

**MINUTES OF
ALL STRETTON, SMETHCOTT AND WOOLSTASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING
held at Picklescott Village
Wednesday 25th January 2023**

Present

C'lr Dale (Chairman); C'lr Philips; C'lr P Starnes; C'lr Ecob;
C'lr Hibbott-Morris; C'lr Burton
Shropshire C'lr D Morris;
Mr Bayliss (Deputy West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner)
Six members of the public attended the meeting
Clerk : Mrs J Griffiths

Apologies

Apologies had been received from C'lr M Morris.

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone present. .

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Public Comments

A member of the public told the Parish Council that Shropshire Council had a Community Fund and grant applications were required at the end of the month. The Clerk had downloaded details of the Fund and it was thought that the Parish Council would not be eligible to apply.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd November 2022

It was then proposed by C'lr Starnes, seconded by C'lr Ecob and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 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. Rural Crime – Mr Marc Bayliss, Deputy West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner

Mr Marc Bayliss attended the meeting and explained the Police and Crime Commissioners role as setting priorities for the Police Force and holding the Chief Constable to account for their actions. An additional £200,000 was being invested and would result in an extra 500+ Officers being appointed and this would result in the highest number of police officers in the West Mercia Region since 1969. This investment will be reflected in the West Mercia part of the Council's precept this year and is likely to see a result of a £15 per year increase for a Band D property.

The crimes reported in the Burnell Ward for 2022 totalled 125 which was an increase of 12 crimes reported in the previous year and they are aware that there is an increase in arson and burglary. He explained that members of the public could engage through the on line "Neighbourhood Matters" web site.

Standing Orders were then lifted to allow the members of the public to comment.

Members of the public, especially those who had been the victim of burglaries explained how this left them feeling very vulnerable and they expressed concern that crime numbers were given with, in many cases, officers not even attending the scene and what appeared to be no effort to apprehend the assailants. Mr Bayliss agreed that this was not acceptable and the issuing of a crime number should only be the start of the process and the Crime Commissioner is pressing the police force to change this culture and instil to officers that action is needed when crimes are reported. .

Mr Bayliss was asked by a member of the public if they had the figures to show how many crimes reported had actually been solved. This information was not available at the meeting. Mr Bayliss agreed to forward more detail to the Clerk.

Standing Orders were then reinstated.

6. Correspondence

The Clerk forwards all correspondence as it is received.

The Clerk also reported the following correspondence at the meeting:-

- Clerk & Councils Direct Magazine, January. Handed to the Chairman
- 2023 Tree Scheme had been circulated to all Councillors. Further update received 12th January
- ID will be required at all polling stations wef 4th May 2023
- Shropshire Council Trees Newsletter – Winter Issue. Received 17th January and forwarded to the PC Tree Warden, C'lr Phillips

7. Planning

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

Nothing to report.

(b) Clerk to report on application received between meetings

22/05503/FUL Weston, Lower Wood

Erection of rear extension, replacement garage with link, new roof with first floor accommodation, surface finish alterations, fenestration alterations and internal layout alterations. This application had been forwarded to all Councillors on 14th December. It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would not comment on this application.

(c) Applications discussed at the meeting

No further application had been received

8. Highways

C'lr Starnes had reported to Shropshire C'lr D Morris that the roads had not been gritted. C'lr Morris had passed the complaint on to Shropshire Council and C'lr Morris had forwarded the gritting policy details to all Councillors, which showed that 27% of the network were gritted as a routine. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Andy Wilde at Shropshire Council and copy the e mail to Shropshire C'lr Morris listing the accidents in the recent cold spell which were attributed to untreated ice.

The damaged railings on Church Road have still not been repaired but are in the programme for repairs.

The Clerk reported a road closure at Hazler Road, Church Stretton from 13th - 17th February.

C'llr D Morris told the meeting that the road from Dorrington to Picklescott was on the Shropshire Council list for repair.

(b) Any further highway issues to be reported

No further highway issues were reported. C'llr Ecob continues to report defect on MyShropshire web site.

(c) Environmental Maintenance work

The Clerk told the meeting that the Highways Maintenance Grant of up to £3,000 (to include £1,500 matched funding) was available for 2023/24. It was proposed by C'llr Starnes, seconded by C'llr Burton and unanimously agreed that the Clerk would complete the application in the sum of £3,000, including £1,500 matched funding from the Parish Council.

