th August

Highways matters reported at the September Meeting as follows:-

- C'llr Burton reported that the white lines need reinstating at High Park Cross roads. C'llr Burton agreed to report on "Fix My Street".
- C'llr D Morris told the meeting that there was a planned road closure on 13th and 14th October to carry out works to the gully near New House Farm, Smethcott.
- C'llr Burton asked for a sign ~"please slow down" to be placed on the approach to Woolstaston. She also told the meeting that there was no sign for Woolstaston and you enter the village. C'llr D Morris agreed to report and C'llr Burton will also report on "Fix My Street".
- C'llr Starnes told the meeting that the fence is broken on the bridge in Picklescott. C'llr Dale told the meeting that he would carry out the repairs as part of the Environmental Maintenance work

C'llr Ecob continues to report and follow up highway reports.

9. Finance

(a) Agree Accounts due for payment

- Picklescott Village Hall 50% contribution towards the Jubilee tiles circulated to children in the parish as agreed at a previous meeting. Totalling £145.70. Cheque No. 00495.
- Alan Cleaver repairs to Woolstaston Notice Board £246. It was agreed at the July meeting that C'llr Burton could arrange the repairs up to a maximum cost of £200. The quotation had been received in the sum of £246. The Clerk had e mailed all Councillors and it was agreed that this work would be carried out. Cheque No. 00496.
- Clerk Salary August/September plus postage and stationery Totalling £553.83 Cheque No. 00497.
- HMRC Tax due on Clerk's salary £110 Cheque No. 00498

It was proposed by C'llr Burton, seconded by C'llr Ecob and unanimously agreed that the above accounts be paid.

(b) Balance held at Bank

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation.

After payment of the above accounts the balance at bank is £4,969.48. This includes the following sums:- . .

CIL	£ 379.09
EMG Match Funding	£1,500.00
EMG from S. Council	£1,500.00
Actual PC Balance	£ 1,590.39

The Clerk told the meeting that she had submitted a claim for the refund of VAT paid 2021/22 in the sum of £618.41 and this had not yet been paid. It will be added to the PC Funds when received.

It was proposed by C'llr Morris, seconded by C'llr Burton and unanimously agreed that the bank statement and the bank reconciliation provided a true financial record. The Chairman then signed the bank statement and the bank reconciliation.

(c) Option to opt out of the central external auditor appointment arrangements for the next five year appointing period

The Clerk told the meeting that under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 the SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all applicable opted-in smaller authorities, for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews. The next five year appointing period will run from 2022/23 until 2026/27. All authorities require an appointed external auditor even if the authority meets the criteria to qualify for exemption. However authorities are being given the opportunity to opt out of the central procurement and appoint their own external auditor for the next 5 year period.

It was proposed by C'llr Dale, seconded by C'llr Burton and unanimously agreed that, the Parish Council, would not opt out of the external audit as they would not wish to appoint their own external auditor.

10. Shropshire Council Report

C'llr Dan Morris reported the following:

New Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council

Cllr Ed Potter stood down as deputy leader of the council today, he will be replaced by Cllr Ian Nellins.

By Election in Bridgnorth and Tasley West

The notice of election for the SC Division of Bridgnorth West and Tasley has been published, It follows the sad death of Councillor Les Winwood in July. If the election is contested it will take place on Thursday 6 October 2022.

Inflation and rising demands new pressures on council's budget

Inflation and rising energy costs, alongside growing demand for council services – particularly for children's social care and safeguarding – are the main reasons for a predicted overspend of at least £4.1m at Shropshire Council (SC) this year. Each quarter SC examines its budget against spending, and in the 1st quarter it highlights that inflation is adding an extra £5 million to the costs of running services while extra demand for council services, which is also predicted to increase further as more people face cost of living pressures, is adding almost another £7 million.

SC is no longer receiving any money from Government to offset the impacts of COVID in spite of the fact that some services are still experiencing knock-on effects from the pandemic such as more demand for social care, reinforced by extra pressures on the NHS. This, coupled with growing costs in children's social care in particular, is forcing the predicted overspend this year up between its best case scenario of £4.1m and worst case of £18.8 million. Just as households face very big increases in costs, SC is also facing a really tough year with rising fuel and contract costs.

The SC council leadership will be focusing its efforts to significantly reduce any overspend. A sign of the growing pressure on services, which remain affected by the impact of the pandemic, is that the number of children in care in April 2022 was 53 per cent higher than in April 2020 and is up 21% year on year. Such placements, that help ensure children are kept safe, can be hugely expensive for councils.

It is likely that the council will need to sell off more capital assets. This will include reducing its number of offices, such as its Mount McKinley offices on Shrewsbury Business Park by next April [2023]. This is just one of several measures the council will be bringing forward to help offset the pressures from inflation and greater demand for services.

Update on the discussions which continue on the future operation of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

The future of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm is still currently being discussed by the estate's owners and Shropshire Council, which has operated the visitor attraction under a lease agreement for the past 40 years. The review is wide-ranging as both parties wish to be thorough in their evaluation to achieve a positive and fair outcome for Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.

The working farm museum was the vision of Thomas Acton who established a museum demonstrating farming techniques at the turn of the century before the advent of the internal combustion engine. Visitor numbers peaked at around 45,000 in 2009 with the advent of the BBC's 'Victorian Farm' television show and have now fallen to 20,000 visitors per annum. There is a current operating deficit of £168,000 per annum, the Shropshire taxpayer has been subsidising the running costs of the farm at a cost of £8.40 per visitor.

SC is aware that people place a lot of value on Acton Scott Historic Working Farm and it is recognised that it has its importance socially, educationally and in terms of the visitor economy. SC wants to reach a workable solution with the estate and explore all possible options in doing so. But SC, as alluded to above, is facing many additional pressures on its budgets. Regrettably the operation is no longer considered to be financially viable for the council. Discussions are still ongoing.

£15,000 of funding now available to community groups across the county

Veolia UK and Shropshire Council have teamed up to offer £15,000 in funding to the county's local community groups and clubs. The first ever EnviroGrant scheme in Shropshire enables clubs or groups to apply for up to £1,000 in funding for projects that benefit the local community or environment. The funding project is one of the many ways that Shropshire Council's waste contract with Veolia goes to benefit the local community. The EnviroGrant scheme is aimed at groups who are looking to improve areas, from planting wild flowers to clearing paths to enable access, whether doing a project that focuses on reuse and recycling, or a local school looking at developing a forest school, applications are now being accepted.

The scheme opened for applications on Monday 5 September 2022 and closed on Monday 31 October 2022. To apply just visit www.veolia.co.uk/shropshire If you need any help with an application please contact Angela James, Veolia's engagement officer, atangela.james@veolia.com

20 MPH limits outside schools

Please read the link to the report below which gives detail of where we are: https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s32467/20220914_School%2020mph%20Communities%20Overview%20FINAL.pdf

the schools most in need of reduced speed limits will be announced shortly

11. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 23rd November.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35pm