



"Not for self"

Oswestry Rural Parish Council

Minutes

of the Ordinary Meeting

held at 7.00 pm on Thursday 30 January 2025 at Trefonen Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Peter Richardson, Cllr Martin Bennett, Cllr Bob Kimber, Cllr Martin Jones, Cllr Iain Campbell, Cllr Steve Watts, Cllr Richard Fowler, Cllr Peter Davies, Cllr Chris Woods, Cllr Jas Singh

Clerk to the Council:

Kathryn Lloyd

In attendance:

Six members of the public

2118 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman extended a warm welcome and gave apologies on behalf of the Chair of the Village Hall Committee due to the heating not been set. The Chairman requested a variation to the agenda by bringing forward item 17 , The Tonys' Community Award Presentation forward. Members AGREED to this.

2119 Tonys' Community Award Presentation

The Chairman invited Tony Milner's partner to present the glass awards to the winner Mr John Evans , who also accepted the award on behalf of Rebecca Greenham.

2120 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following:

Cllr William Jones
Cllr Mike Weston
Cllr Paul Milner

2121 Police Report

The Chairman advised two Police reports had been received both of which had been circulated to members by The Clerk. The following report was read:

Community priorities:

- 1. Speeding*
- 2. Anti-Social behaviour*
- 3. Drugs*

Priority 1.

From the list of incidents that have been reported over the December period, I'm glad to say that there have been none for speeding.

There have however been 4 reported incidents of RTC's (road traffic collisions) in the Oswestry rural area. Most of these have been on the fast A roads.

These involve a motorcyclist who had come off his motorbike but luckily had no major injuries. Police took him to the RSH rather than wait for the ambulance. The next resulted in a broken arm and took place at the Maesbury Rd traffic lights.

Another involved a pregnant lady after a 2-car incident just outside Morda. One driver blew over the prescribed level and was arrested and taken to custody.

The next was at the new roundabout set up at mile End. No injuries reported, but the road was blocked for a short time.

We have also had reports of fallen trees over the period of the storms that hit us quite heavily. Luckily, no damage was caused to travelling vehicles.

We have also received a report of a stolen car, which had actually been lent to a "friend" who then refused to return the car as they hadn't got a replacement for their own car !

A report was made of a drunk driver. The car was not found on our area, so reports were sent out to other local forces for observations.

We've had one report of a car left in a dangerous position in Trefonen. The car had gone by the next morning.

As usual we have a couple of reports of sheep on the roads. As usual they have either made their way back into the field or been removed by the owner.

Priority 2.

We have sadly had one report of ASB which had racial undertones on the area. This will not be tolerated.

Another report was received where a group of males had arrived in a local public house and began upsetting locals. They were removed from the establishment and the owner is looking at banning orders for those involved.

A homeowner / business operator has been using unlicensed and uninsured vehicles on the road and causing problems for neighbours by parking them on public roads. We have currently removed 5 vehicles from him either for no road tax or being uninsured and on the public highway.

Priority 3.

No drugs issues reported

Emerging trends - Requests for information - other.

There has been a report of theft of lead that was left outside the front of a building.

Members **NOTED** the report

2122 Shropshire Council Report

Cllr Joyce Barrow presented the following report.:

"Still no letter from MHCLG. It is believed by CCN and the LGA that it will arrive towards the end of next week. We certainly know that the Councils who have put in a request to undertake devolution will know their fate next week.

We are coming to the conclusion of the Collaborative budget process and Cabinet members have been working with the finance team. This has included leaders of opposition groups.

We no longer have a five year land supply; the local plan makes no difference to this. We can lay this firmly at the Government's door - our housing numbers have almost doubled and our current supply is judged against the new figure. The sad thing is we do need more homes, but we need the right homes in the right places. We know, from bitter past experience, that when there is no 5 year land supply, we get the wrong homes in the wrong places! We can lay this firmly at the Government's door - our housing numbers have almost doubled and our current supply is judged against the new figure. The cabinet meets on 12th February when they will give a timeframe, for a response to the examining inspectors. The inspectors asked for the council to provide a project plan, to address the soundness issues they identified. The council have been giving consideration to the contents of ID47.

