



MINUTES OF THE CONDOVER PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2025 AT DORRINGTON VILLAGE HALL.

Councillors in Attendance: L Baines, R Ball, R Betton, T Cobbe, S Gill, P Gore, E Marvin, R Nash, R Slee, J Streilitz, R Wintle (Chair)

Apologies: G Walker-Pryor

048.25 PUBLIC SESSION

Mr Robin Gough briefed the meeting about the project to purchase The Fox Inn at Ryton. The project team is meeting with the owner to resolve the sale, an offer has been made and they are awaiting a response. A share issue will be instituted in March. The Fox team was congratulated for their efforts and the Parish Council offered support for future development of the work.

049.25 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES – Apologies were received from G Walker-Pryor.

050.25 COUNCILLORS DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS – Ongoing

051.25 CONFIRMATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES – The meeting accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2025 and the Chair duly signed the minutes

Strategic Planning

052.25 SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR REPORT

The condition of the road outside Farm Friends in Condover has been escalated and the lead officer for the area Graham Downes has said it is a priority for repair

The bin outside Dorrington shop is SC maintained. The main office contact there in street scene is Derek Furlong. SC officers have been reminded to monitor contents.

Planning matters – I note that the recent application in Chatford was approved. 24/04272/FUL 32 Harley Road Condover will be discussed at the 25 February 2025 Planning Committee. Tim Ward is the officer responsible for running the meeting.

New restrictions for all Shropshire bird keepers from 27th January, all bird keepers in Shropshire must, from Monday 27 January, keep their birds housed to protect them from bird flu.

The Shrewsbury Market Hall has been crowned 'Britain's Favourite Market' for record fourth time and third year running

New free park and ride service for Royal Shrewsbury Hospital patients and visitors - Patients and visitors to Royal Shrewsbury Hospital will be able to use a new, free, Park & Ride service as part of a trial. The Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust (SaTH), which runs the

county's two acute hospitals, is working with Shropshire Council and Arriva to provide the service for a trial between 10am and 3pm Monday to Friday, from Monday 27 January 2025 until further notice. The bus service, which is currently available for staff, runs every 20 minutes from the car park at the Oxon Park & Ride site to the Treatment Centre, the new main entrance of the hospital. The service will be free to patients and visitors during the trial period.

Shropshire Council has launched a new road safety education programme for primary schools. The Council's sustainable travel team has launched 'Our Journey' – an engaging new virtual road safety education programme for primary schools across the county. Designed to empower students with essential safety skills for independent and sustainable travel, the programme combines creativity, technology, and local collaboration to make road safety education more accessible and fun than ever.

Shropshire Council published plans to close budget gap in 2025/26 its draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, with plans to close an £11.8m budget gap in 2025/26, after examining detail in the Government's funding settlement announced in December. The council has already begun a consultation for £8.5m of new savings proposals including moving to three weekly general waste collections, reducing opening hours of the museum and castle in Shrewsbury, switching off some streetlights for part of the time and changing park and ride bus services in Shrewsbury. £3.8m will be delivered through plans already agreed in 2024, including reducing the size of the council by removing around 1 in 5 jobs, and more savings will be made by managing the demand for council services. The report finds that Shropshire's spending power will increase by 3.1% in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25, even with the 4.99% council tax increase the Government assumes councils will make. The national average funding increase for councils is almost double Shropshire's amount at 6%, with urban authorities benefiting the most. Shropshire sees the third lowest increase out of more than 180 councils. The ongoing impact of higher demand for council services, particularly for social care which accounts for £4 in every £5 the council spends, and increasing costs of services and supplies, will outstrip the increase proposed for Shropshire. The removal of a rural services delivery grant worth around £9m is a key pressure for Shropshire, as well as major reduction in social care funding, effectively representing a 'loss' of £16m.

Residents have been urged to take part in consultation on proposed charges to telecare offer. Shropshire Council is inviting residents who access the council's Telecare service, to take part in a public consultation on proposals to introduce a subsidised charge for Telecare services. The consultation launched in January and ends on March 10th. It is part of the council's wider plan to meet its savings and respond to the growing challenges in social care.