The Clerk reminded C'llr Dale that to enable her to complete the application she would require the invoice for the 2022/23 Environmental Maintenance work before the end of March.

C'llr Dale told the meeting that he had recently purchased a drain jetter and would commence jetter the drains on Pays Lane. He is also continuing to work on the flooding at New House Farm on the Dorrington to Picklescott road.

9. Finance

(a) Agree Accounts due for payment

- .HMRC Tax due on Clerk's salary £110 Cheque No. 00502
- Clerk Salary October/November plus postage and stationery Totalling £450.54 Cheque No. 00503.

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

(b) Balance held at Bank

The Clerk circulated a bank reconciliation.

The Clerk told the meeting that the £618.41 reclaimed VAT against the 2021/22 expenditure had now been received. After payment of the above accounts the balance at bank is £4,385.87. This includes the following sums:-.

CIL	£ 379.09
EMG Match Funding	£1,500.00
EMG from S. Council	£1,500.00
Actual PC Balance	£ 1,006.78

It was proposed by C'llr Dale, seconded by C'llr Phillips 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) Agree 2023/24 Precept

It was proposed by C'llr Dale, seconded by C'llr Phillips and unanimously agreed that

the Clerk would apply for the following precept:-

	£
Clerks Salary	3,560
Payroll admin	60
Stationery/Postage	175
Insurance	350
Audit Fee	75
Election Expenses	100
Hire of Hall for Meetings	120
Contingency	400
SALC	220
Training	100
Matched Funding EMG	<u>1,500</u>
	6,660

10. Shropshire Council Report

C'llr Dan Morris reported the following:

Winter Road Maintenance

The recent cold snap, following wet weather, has led to issues on the County's road network, with some our rural roads in Burnell that are not part of the defined or secondary network, being difficult and in some cases dangerous, to navigate. Just over a $\frac{1}{4}$ of the county roads are part of the defined network and are gritted when weather conditions dictate it. However this means that nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the roads in Shropshire don't get gritted. Local/farmer contractors will come out when it snows to help clear unclassified roads, but the current policy is not to come out only to spread grit. The policy is to maintain salt bins throughout the winter period, and provide salt and grit mixtures in bags and heaps at various rural locations throughout the winter to be provided for local use.

The way a road is classed as being part of a defined network is by it being scored by certain factors like being on a bus route, having large amounts of employment, adjacency to Trunk roads operated by the Highways agency, being on school bus routes, steep gradients, being in 'wet' areas and so on. If the Risk Rating is less than 20 the road should not be included in the defined network or secondary network. If the Risk Rating is between 21 and 42 the road may be included in the secondary network following the approval of the Assistant Director Environmental Maintenance. If the Risk Rating is greater than 43 Member approval must be sought via the Assistant Director Environmental Maintenance to include the road in the defined network

Rural crime

Please see the attached video clip where on 10th January asked a question of the police minister on the blight of rural crime. MP Daniel Kawczynski mentioned me by name (!) as a result of his researcher attending a community concern rural crime meeting in Pulverbatch that I chaired back in December. The assistant PCC for West Mercia is visiting All Stretton/Smethcott/Woolstaston PC on 25th January to discuss rural crime issues.

Views sought on new home-to-school transport policy

People are being asked for their views on a revised policy which outlines how unsafe walking routes are assessed in relation to home-to-school transport. Shropshire Council is proposing a revision to its Extremely Hazardous Routes Policy and a six-week consultation was launched this week to seek feedback from all interested parties including councillors, town councils, parish councils, schools and colleges, parents and students. The consultation runs until Friday 10 February 2023 and can be seen on the council website at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/extremely-hazardous-routes-policy-revision/>

The Bus “Get around for £2” campaign until end of March

People can travel around Shropshire by bus for no more than £2 for a single journey until the end of March - the ‘Get Around for £2’ campaign runs from 1 January to 31 March 2023 and aims to get more people to travel by bus. Backed by £60 million of Government investment, it will help families, commuters and other passengers save money this winter, by capping single tickets at £2 across England, outside of London, for most bus services. With the average single local bus ticket in England costing £2.80 (in some rural areas a single ticket costs more), passengers can save almost a third of the ticket price per journey. Two bus services in Shropshire Council’s Burnell ward are involved in this scheme:

- Arriva Bus (Shrewsbury/Pulverbatch)
- 435 Minsterley Motors Bus
(Ludlow/Leebotwood/Longnor/Dorrington/Ryton/Condoover/Shrewsbury)

Levelling up bid success

Shropshire Council has welcomed the Government’s decision to award £18.7m of levelling up funding to support the regeneration of Shrewsbury town centre. One of the criteria the bids were measured against were their economic impact, and the success of the Shrewsbury bid underlines the positive effect it will have on Shropshire’s economy. The successful Shrewsbury bid will fund two complementary infrastructure and public open space projects, essential to realising the ambitions of Shrewsbury’s Big Town Plan.

The Smithfield Riverside redevelopment programme will accelerate the regeneration of around 1.2ha of brownfield land, enabling mixed-use low carbon waterside development, significantly improving Shrewsbury’s employment and productivity, and incentivise private sector investment, whilst addressing flooding and increasing opportunities to live in the town. There will also be a range of associated transport, active travel and public realm interventions near to the town’s railway station will ensure this programme maximises benefits for the town.

The LUF funding will help to increase the appeal of Shrewsbury as a location for business, tourism and investment; help to create higher value, higher skilled jobs; ensure lower vacancy rates and an increase in commercial floorspace; and make the town centre better connected and more accessible for people using all forms of transport.

Bikeability training support

Shropshire Council has been awarded more than £160,000 from the Department for Transport to continue delivering Bikeability cycle training to

primary school children across the county. The money is an initial grant of £166,153, with the possibility that more funding may follow. It's to be spent in the financial year 2023/2024. It will pay for the continued delivery of Bikeability balance bike training – getting younger children used to riding without pedals – and Level 1, 2 and 3 Bikeability training, which gives older children the opportunity to learn the skills needed to travel to school safely on a bike. The funding is part of Government plans to ensure that every child receives Bikeability training by the time they finish primary school – an aim shared by the council.

Cost of living support for lowest income households in 2023/24

Millions of the lowest-income households across the UK will get £900 – or up to £1,350 – from the Government in 2023/4 to help with the cost of living. Starting from Spring 2023 cost of living support will include:

- £900 Cost of Living Payment for means-tested benefit claimants
Direct into bank accounts in three payments over the financial year
- Extra cash support for people with disabilities
- Pensioners will see some households receive extra cash.

The new £900 cash boost for over eight million eligible means-tested benefits claimants, including those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and tax credits, starts in spring and will go direct to bank accounts in three payments over the course of the financial year. There will also be a separate £150 for over six million people with disabilities; and £300 for over eight million pensioners, on top of their Winter Fuel Payments.

Shropshire Council and their partners across the county continue to offer help and advice on money, bills and well-being, which may also be useful to many. Exact payment times will be announced closer to the time. They are spread across a longer period to ensure support throughout the year and will broadly be as follows:

- £301 – First Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2023
- £150 – Disability Payment – during Summer 2023
- £300 – Second Cost of Living Payment – during Autumn 2023
- £300 – Pensioner Payment – during Winter 2023/4
- £299 – Third Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2024

Acton Scott Farm Museum

Shropshire Council Cabinet has approved a recommendation to hand back the site of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm to the owners of the site, the Acton Scott Estate. Detailed negotiations between Shropshire Council, which has operated the visitor attraction under a lease agreement for the past 47 years, and the Acton Scott Estate had resulted in mutual agreement that the lease be surrendered. The recommendation was approved at Shropshire Council's Cabinet meeting on 14 December and the settlement allows the owners to invest in the essential infrastructure improvements required to support endeavours to open a new historic attraction. The attraction had been operating at a deficit of £168,000 per annum and the Shropshire taxpayer has been subsidising the running costs of the farm at a cost of £8.40 per visitor. However a subsequent call-in request was submitted and has been accepted, which in effect suspends the decision. The council's scrutiny committee will

now make the decision and it is likely to be discussed with the press and public exempt.