The government settlement to Shropshire Council was the third lowest in the country, making budgeting very hard.

We have an outbreak of Avian Flu in North Shropshire so bird keepers and the public are being asked to stay alert.

Purdah for the local elections comes into force on 10th March for the local elections."

Members **NOTED** the report.

Councillors posed a number of questions to Cllr Joyce Barrow including the number of Councils in a similar position with the Local Plan not being fit for purpose, costs of Shropshire Council office moves, Consultation on waste collection three weekly cycle and the recycling booking system. Cllr Joyce Barrow responded by requesting the questions are emailed to her as some will require information from Finance.

A Councillor expressed concerns with the Parish Council not being informed of the departure of Mark Barrow and only learning of this via a press release and not being advised as to the current position of the Planning Department.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the Parish Council to write to Shropshire Council for clarification on the current situation with the Planning Department.

2123 Public Participation

A resident advised members he had addressed the Council in September 2024 with regard to a planning application by Trefarclawdd Farm for an additional shed. This was updated in December in respect of manure management. He has written to Shropshire Council and raised concerns via the Trefonen Facebook page regarding damage to road and will be commenting formally. He believes the majority of the community is not aware of this application and requested the Parish Council to publicise to raise awareness. A Councillor questioned whether by doing so this would be predetermination / bias. A Councillor stated the Parish Council had fiercely resisted the original application, making representation at the North Planning Committee. The Chairman stated the applications had been submitted on a piecemeal basis. A Councillors suggested devising an acceptable form of words for a poster / Social Media use.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for Cllr Martin Bennett to devise a suitable poster.

2124 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 28 November 2024 were considered for approval.

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

2125 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.

None declared

2126 Dispensations

None received

2127 Declarations of Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

The Clerk declared a gift voucher to the value of £50 received from HSBC. Refer to 2148.

2128 Planning Matters

Members **NOTED** the following applications.

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
24/03371/FUL Cherry Trees, Maesbury Road, Maesbury, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8AT	Single-storey front extension and a single-storey detached double garage Decision: Grant Permission

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
24/04168/FUL Weston House, Weston Road, Morda, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9ET	Single storey side extension, reconstruction of lean-to and refurbishment of outbuildings Decision: Grant Permission
24/04054/FUL Pentre Cefn, Craig- llwyn, Trefonen, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9BJ	Erection of two storey extension and associated works Decision: Grant Permission
24/04173/FUL Top House, Middleton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4LT	Construction of calf rearing shed Decision: Grant Permission
24/04308/FUL Bromwich Park, Maesbury Marsh, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4JQ	Erection of first floor balcony to west elevation and rebuilding of bay windows with balcony to south (front) elevation Decision: Grant Permission
24/04436/OHL Mile End Farm Buildings, Oswestry, Shropshire	New pole Decision: No Objection OHL/Circular Notification
24/04009/FUL Vron Cottage, Chapel Lane, Trefonen, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9DP	Erection of a replacement conservatory following removal of porch at front, Decision: Grant Permission

b Planning Applications

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

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
24/04517/PSPPA Tramway Farm, Crickheath, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8AH.	Application for Prior Approval under Part 14, Class J of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the installation of solar panels on an existing agricultural building.
24/04592/FUL Land East Of The Hollies, Middleton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4LU.	Construction of timber built shelter
24/04709/FUL Lavender Cottage, Sweeney, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9EY.	Erection of bicycle storage and bicycle repair building

Members **NOTED** the following appeals :

Planning Application Details	Appeals
24/03240/REFLUD Warehouse Known As Unit 2, The Barns, Woolston, West Felton.	Application for a Certificate of Existing Lawful Use for the use of building and yard for B8 storage Hearing Date : 13th January 2025 at 10:00 am
23/03185/ENF The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton.	The Barn, Top Farm, Woolston, West Felton. Appeal against Material change of use to a mixed use development comprising of oil processing and storage, contactors compound, tourist accommodation, squash court and other leisure/tourism facilities and domestic storage and garaging. Hearing Date: 13th January 2025 at 10:00 am

Members considered the following January 2025 planning applications:

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/00045/FUL 4 Brick Kiln Cottages, Racecourse Road, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7PJ.	Alterations and extensions It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to support this application

