



"Not for self"

Oswestry Rural Parish Council

Minutes

of the Ordinary Meeting

held at 7.00 pm on Thursday 26 June 2025 at Canal Central, Maesbury

Present:

Cllr Martin Bennett, Cllr Peter Richardson, Cllr Bob Kimber, Cllr William Jones, Cllr Martin Jones, Cllr Iain Campbell, Cllr Mike Weston, Cllr Richard Fowler, Cllr Jaz Singh, Cllr Andy Davis

Clerk to the Council:

Kathryn Lloyd

In attendance:

Thirteen members of the public

2265 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman extended a warm welcome and asked whether any members of the public wished to speak under Public session.

Chairman Engagements

The Chairman met with the Town Mayor at a joint meeting of the Whittington Pioneers, the equivalent of the Morda School Council.

2266 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Martin Jones who is expected to be late.

Members **APPROVED** this.

2267 Police Report

a) The Chairman advised members the Clerk had circulated The Oswestry Safer Neighbourhood Team Newsletter. Members **NOTED** the report.

b) Councillor Peter Richardson proposed amending the Parish Council Police Charter priorities. He noted that, as the PCC target now includes speeding, it is no longer necessary to retain this as a Parish Council priority. Instead, he recommended focusing on Anti-Social Behaviour, Drug Abuse, and Rural Crime and Policing. The Clerk informed members that the Charter will remain in effect until 30 September 2025. The Chairman suggested that the priorities be kept under review and revisited in September 2025.

A Councillor stated that PCSOs only have common law rights, so it would be more effective to have greater presence of Police Officers with more powers. Cllr Mike Weston suggested enquiring with the team producing the report why ORPC does not have its own heading .

2268 Shropshire Council Report

Councillor Andy Davis provided an update to members which covered three separate areas: Information Sharing, Council Priorities and Out and About.

Information Sharing:

The aim is to ensure that all members of the Parish receive the consistent information and to establish links with both Facebook and the Oswestry Community Facebook page.

Council Priorities:

There are currently no immediate solutions for pothole issues; however, a third team has been established to address the existing backlog. Issues can be reported via the Fix My Street portal. Reports of fly tipping have increased. Shropshire Council has submitted a request to Central Government for additional Rural Funding, which is under review. A peer review is scheduled for July to assess current systems and structures and provide recommendations. Demand for foster carers is high. The HAF Programme which is a playscheme for children will continue over the summer.

Out and About.

He has visited all the schools in the Parish and engaged with Headteachers to discuss concerns and challenges. Surgeries have been conducted, with meet and greet opportunities in the village shop. He is aware of several issues in Maesbury. He has attended coffee mornings in Rhydygroesau and Trefonen, visited Morda Village Hall, and met with the Chairman of SALC. He is aware of concerns with speeding in Nantmawr, and that the Police have no objections to reducing the speed limit. He also referenced the Vyrnwy Frankton Connection and the ongoing consultation regarding the Wind Farm. Councillor Iain Campbell raised the issue of potholes and the associated costs, suggesting that a more efficient system should be introduced. It was noted that Shropshire Council is under contract with Kier for the next twelve months, with maintenance work being subcontracted to other providers.

2269 Public Participation

In accordance with Standing Orders 3(e) members of the public may make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda. This does not include matters relating to the council's administration. Should anyone wish to discuss business which is not included on the agenda please write to the Clerk who will make arrangements for appropriate action.

A resident of Morda informed members that, after applying for a vacancy via co-option had been notified by email this would no longer be addressed at the June Council Meeting. The resident requested an explanation for this. The Chairman explained that due to several discrepancies between the Standing Orders and Vacancy Policy and to ensure a transparent, fair, and open process, having taken advice from The Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) the recommendation was to defer. The Chairman advised the number of applicants exceeds the number of available vacancies. The Council may need to convene a special meeting to deal with the co-option process.

2270 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 31 May 2025 were considered for approval.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the minutes be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record. There was one abstention.

2271 Co-option Applications – Trefonen with Treflach and Rhydygroesau

The Chairman proposed that the co-option process be deferred.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to defer the Co-option process to either the July 2025 meeting or if necessary, to a specially convened meeting.

2272 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

In accordance with Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 Members were informed they are personally responsible for deciding whether they should disclose an interest at this meeting. Members were also reminded they should not make decisions with a closed mind and must declare a bias and not vote on matters where their decision could be pre-determined.

Cllr Andy Davis declared an interest in Planning items relating to The Barns at Woolston. The clerk informed him that he may remain in the room during the discussion but to abstain from voting. He was also advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer at Shropshire Council.

