



"Not for self"

Oswestry Rural Parish Council

Minutes

of the Ordinary Meeting

held at 7.00 pm on Thursday 31 July 2025 at Rhydycroesau Village Hall

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:

Six members of the public

2298 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman extended a warm welcome. He acknowledged the commitment of each member in facilitating fair and effective dialogue, maintain impartiality, and making informed decisions that reflect collective responsibility and the Council's motto, "Not for Self."

Chairman Engagements

None

2299 Apologies

None received

2300 Police Report

a) The Chairman advised members the Clerk had circulated The Oswestry Safer Neighbourhood Team Newsletter. Councillor Peter Richardson commented that the report was too informal. It was observed there was no police representatives present. Councillor Martin Jones suggested the Police should update the notice published on the Rhydycroesau noticeboard to accurately reflect the current PCSO officers. The Chairman stated that, due to shift changes, PCSOs will not be working after 8:00 p.m. A copy of the notice from Police Crime Commission will be sent to the Clerk for distribution. Members **NOTED** the report.

The Chairman requested, under Standing Order 10a6, that item 3b Parish Council Survey be moved to the end of the agenda covering two other consultations. Members **APPROVED** this change.

2301 Shropshire Council Report

Councillor Andy Davis updated members, noting that Shropshire Council's new administration is prioritising the development of effective working relationships with Parish and Town Councils. He referenced the Transformation Scrutiny Committee and mentioned several pilot schemes. He mentioned the Government Planning Reforms and related consultation timeframes.

There is a national campaign in Wales to address declining vaccinations rates, although hospital discharges last year improved. He advised SC is aware of concerns with potholes and a third team established to support maintenance works. He has requested better information on Road closures. He commented on the Shrewsbury Park and Ride and plans for improvements. He commented on Housing needs and the importance of local homes for local people. SC is actively seeking fostering parents. He noted SC Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Vyrnwy Frankton Connection project has begun drilling / bore hole activities with landowners' consent. Councillor Martin Jones expressed concern regarding the closure of the Oswestry Gateway while construction work is limited to eight hours per day, noting that this has created access challenges into Oswestry. It was suggested that financial penalties should have been included in the contract; however, Councillor Bob Kimber confirmed that such provisions are not allowed only damages. Cllr Martin Jones also commented on Domestic Abuse, the implications on housing and demands placed on health services and schools.

Cllr Peter Richardson commented on an article on Shire Hall and the plan to refurbish this at a cost of £7m, retaining the existing building and saving £28m. It was noted this is a 1960's iconic building recognised for its architectural design.

2302 Public Participation

None

2303 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 26 June 2025 were considered for approval. The Chairman proposed two changes relating to item 2276 Action refer 2260. To amend TG Aggregates to Evans Aggregates and the value of sponsorship value from £300 to £350.

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

2304 Co-option Applications – Trefonen with Treflach and Rhydycroesau and Llanforda

The Chairman advised members that not all candidates have been available. He proposed that the co-option process be deferred until September 2025 with the provision of an extraordinary meeting if required.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to defer the Co-option process to September 2025 with a provision for an extraordinary meeting if required.

2305 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 agenda item 10. All Planning matters. The clerk advised he may remain in the room during the discussion but to abstain from voting.

2306 Dispensations

None received

2307 Declarations of Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

None declared

2308 Planning Matters

Members **NOTED** the following applications.

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/01196/FUL Olive House, Maesbury Marsh, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8JB	Erection of two storey rear extension and first floor extensions over existing footprint, bay and porch to front elevation Decision: Grant Permission

b Planning Applications

Cllr Andy Davies remarked on applications recently submitted not leaving time for review. The Clerk advised that applications received after the agenda is issued and included on the Shropshire Council's website are considered to meet response timeframes.