The NHS, fire service, police and public transport operators have recently announced their support for Shrewsbury North West Relief Road. Jo Williams, Interim Chief Executive of Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals (SATH) NHS Trust, recently commented that "The North West Relief Road will significantly improve access to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital for our patients and staff. Journey times to the hospital, especially from the north and east of the area, and Telford, will be reduced. This will directly support people to access urgent and emergency care services and the thousands of patients each year who use our outpatient services. The shorter journey times and more reliable public transport that the scheme will deliver will also reduce pressure on our staff travelling to and from work. In addition, the reductions in congestion in many residential neighbourhoods to the north of the area will improve air quality, benefitting the health of local people and long-term, reducing pressure on the NHS. We see great benefit in delivery of this project to complete Shrewsbury's outer ring road."

A report will be presented to Shropshire Council's next Cabinet meeting (12 February 2025), asking them to agree the council's response to a letter from the Local Plan Inspectors, following hearing sessions in October 2024 – including a proposed new timetable for the plan. The letter was received in January and raised a number of concerns about the soundness of the draft Plan. It asks the council to provide a project plan to the Inspectors which sets out how all of the soundness issues will be addressed within a six month timeframe. It says that should this not be possible, the Inspectors would need to consider the withdrawal of the draft Local Plan. The council is surprised and disappointed by many of the issues raised by the inspectors, and have raised these concerns in the proposed response. Despite these concerns, the council's letter provides a positive and pragmatic response which details the issues the council is able and prepared to address within the next six months. However, it does invite the inspectors to "reconsider some of their soundness concerns, informed by the information we have provided in this letter".

Shropshire Council's new on-demand bus service was further expanded from 31 January 2025 – with new users being offered a £5 credit when they register. It was launched in December 2023, initially in two zones, and with plans in place to expand the service on a zone-by-zone basis. Now 'Zone 2' is being expanded to include areas of Weir Hill (new residential development), Shrewsbury Business Park, Kingston Drive, and Love2Stay providing communities with more options for travel in and out of Shrewsbury town centre. At the same time St Mary's Street will be added to the list of Connect On-Demand stops within the town centre, for use by customers in both zones 1 and 2. Stops already available in the town centre are the Bus station, Railway station, Barker Street, High Street and The Abbey. To celebrate this expansion, new users who register for the service in January and February 2025 will automatically receive a £5.00 credit added to their account.

The Government's devolution White Paper was published in late December. This would make Shropshire part of either a strategic or combined authority with new powers to get things done in a broader geographic area covering things such as transport, housing and planning, and skills and employment. Some of these powers, such as the proposals to bring buses back into local public control, would be very welcome in a county like Shropshire. However, Shropshire's position in the Government's plans for reorganisation of councils is unclear. The paper says that single tier unitary councils, like Shropshire, should represent a population of 500k. Ours is some way short of this at around 325k. While there may be exceptions, to ensure new structures make sense for an area, including for devolution, decisions will be on a case-by-case basis. On this measure, Shropshire could be forced with other neighbouring authorities to form a new larger council. The Government has also said that it would re-organise unitary councils where there is "evidence of failure or where their size or boundaries may be hindering their ability to deliver sustainable and high-quality public services". The White Paper does not elaborate on what is meant by evidence of failure or how size and boundaries can be considered as hindrances. We are urgently seeking clarification from Government on all these points, any likely timescales and impact any change would have on council business.

A number of questions were raised:

- Cllr Marvin asked about increased fly tipping and agreed that residents should be notified to report incidents using Fix My Street link on the Shropshire Council website
- Cllr Gill raised concerns about dangerous trees on our highways and was advised to report to trees@shropshire.gov.uk
- Cllr Nash asked about a response to traffic around Condoover school. He was advised to contact the Chair of Governors to seek support
- Cllr Morris agreed to seek an update on the A49 restrictions at Bayston Hill.
After note – this has now been done and Councillors informed

- Cllrs raised concerns about a housing survey recently sent to residents. Cllr Marvin explained that he had spoken to CNB Housing Insights about this survey and their plans to submit a planning application for Affordable Homes. It was agreed a note should go on our website and social media as follows;
“The Parish Council has been made aware of a housing survey sent to residents by CNB Housing Insights. The Parish Council is not involved with nor do we support this survey. We have contacted the company and expressed our concerns. This is not an official survey and you are under no obligation to reply.”