2273 Dispensations

None received

2274 Declarations of Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

None declared

2275 Planning Matters

Members **NOTED** the following applications.

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/01045/FUL Unit 3, Mile House Farm, Shrewsbury Road, Aston, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4JF	Change of use from Class B2 to Class E (gym) Decision: Refuse
25/01315/FUL Unit 4 The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8HY	Change of Use of agricultural building to squash court for personal use. Decision: Refuse
25/01448/FUL Holly Cottage, Aston Square, Aston, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4LR	Proposed new single-storey side extension to link existing garage and main dwelling. Decision: Grant Permission

b Planning Applications

To CONSIDER and APPROVE a response to the following planning applications:

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/02017/FUL The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton, Oswestry	Erection of extension to agricultural building It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There was one abstention
Appeal 25/03369/REF Unit 4 The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton. Oswestry , SY10 8HY	Change of Use of agricultural building to squash court for personal use. The Chairman informed members that the Parish Council had supported this application due to a lack of local facilities. He requested members considered his response. Members voted as follows: Support 7, Abstentions 3 It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to submit the response. There was three abstentions

2276 Clerk's Report

Members reviewed a written report from the Clerk regarding actions taken after decisions made at previous council meetings.

Minute Ref 2253 - Cllr Richard Fowler advised members his report on venues in Morda had been circulated by The Clerk. He has been exploring several venues to enable a number of Council meeting to be held in Morda. Several options were suggested including Morda Village Hall and Weston Pool whilst other options including the School and Miners Arms had been discounted based on suitability or availability issues. There was a discussion on the merits and practicalities of the various venues. Use of one would result in the Council having to convene on a different evening. Members voted on the use of Weston Pool as a venue to be included in the schedule of meetings for next year. Support 7, Against 2, Abstention 1.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to include Weston Pool as venue in the schedule of meetings next year.

Minute Refer 2260 - The Chairman informed members The Council has been offered sponsorship for The Tonys' Community Service Awards of £300. Cllr Peter Richardson commented that as a commercial business, The Council should be mindful of previous sponsors and any potential future planning applications which may give to a perceived conflict of interest. Another Councillor commented it was unlikely to be any planning applications from Evans Aggregates.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to accept the sponsorship from Evans Aggregates. Members **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** for any completed actions to be removed.

2277 Financial Matters

a) Members considered approval of income and expenditure to 31 May 2025.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the income and expenditure to 31 May 2025 of income received of £49,873.17 and gross expenditure of £11,201.63 be **APPROVED**.

b) Bank reconciliation

Members considered for approval the bank reconciliation at 31 May 2025.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the bank reconciliation statement at 31 May 2025 totalling a bank statement total of £ 256,006.78 be **APPROVED**.

c) Provisional Payments for June 2025

Members considered the following provisional Payments for June 2025:

Supplier	Details	Gross £
Shropshire Council	Joint Energy Costs - 1st Quarter April - June 2025	897.63
EE	Mobile charges	15.74
HSBC	Bank charges - 30/04/2025 - 29/05/2025	8.00
Mark Evans	Bus shelter Cleaning June 2025	60.00
Colin Turner	Bus shelter Cleaning June 2025	25.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Clerk's pay and allowances June 2025	1,586.67
HMRC	PAYE / NI Clerk Pay June 2025	360.05
Shropshire Council	Pension Contributions June 2025 - Employees / Employers	487.04
K Lloyd -The Clerk	Reimbursement - Postage	14.80
Aubergine 262 Ltd	Website set up , transfer and year 1 web subscription	838.60
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Reimbursement - Postage for agendas and associated papers June 2025 (provisional)	30.05
WTS Edge Ltd	Water Testing -Samples, certificate, and courier charges June 2025	399.00
Total		4,722.58

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the provisional payments for June 2025 be approved.

d) Members **AGREED** for the Clerk to arrange the completion of the CCLA Bank Mandate requested by the bank.

2278 Clerk's Campaign for Rural England Membership

a) Members considered joining the Campaign for Rural England (CPRE). The Clerk confirmed an annual subscription of £60 or a direct debit charge of £5.00 per month. A number of Councillors expressed their views of the benefit of membership including access to information and the influence the CPRE has.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to **APPROVE** membership of CPRE at an annual cost of £60.00 with renewal to be reviewed next year.