NOTE: Planning applications not listed above that are received after the issue of this agenda and included on Shropshire Council's website will also be considered to meet response timeframes

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
24/04384/LBC Morda Mill, Morda Bank, Morda, Shropshire	Install central heating boilers with associated flues, radiators and pipe-work to 12 flats Decision: Grant Permission
25/00282/AGR Pentreshannel, Coed-y-go, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9AX	Agricultural storage building Members NOTED this application
25/00231/FUL 20, The Terraces, Morda, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9NB	Erection of single storey extension following removal of existing conservatory A Councillor stated the extension will provide a better standard of living. It was PROPOSED,SECONDED and AGREED to support this application.
25/00299/FUL Pleasant Grove, Wern Y Wiel, Treflach, Oswestry, Shropshire.	Conversion of Existing Outbuilding and Erection of extension to form an Annex A Councillor commented on the ecologist report which was NOTED by members. It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to support this application.

2129 Parish Councils' Collaboration

Cllr Martin Jones advised members he had spoken with several local councillors' and Chairmans regarding collaborative working with planning applications. There have been a number of questionable decisions on planning applications. These are expensive to call out with a limited period in which to act. He noted Trefarclawwd Farm and the ironworks as examples. Councils could share the burden, limit costs and strengthen their position. There is a broad interest for this with Councils placing this as an agenda item.

The Chairman advised the Parish Wide Meeting held in September 2024 was very well received and another will be arranged for the Spring. Cllr Martin Bennett expressed a view that all Parishes defend their independence and there may be some controversy with funding and requested clarification. There are changes to the National Policy Framework and uncertainty with the Local Plan. Cllr Martin Jones expressed that collaboration with a group of Parishes would strengthen the Councils voice. Members **AGREED** for clarity on proposals.

2130 Clerk's Report

Members **NOTED** a written report from the Clerk on action taken following decisions made at previous council meetings.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to accept the report.

2131 Financial Committee Report and Financial Matters

Cllr Martin Bennett, Chairman of the Finance Committee advised ,members the Finance Committee met on 20 January 2025 to discuss finance including the draft budget and precept for 2025/26. A number of staffing matters to be discussed under Part 2 impact on the draft budget. He proposed the draft Budget be agreed in principle subject to any decisions under Part 2. Members **AGREED** to this And;

a)Members considered retrospective approval of income and expenditure to 31 December 2024, and approval of I & E Balances and forecasted outturn to 31 March 2025.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the income and expenditure to 31 December 2024 and the balance of income received to date of £56,794.73 and gross expenditure to date of £51,460.32 be APPROVED. Members NOTED and APPROVED the forecasted outturn position for 2024/25.

b)Bank Reconciliation

Members considered for approval the bank reconciliation at 31 December 2024

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the bank reconciliation statement at 31 December 2024 totalling £235,523.99 be **APPROVED**.

c) Provisional Payment January 2025

Members considered the following provisional Payments for January 2025:

Supplier	Details	Gross £
SLCC	SLCC Membership - 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2025	240.00
Scottish Power	Electricity charges 30/09/2024 - 31/12/2024 (Partially disputed)	947.27
EE	Mobile charges 11/12/2024 - 10/01/2025	14.81
HSBC	Bank charges - 30/11/2024 - 29/12/2024	8.00
Mark Evans	Bus shelter Cleaning January 2025	60.00
Colin Turner	Bus shelter Cleaning January 2025	25.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Clerk's pay and allowances January 2025	1,614.75
HMRC	PAYE / NI Clerk Pay January 2025	309.90
Trefonen Village Hall	Hire of Hall - October - December 2024	60.00
TEEC	Website & Domain Charges August 2024 - August 2025	496.80
Unity Bank	Reversal of bank charges 30/09/2024, 31/10/2024, 30/11/2024 - letter from Unity Trust	-29.40
SLCC	CICLA - Qualification course fee	450.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Reimbursement - Engraving Plus , Tonys' community glass awards with engraving	69.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Reimbursement - Postage for agendas and associated papers January 2025 and envelopes	29.64
Total		4,295.77

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

2132 Cemetery Fees

The Chairman advised members that Cllr Mike Weston, a member of the Cemetery Working Group had requested a deferral of the review of cemetery fees until March 2025.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to defer the review of cemetery Fees until March 2025.