Members considered the following planning applications:

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/02415/FUL The Mile House Farm , Shrewsbury Road, Aston, Oswestry, SY11 4JF	Change of use from Class B2 to Class E (gym) It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were two abstentions
25/02470/FUL The Bungalow, The Terraces, Morda, Oswestry, Shropshire.	Installation of external wheelchair lift It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were two abstentions
25/02320/COU The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8HY	Extension of residential curtilage It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were two abstentions
25/02544/FUL Brookside Farm, Albridge Lane, Morton, Oswestry, Shropshire.	Demolition of single storey lean-to and replace with single storey lean-to extension, formation of new vehicular access with visibility splays and sight lines and change of use of land to domestic for new access drive, and parking. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were two abstentions
25/01196/FUL Olive House, Maesbury Marsh, SY10 8JB	Erection of two storey rear extension and first floor extension over existing footprint, bay and porch to front elevation. Members NOTED this had been sent twice by Shropshire Council. The application has been granted (refer to 10 a)
25/02703/FUL Ash Cottage, Crickheath, Oswestry	Erection of single storey flat roof extension with balcony above following demolition of existing store building. Cllr Iain Campbell advised members had been unable to access the application on the Planning Portal. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were two abstentions
FOR INFORMATION ONLY 25/02771/AGR High Fawr Farm, Llanforda, Oswestry	Agricultural building to provide a covered manure store and covered feeding yard FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY

2309 Clerk's Report

Members reviewed a written report from the Clerk detailing actions taken following decisions at previous council meetings. A Councillor noted that several actions were outstanding from February 2025. The Clerk explained that order of service booklets would be printed closer to the date of the Remembrance Service. Councillor Fowler reminded members that Ref 2135 concerning the Llansylin Road issue had been previously discussed, and while concerns regarding speeding and a difficult corner were valid, it was determined that no further action was justified. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to accept the report and for all completed actions to be removed.**

2310 Financial Matters

a)Members considered approval of income and expenditure to 30 June 2025. The Clerk noted several minor, non-material adjustments since the agenda was published.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the income and expenditure to 30 June 2025 of income received of £54,415.49 and gross expenditure of £15,619.21 be APPROVED.

b) Bank reconciliation

Members considered for approval the bank reconciliation at 30 June 2025.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the bank reconciliation statement at 30 June 2025 totalling a bank statement total of £ 254,692.16 be APPROVED.

c) Provisional Payments for July 2025

Members considered the following provisional Payments for July 2025:

Supplier	Details	Gross £
EE	Mobile charges	15.74
HSBC	Bank charges - 30/05/2025 - 29/06/2025	8.00
Rhydycroseau Village Hall	Hire of Village Hall - 31 July 2025	35.00
Mark Evans	Bus shelter Cleaning July 2025	60.00
Colin Turner	Bus shelter Cleaning July 2025	25.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Clerk's pay and allowances July 2025	1,526.48
HMRC	PAYE / NI Clerk Pay July 2025	359.85
Shropshire Council	Pension Contributions July 2025 - Employees / Employers	487.04
K Lloyd -The Clerk	Reimbursement - Postage and stationery	50.25
Trefonen Village Hall	Hire of Hall - 24 April & 29 May 2025	60.00
The Muckshifter Ltd	Cemetery Works - 50 % for materials	8,400.00
A G Royce	Grounds maintenance 29/05/2025 & 12/06/2025	901.00
CPRE	Membership 2025/26	60.00
Total		11,988.36

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

CLlr Richard Fowler referencing the outturn, inquired about the allocation of funds for speeding measures in Nantmawr and Aston, and if there were related specifications. CLlr Martin Jones explained that there has been limited ward representation and lack of initiative from Shropshire Council and the Parish on this matter. Although a speed monitoring request was submitted, it has not advanced. CLlr Andy Davies reported that Shropshire Council had no objections to a change in speed limits.

2311 August 2025 Recess – Interim Arrangements

Members considered the following interim arrangements:

Finance

- a) Delegated authority to the Clerk for processing all invoices payable in August 2025
- b) Finance limit of £5,000 set on any individual invoices, above which the Clerk will seek Finance Committee approval
- a) Retrospective approval sought from Full Council at the September 2025 meeting

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the interim finance arrangements for August 2025. There was one abstention.