2279 Committees/Working Groups

Members reviewed the composition of the Road Safety (RSWG), Cemetery (CWG) and Environment Working Group (EWG). Cllr Iain Campbell informed members he was satisfied with the current membership of the EWG. Cllr Mike Weston advised of two vacancies on CWG and encouraged interested and proactive members to join. Cllr Peter Richardson volunteered to join the CWG. Members **AGREED** to with no further changes to group membership until the completion of the Co-option process.

2280 Review of Policies / Terms of Reference:

The Chairman proposed the deferment of items a & b ; Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to **APPROVE** to the deferment.

Members reviewed the Terms of Reference for The Personnel Committee, Road Safety Working Group, Cemetery Working Group, Environment Working Group and The Finance Committee (c – g)

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Terms of Reference for the Working Groups and Committees c-g)

2281 Communications Working Group

a) Cllr Richard Fowler informed members the Council has a Facebook page, Instagram account and work is continuing on a new website. He suggested a group of Councillors should be involved with this work. Cllr Andy Davis volunteered to join the team. Members noted the Group's remit will incorporate the newsletter and noticeboards. Group membership will be reviewed after the completion of the Co-option process.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to the formation of the Communication Working Group.

b) Members reviewed the draft Terms of Reference noting responsibilities have not yet been agreed.

2282 Risk Management

a) Members considered the risk assessment inspections of the council's assets. The Clerk confirmed all inspections had been completed. Several minor maintenance repairs have been identified. The Clerk will look into an inspection of headstones at Trefarclawdd Cemetery.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the risk assessment inspections of the Council's assets.

b) Members considered the Annual Risk Assessment reviewed and updated by the Clerk.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to approve the Annual Risk Assessment.

2283 Representative on the Trefonen Village Hall Committee

a) Members considered the appointment of a Councillor to represent the Parish Council on the Trefonen Village Hall Committee.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to appoint Cllr Peter Richardson to be the Parish Council representative on the Trefonen Village Hall Committee. There was one abstention.

2284 Cemetery Working Group

Cllr Mike Weston advised his report had been circulated and requested members to consider and approve the following:

1. Cemetery be closed to the public and for burials during the first two weeks of August to facilitate planned major maintenance work
2. Subject to approval, the closure be advertised on the website, Facebook, notice boards and a sign fixed to the cemetery gates. Funeral Directors and Stonemasons to be formally notified.
3. That space be added to the Cemetery Rules and Rights of Burial documents to collect phone and mobile numbers and email and domestic addresses
4. That Cemetery Rules be amended so that all payments made by Funeral Directors be made in advance and only by bank transfer to an account nominated by the Clerk and then Finance Group
5. That a general tidy up of certain plots be planned.
 - i. Photos attached of examples of plots not conforming to guidelines/rules
 - ii. To maintain the grassed lawn concept of the cemetery
 - iii. Approach identified plot holders requesting compliance and giving say six months' notice that in the event continued non-compliance items will be removed and plots seeded
 - iv To be advertised on website, Facebook and notice boards.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the recommendations set out above 1 – 5i-iv. report.

2285 Environment Working Group

Cllr Iain Campbell provided an update on the latest test results, which were consistent with previous findings. However, due to courier issues, the ambient temperature may have affected the results. The Clerk has written to the Environment Agency (EA) and Severn Trent (ST) with the test results requesting an explanation. Cllr Campbell intends to raise questions regarding the planning application submitted by the Sewage Works several years ago and will inquire as to whether certificates were issued relating to capacity and the management of phosphates. He expressed that sewage and management of it is becoming a national topic especially as housing developments increase.

Cllr Martin Jones informed members that a number of Parish Councils have expressed interest in conducting water testing and support has been provided to set up a group at Baschurch and Ryton XI to test The Perry. He advised that last year The Perry had 800 hours of uncontrolled discharge from the sewage works. This year there has been over 3,000 hours to date. This may be due to better monitoring and the effects of heavy rains earlier in the year and an increase in housing.

No response has been received from ST concerning the issue of untreated discharge. Kinnerley Parish Council has indicated an interest in conducting water testing and sharing associated costs. This collaboration may enable more comprehensive testing efforts.

There were comments on the recent court ruling on slurry being an industrial waste which raised concerns with the latest planning application at Trefarclawdd Farm and the impact of increased cattle on the Manure Management Plan. Members were informed the Oswestry Area Place Plan included a new sewage works.

2286 Oswestry Post Office Update

The Chairman informed members the Oswestry Post Office has a franchisee. No other details are available and Helen Morgan MP has not been notified.

2287 Social Media

Cllr Richard Fowler provided an update, noting that the increase in co-option applications may be due to the vacancies being advertised on various social media sites.