2133 Draft Budget , Precept and Earmarked Reserves 2025/26

a) Members considered the draft budget and precept 2025/26 which was reviewed by the Finance Committee. It recommended a gross expenditure budget of £172,032 with a draw down from general reserves of £22,663. Forecasted income included £2,000 cemetery Fees, £4,500 interest and use of CIL funding of £97,869. A precept of £45,000 is required to set a balanced budget. This is an increase of £5,400 from 2024/25 and an increase of 14.00% overall (Tax Base 1.82% and 11.82% band D). The cost per household is £2.71 per week. Members **NOTED** the tax base increased from 1693.41 to 1724.20.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Draft Budget and precept for 2025/26 subject to a number of decisions under a Part 2.

2134 Interim Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Members **NOTED** the interim Internal Audit Report for 2024/25. The Clerk advised the suggestion of recording the bank statement figure in minutes of the meeting will be implemented.

2135 Road Safety Group

Cllr Martin Bennett advised members of the issues cause by Severn Trent and Shropshire Council . Locally, temporary traffic lights have appeared and disappeared. A resident has raised concerns

Cllr Steve Watts advised members at ST arrive at Weston Road to commence work on sewage issues. This was unplanned with no notices. The work caused noise and light pollution for residents. Tankers were travelling to and from the site and caused issues for other road users. ST claimed to have had permission however Shropshire Council were aware of the works having received a number of complaints. An inspector was on site. It was proposed writing to ST to raise concerns and to suggest better management. Cllr Martin Bennett agreed to draft a letter for the Clerk. A Councillor suggested this was a wider issue and provided Ellesmere A495 as an example.

b) The Road Working Group will meet via zoom to discuss road safety issues on Llansylin Road. A report will be provided at the next meeting for members to consider.

Cllr Martin Jones advised members of a recently erected sign at the metal bridge at Crewgreen and Melverly. This is causing traffic to be diverted through Knockin / Llanymynech and heavy vehicles through Maesbury and Morton.

2136 Cemetery Working Group

The Clerk read the following report on behalf of Cllr Mike Weston

"The group is currently focussed on two activities: firstly, The New Car Park & Memorial Garden. The first step is to create a Specification of Works. This will be issued to potential contractors to quote against. It will also be used as a project management to ensure the chosen contractor delivers per plan to ORPC. Quotes for the production of the Specification of Works are being sought from a number of local companies

Secondly, the installation of new Walkways and Headstone Rows. The Council needs to extend the current walkways and rows in order to continue to provide the same level of access, safety and visual appearance. A schematic has been drawn up to issue to potential suppliers. Quotes are being sought from local companies for this work."

2137 Environment Working Group

Cllr Iain Campbell advised members water testing is continuing. He has spoken with the Clerk who has requested all test results. He is looking for an Environmentalist to give a talk.

He advised a number of concerns have been raised over the state of the roads due to mud. Slurry issue at Trefarclawdd Farm and the impact with runoff. Slurry pits will need to be extended through potential planning application. Cllr Joyce Barrow advised enforcement Officer Dave Sambrook will be conducting a review at Trefarclawdd Farm in the next two weeks. She advised the name of the Planning Office dealing with the latest planning application and that both departments are "not talking" to each other.

Cllr Martin Jones advised testing has been conducted at Candy, Courtyard – Weston, North of the sewerage works, after the sewerage works and the Fjord at Maesbury, Some testing at the source of the River Morda is planned. All results will be published on the Parish Council website with links to the Facebook page. Up Sewerage Creek have been impressed with the water testing and are raising funds for their own project.

Cllr Iain Campbell advised that all the data has been shared with Cllr Joyce Barrow. Most of the data is technically and he is working to have simple looks up and take forward a suggestion for graphs and explanations.

2138 Land at the Terraces, Morda

The Chairman advised members a Trustee of the Parker Leighton Trust had approached the Parish Council with a view for it to purchase the land at The Terraces, Morda for the recreational purposes. The land is contaminated with mineworks. He proposed the Council should decline this approach stating the land is of no interest. Members voted on this- Support : Eight, Against : 1, Abstention: 1

It was PROPOSED, SECONED and AGREED to decline the approach to purchase the land at The Terraces, Morda.