Planning

- b) Delegated authority to The Chairman for all planning applications / enforcements
- c) All members to forward any views, including support or objections to the Chairman by 22 August 2025
- d) Chairman to determine comments on applications which will be submitted to the Clerk by 31 August 2025.
- e) Retrospective approval sought from Full Council at the September 2025 meeting

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the interim planning arrangements for August 2025. There was one abstention.

2312 Policies

The Chairman informed members that the Council's Strategic Plan is currently outdated and emphasised the importance of aligning projects and budgets with an updated plan. He proposed a working group to review existing policies and Strategic Plan. Several Councillors indicated that it was more appropriate for The Clerk, acting as the

Proper Officer, to undertake a review of the policies. Cllr Martin Jones recommended that all Councillors review the latest Strategic Plan, reflecting on objectives and consider the views of residents in their individual wards. Any suggestions can be presented to members for consideration and inclusion in a revised Strategic Plan. The Clerk advised that policies are scheduled for review during the August recess. These will be shared with the Finance Committee for consideration with recommendations being made to Full Council in September 2025.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the policies to be reviewed by The Clerk and for members to review the Strategic Plan for their own wards. Any proposals will be brought to Full Council for consideration at the September 2025 meeting.

2313 Finance Data

Cllr Richard Fowler advised members he requested access to the draft budget, forecasted outturn, and asset register in a spreadsheet format for easier interrogation and advised he had transcribed some of this data. Cllr Peter Richardson, former Chair of Finance, stated he was reluctant for financial information being issued in an editable format and reminded the Clerk serves as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Chairman inquired about members' understanding of the Council's finances, under guidance from the Clerk, and proposed a finance seminar for all. Cllr Iain Campbell remarked that the Council benefits from a highly qualified Clerk who is also a Chartered Accountant and indicated he would consult the Clerk for any finance information to support a project. Cllr Jones suggested that should members have any financial queries, a pre-meeting could be arranged to address any questions. The Chairman stated that, having obtained members' opinions, there would be no further discussion on this subject.

2314 Yarreal Estate Management Meeting

The Chairman reminded members that it had been agreed for a meeting to be held with the new Yarreal Estate Manager. Cllr Peter Richardson expressed a view that serious concerns may be construed as a complaint and wanted The Clerk to be in attendance. The Chairman clarified this is a "without prejudice" meeting. Several Councillors expressed the view that engagement was a sensible way forward. Cllr Mike Weston suggested a concise list of objectives to facilitate questions and discussion. It was proposed The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Former Chairman and The Clerk represent the Council at the meeting. The Clerk advised that Trefonen Village Hall is unavailable for proposed dates and it was agreed for the Council representatives to determine a suitable date and venue.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for a meeting to be held with the new Yarreal Estate Manager to allow issues relating to Trefarclawdd Farm to be taken forward. There was one abstention.

2315 Shropshire Together Conference

Cllr Peter Richardson informed members that he, the Chairman, and Councillor Andy Davies attended the Shropshire Together Conference on 25 July 2025. He reported that the event was well-attended and provided an overview of the agenda, which included updates on Shropshire Council's finances, the Devolution Bill, and the Empowerment Bill. It was noted that Shropshire Council's capacity to provide non-statutory services will be reduced. The impetus is on Parish Councils working in partnership with Shropshire Council, and for Cluster Parishes to collaborate with Town Councils in service delivery. Councillor Andy Davies remarked that Shropshire Council will focus solely on fulfilling its statutory obligations. Members **NOTED** the shift in Local Government.

2316 Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Oswestry

Cllr Peter Richardson informed members that he had been approached by a former Oswestry Rural Parish Councillor regarding Oswestry Town Council's (OTC) neutral position on a proposed House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) in Cross Street. He attended the OTC July planning meeting to gauge why this stance had been taken and their view with Smithfield Hotel. Cllr Iain Campbell and Cllr Martin Jones were also in attendance. When considering the proposal for a 22-bed HMO at Smithfield Hotel, the Town Council adopted an opposing view. He understands Shropshire Council's Planning Department has rejected the Cross Street application. During discussion, concerns were expressed on the removal of the fire escape. Councillor Richard Fowler inquired whether any such issues existed within the Parish and noted that online resources provide guidance on how to circumvent registering properties as HMOs. Cllr Martin Jones advised that Public Houses in Newtown were being purchased and converted into HMOs by a developer which are then managed by Serco. He raised concerns with lack of facilities and room sizes. Cllr Peter Richardson referenced a specimen Article 4 document that has been circulated to members and expressed his willingness to act as the proposer opposing the conversion of the property from C3 (single occupancy) to C4 (multiple occupancy).