053.25 PLANNING MATTERS

1. 25/00092/FUL - Accepted by the Parish Council
2. 25/00119/OUT – A lengthy debate took place in which the background to the site was considered. The Parish Council did not support the application for the following reasons:
 - a. The site lies outside the village boundary
 - b. The site is not included in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan
 - c. Parish residents have voted against this site in the 2024 planning consultation
 - d. The Parish Council has identified 2 alternative sites to meet our housing obligations
 - e. Dorrington infrastructure (roads and waste) considered insufficient for this development

054.25 REPORT FROM FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Finance

- The Committee approved payments at their meeting
- Cllr Marvin approved payment to our planning consultants, Andrea Pellegram Ltd.
- Cllr Ball asked for any additional budget items to be submitted as the budget will be resolved at the March meeting

Personnel

The meeting was briefed on the interview with our next Parish Clerk. The view was positive following an extensive interview process and the meeting accepted the findings of the Interview Team that a clerk would be employed for a 6 month probationary period including Parish Clerk training. Hours of work would be 50 hours per month and, subject to a reference review, start on 1 April 2025.

055.25 CONDOVER PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A detailed report was submitted by Lee Searles to the meeting and is attached to these minutes. The Parish Council accepted the report and confirmed the view that we should continue to develop the Plan. It is hoped to submit the Plan to Shropshire Council in March prior to which the Council will have the chance to consider the details and approve next steps. In the meantime, Cllr Marvin will contact Shropshire Council.

056.25 CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENT

Thermal Imaging Camera – details about the Thermal Imaging Camera will be promulgated on our website and social media

Items for Decision

057.25 URGENT ISSUES FROM WARDS REQUIRING DECISION

Conover Village Sports Ground – The project team has assessed the tender bids for the new build and approved the bid from Matrix. The following actions were agreed by the Parish Council.

- Cllr Streilitz will draft 3 letters to the bidders outlining the result

- The Chair, Cllr Wintle, will contact the architect, Gary Chesters, who will be asked to write a letter of intent and the build contract
- Cllr Nash will contact Shropshire Council about the CIL allocation
- A project manager will be identifies

058.25 CLERKS UPDATE REPORT AND COMMUNICATION – Nothing further to report

059.25 VILLAGE UPDATES

- Ryton Village Pump – Cllr Slee briefed the meeting on the deteriorating condition of the village roads as a result of the heavy traffic and lack of adequate maintenance. He will speak to Longnor Parish Council about a notice to deter traffic from using the local roads
- Condover Woodland Park – Cllr Gore briefed the meeting on the crowdfunding efforts to meets the costs of maintaining the Woodland Park. A number of pledges have been received and the Spacehive bid has to be in by 31 March. A discussion took place about the management of any funds raised and the Chair agreed to thank the Spacehive contact, Chris Childs. The Woodland Park Committee will next meet on 11 February.
A lengthy discussion then took place concerning safety at the Woodland Park and specifically about the condition of the trees and footpath. The meeting was unhappy about the risks associated with the Park and in particular, our public liability responsibilities and insurance cover. As a result, the Parish Council voted to temporarily close the Woodland Park (6 in favour, one against and one abstained) until these concerns had been resolved. The Woodland Park Committee was asked to address the following issues;
 - Close the Woodland Park immediately
 - Carry out a safety report
 - Complete a risk register
 - Confirm the insurance cover
 - Inform local residents by notice and social media
- Dorrington Community Garden – Cllr Ball briefed the meeting on his work with Shropshire Council to enable a licence to occupy the Community Garden area by the Dorrington Community Garden group. He is waiting for a response from the Senior Estates surveyor. Once resolved he will meet with Cllr Cobbe to finalise an agreement.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

Signed Chair, Cllr Wintle

Date: February 2025