2288 Website

Councillor Richard Fowler informed members that he has an online meeting scheduled with the new website provider. Progress on the website will be slower until the Communication Group is operational. The Chairman suggested photographs of Full Council members for the website. Members **ACCEPTED** the report.

2289 Morda Play Area Update

Councillor Andy Davis informed members that the Morda Councillors have conducted a review of the play areas in Morda and compiled a report, which has been circulated by the Clerk. The report outlines both strengths and weaknesses, highlighting the need for an inspection. Inspectors have been out and several issues have been identified that Shropshire Council will address. Councillor Davis noted that the play areas require improvements and there is potential for expansion. While Shropshire Council is supportive of these initiatives, there is no funding. Cllr Andy Davis proposed that the Parish Council allocate £30,000 to enhance the playing areas within the Parish. He confirmed he had not approached the Clerk regarding availability of funds. The Clerk provided an update on the finances, reserves and noted the Internal Auditors recommendation for the close monitoring of reserves which are relatively low. The Clerk recommended the Parish Council should not agree to this proposal at present and Cllr Andy Davis withdrew his proposal for the time being. There was a suggestion for the Morda Councillors to meet with the Clerk to discuss finances. Other suggestions included seeking grants, meeting with the Community to establish what residents want and funding sources. The Clerk informed members that associated risks would have to be considered, including insurance, maintenance, Health and Safety, legal agreements and purchasing of assets to be located on land owned by another party.

2290 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Andy Davis informed members about a document concerning the relationship between Parish Councils and Local Authorities, focusing on which services the Parish Council may assume responsibility for. He suggested Neighbourhood Plans be considered for discussion. Cllr Peter Richardson reminded members that the Council had debated this in 2017/18 and agreed not to pursue it. He noted that Morda has experienced significant development, and the Parish is at capacity. The Chairman reported receiving correspondence from the Trefonen Protection Group, which will be circulated to members. He stated the Area Place Plan for Oswestry will be implemented and referenced the National Policy Planning Framework and Local Government white paper on reform.

2991 Correspondence

Members **NOTED** correspondence from a resident raising concerns at Trefarclawdd Farm.

2292 Consultations

a) Members **NOTED** The Shropshire Council Survey "Call for Information" from Town & Parish Councils with a consultation period from mid-June - 18 August 2025. Members will review and agree a response.

2293 Date for Next Meeting

Member **NOTED** the next meeting will place on Thursday 31 July 2025 at Rhydycroesau Village Hall from 7.00pm.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act and due to the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted it will be PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the public and press should not be present

2294 Rhydycroesau Village Hall

The Clerk informed members that, subsequent to the Parish Council meeting at Rhydycroesau Village Hall in May 2025, the secretary notified her that the Hall was discovered unlocked with lights left on the following morning. While it is ordinarily the Clerk's responsibility to ensure the premises are secured, due to an unexpected illness at the meeting, it was assumed a Councillor would complete this. Members recognised this oversight and **AGREED** that, moving forward, a Councillor will confirm with the Clerk that premises are secure before departure.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for a letter of apology to be sent to the Chairman of Rhydycroesau Village Hall Committee.

2295 Burial Issues

The Clerk informed members of an issue at Trefarclawdd Cemetery following correspondence from the owner of a burial plot. In response, appropriate actions were taken including the review of burial records and an onsite review/ inspection with the Funeral Director and Cllr Mike Weston. The Clerk provided assurance that the matter has been concluded and no further issues remain. On behalf of the Council, Cllr Peter Richardson thanked The Clerk for her due diligence and efforts.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to suspend Standing Order 3(x) to enable the meeting to exceed more than two hours.

2296 Quotes – Internal Audit Service 2025/26

The Clerk advised members the Council's Internal Auditor had submitted a quote for the Internal Audit Service 2025/26. The Clerk approached SALC for details of Local Internal Auditors and was informed there is a shortage of qualified persons across Shropshire.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the appointment of Rebecaa Turner as the Internal Auditor for 2025/26.

2297 Planning Enforcement

a) Members **NOTED** a planning enforcement case.

b) The Chairman provided an update on the response received from the Enforcement Team at Shropshire Council. There was a suggestion for motion CCTV to capture industrial HGV and demonstrate traffic movements. Members considered whether to continue submitting enforcement complaints. The Chairman confirmed there has been a change of management and an offer received from the Estate for a meeting to discuss current concerns and plans. He proposed a meeting is arranged at a suitable neutral venue. Members **AGREED** to this proposal.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.25 pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

The Chairman