Budget

Plans by Shropshire Council to close its budget gap, manage the impacts of inflation, deliver priorities in the Shropshire Plan and bring its budget into balance, are now out for consultation. The council is proposing a transformation and efficiency programme that will save £50.6 million in the next year. Ongoing impacts of COVID and broader economic conditions, particularly the effects of inflation and rising energy costs, are at the root of the budget challenge facing the council. Most of the focus will be on greater efficiencies in services in what is the last chance to achieve a sustainable budget for Shropshire Council. It has no option but to make the savings, as if it does not, others will come in and make the decisions for it. Pressures are continuing from increased demand for services, particularly for social care, which currently accounts for three quarters of the council's budget, while new pressures linked to the cost of living are seeing further demand for support and services from residents.

The announcement of the Government's budget settlement for councils on Monday 19 December 2022 would see the council's spending power grow by 8.6% next year through a combination of money raised from council tax, Government grants and business rates, although some of this was already anticipated in the council's budget plans. This figure includes the 4.99% increase in council tax, including a 2% precept increase for adult social care, that Shropshire Council is proposing for next year, and that the Government has already assumed in its calculations that it will make.

The increase in Council tax is equivalent to £1.38 a week for the average household in Shropshire (the local average is band C), the rate of council tax in Shropshire is already 6% below the average for unitary councils such as Shropshire. The proposed increase in council tax would provide an extra £10m, while inflation alone is having a £43m impact on the council.

The consultation asks for views on the council's budget's overall direction, whether people agree with this and any suggested alternatives. The consultation is available on the SC Council Consultation pages:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/budget-consultation-202324/>

Feedback from the consultation will inform the final budget proposals which will come back to the council in March. Those unable to go online can take part in the consultation by calling 0345 6789077. The consultation will remain open until 30 January 2023.

Foster Carers

From 1 April 2023, the amount Shropshire Council pays foster carers will significantly increase in a bid to encourage more people to come forward and look after some of the county's most vulnerable children. The decision includes more financial support for foster carers, including connected carers who look after children from their extended family. The Council has increased the allowances paid for each child their care for from an initial fee for the first child and then a small allowance for any additional child, to a full fee for each child they care for.

More Census Data recently released!

155,000 usual residents aged 16 years and over in Shropshire were economically active (56.9%), while 113,300 (41.6%) were economically inactive. The national economic activity rate is marginally higher than it is in Shropshire (58.6%).

Among residents aged 16 and over, 149,300 people in Shropshire were in employment. Of these, 118,600 were employees (43.5%) while more than 1 in 10 were self-employed (11.2% or 30,700 people). Levels of self-employment are higher in Shropshire than the England average (9.5%). 6,500 people in Shropshire were unemployed at the time of the 2021 Census (2.4%). This compares with 3.5% of the 16+ national population.

A high proportion of the economically inactive population in Shropshire are retired (influenced by the county's older demographic profile), at 77,600 people or 28.5% of those aged 16 and over. This is notably higher than in England (21.5%).

In 2021, 96.7% (312,900) of usual residents in Shropshire identified their ethnic group within the high-level "White" category. This compares to 81% in England. The next most common high-level ethnic group was "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" accounting for 1.3% of the overall population, compared to 9.3% for England.

In 2021, 96.4% (311,800) of usual residents in Shropshire identified with at least one UK national identity (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, and Cornish). This compares to 90% in England. In Shropshire, 2.1% of the resident population identified their national identity as Welsh only, compared with 0.3% for England.

Changes to Shropshire Council's Cabinet responsibilities

Simon Jones is stepping back from his Cabinet responsibilities covering adult social care and public health, due to suffering long term effects following contracting COVID-19 earlier this year.

His responsibilities are now being shared on a temporary basis between Cabinet members Cecilia Motley (adult social care and public health) and Dean Carroll (housing).

Voters in England asked to show ID at polling stations from May 2023

From 4 May 2023 voters in England will now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections, including local elections, parliamentary by-elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections, and recall petitions.

From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections.

No elections are planned in the Shropshire Council area this year, but from late January anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID – known as a Voter Authority Certificate at www.voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/ or by completing a paper form. Accepted forms of ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth drivers' licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card. Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.

11. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 22nd March. Annual Meeting followed by Parish Council Meeting.

C'llr Starnes gave his apologies as he will be unable to attend the March meeting.

The Clerk reminded the Chairman, C'Ilr Burton (Footpath Warden); C'Ilr Phillips (Tree Warden) and she will remind C'Ilr Morris (Parish Council representative on the Henry Fletcher Trust) to let her have their reports for the Annual Meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9pm