A Councillor advised members that Les MacGuire had taken legal advice from Shropshire Council although it was not known in what capacity. The Chairman requested Cllr Joyce Barrow ask the Head of Legal Services, Graham White to confirm in what capacity this approach was made.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the Parish Council to write to the Head of Legal Services to request details.

2139 Possible closure of Oswestry Post Office

Cllr Martin Bennett advised members an update had been circulated earlier in the week. There will be no communication from the Post Office until March 2025. For Oswestry there is no viable solution. He has asked Helen Morgan MP to obtain statistics, costs and conditions. When the Post Office has made their decision, the MP will be informed. He incurred £14 expenditure to obtain registry information. Members **AGREED** to reimburse the cost of this. There is news that WH Smith maybe withdrawing with the possibility of OTC taking on this. It will be discussed at the next Area Committee meeting.

2140 Social Media

Cllr Richard Fowler advised members an update had been circulated detailing information on posts and responses. He requested for members to forward any items for posting. He requested guidance from members regarding posting general information from the Police and Fire Service. He has been approached by a resident asking for a post

regarding clearing of dog mess within the Parish. The Chairman proposed discretion is given for the posting of generic notices. Members **AGREED** to this proposal and **NOTED** the update.

2141 Website

Cllr Richard Fowler advised members a report had been circulated in advance. He has received four responses from alternative providers. There are number issues with the current website including broken links, orphan and redundant pages. He suggested only those pages which are useful be migrated. The next steps will be to obtain detailed pricing and functionality information from potential providers and review and update of the current website. Members **ACCEPTED** the report.

2142 Newsletter

Cllr Martin Bennett advised members he will liaise with the Clerk regarding potential articles.

2143 Correspondence

- a) Members **NOTED** receipt of a grant application from Morton Playing Fields Committee.
- b) Members **NOTED** Shropshire Fire and Rescue Keeping your homes safe from fire Scheme.
- c) Nominations have been sought to attend the Shropshire Garden Party 4 June 2025. The Chairman proposed Cllr Bob Kimber and his wife.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for Cllr Bob Kim and his wife to be nominated.

2144 Consultations

The Chairman advised members of the Vyrnwy Frankton Project next stage consultation from 19 February to 16 April 2025. Councillor Martin Jones advised a Public Meeting is being held in Llanymynech Village Hall. A resident was given permission to address members. He advised he engaged in a campaign against the pylons. He is directly impacted as the pylons will be located in his back garden. He has received threatening letters.

The Chairman kindly advised the resident to mention any matters during public participation as this is a meeting of the Parish Council which is held in public. Members of the Public cannot address members unless invited to do so.

2146 Date for Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** the next meeting will take place on Thursday 27 February 2025 at Trefonen Village Hall.

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

2147 Staffing Matters

The Chairman advised members that as part of the Finance Committee meeting, it recommended increasing the Clerk Working from Home Allowance to £10.00 per week / £43.33 per month. This is to reflect the cost of living crisis / energy price increases.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to increase The Clerk's working from home allowance to £10.00 per week / £43.33 per month.

The Chairman advised members that the Finance Committee recommended the Council join the Shropshire Pension Fund to allow The Clerk to be in receipt of a Pension. At the invitation of the Chairman, The Clerk provided an update on the benefits and associated costs.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the Council to join the Pension Fund and to progress to the next stage. Members ratified the Budget and precept 2025/26 agreed earlier in the meeting.

2148 HSBC issues

The Clerk provided an update to members concerning the issues with HSBC. The Council has been awarded £250 compensation with a gift card to The Clerk to the value of £50 for the personal inconvenience.

2149 Planning Enforcement

Cllr Martin Bennett advised members of a matter for consideration. The Parish Council must find evidence and grounds for refusal for a planning application being considered at the North Planning Committee in March. The Parish Council should consider seeking specialist advice to challenge the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Cllr Iain Campbell requested a permanent earmarked reserve for potential Judicial Reviews and asked for this to be an agenda item for the next meeting.
Members **NOTED** recent planning enforcement cases

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.45 pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____

The Chairman