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the document to be amended to incorporate comments from Councillors and to be brought to Full Council in September for approval before being submitted to Shropshire Council. There were two abstentions.

2317 Future Meetings Schedule

Members considered the proposed dates for holding Parish Council meetings at the Weston Pools Village Clubhouse in October 2025 and February 2026. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to accept the venue and dates. Following the October meeting, members will evaluate the suitability of the venue prior to the February meeting. There was one abstention.**

2318 Cemetery Working Group

Cllr Mike Weston advised members there had been a change to the date for the closure of the cemetery. Planned Maintenance work will commence from 18 August 2025. A notice will be attached to the cemetery gate and details of this published on the Parish Council website.

2319 Environment Working Group

Cllr Martin Jones informed members that there was minimal new information to provide. He is currently awaiting a response from the Water Testing Company about cost estimates, which may be shared with Baschurch Group which is testing The Perry.

b) Councillor Iain Campbell reported that a response was received from the Environmental Agency (EA), which aligns with previous replies from the Emergency Services. He will consult with the Clerk about a reply. He provided an update on Maesbury Waste Water Treatment and mentioned a potential connection with the EA through a member of the Baschurch Group. He expressed interest in collaborative work.

2320 Communications Working Group

Councillor Richard Fowler reported that the working group's membership was anticipated to be finalised through the co-option process; however, this had not yet progressed, so there were no further update. Councillor Peter Richardson volunteered to join the group as the representative for Maesbury Ward. Members **AGREED** to this proposal.

2321 Social Media

No update.

2322 Website

Councillor Richard Fowler notified members that the Clerk had distributed the report. Online training with the website provider is scheduled for 30 August 2025. He indicated that additional Councillors are needed to assist with website management. Councillor Peter Richardson confirmed his attendance at the upcoming training session.

2323 Correspondence

a) The Clerk informed members that a parishioner has requested permission to install a memorial bench at Trefarclawdd Cemetery in memory of her late husband. Councillor Mike Weston advised that space will be available near the cremated remains area once ongoing works are complete. The installation will require a concrete plinth, with the costs to be covered by the parishioner. A site visit will be arranged.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to agree to this request in principle. There were two abstentions.

b) The Clerk notified members that a Community First Responder from Oswestry had contacted the Council with a request to provide funding for the replacement of the battery and pads on the defibrillator situated outside Morda Village Shop. The Clerk clarified that this device was initially donated by the school to the Parish Council, which had subsequently agreed to ensure its ongoing maintenance. The Chairman advised a Trefonen resident had donated £2,000 for this purpose. The Clerk confirmed that the Council has allocated funds in the budget for the scheduled replacement of both the battery and pads. A councillor noted that batteries typically have a shelf life of five years.

2324 Consultations

The Chairman informed members about the Police's Parish Council and Town Council Survey, as well as the Shropshire Council Youth Offer. He also mentioned the Shropshire Council Survey "Call for Information," which had been communicated to members during the June meeting. Councillor Martin Jones suggested that councillors submit individual responses, and members agreed to this proposal.

2325 Date for Next Meeting

Member **NOTED** the next meeting will place on Thursday 25 September 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

2326 GDPR Breach

The Clerk provided a verbal report on the recent GDPR breach and confirmed the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) were taking no further action. The Clerk reminded members of the necessity to avoid sharing personal data, such as email addresses, without appropriate consent.

The Clerk inquired if any Councillor was interested in attending GDPR training. A Councillor suggested a copy of the Parish Council's GDPR policy which the Clerk agreed to distribute.

2327 Planning Enforcement

- a) Members **NOTED** a planning enforcement case. This has been appealed.
- b) No further update.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.59 pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

The Chairman