"Not for self"

Oswestry Rural Parish Council

Minutes

of the Ordinary Meeting

held at 7.00 pm on Thursday 25 September 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 Jass Singh, Cllr Andy Davis

Clerk to the Council:`
Kathryn Lloyd

In attendance:
Eleven members of the public

2328 Prior to Meeting
Before the meeting was officially convened, the Chairman requested members' support for an informal opinion reference for The Shropshire Union Canal, with the intention of seeking formal ratification at the October 2025 meeting. Members **AGREED** to this proposal.

2329 Chairman's Welcome
The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Councillors and members of the Public.

2330 Chairman Engagements
None

2331 Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Weston. Members **ACCEPTED** this.

2332 Police Report
The Chairman advised members that The Clerk had circulated the police report. Members **ACCEPTED** the report.

2333 Shropshire Councillor Report
Councillor Andy Davis provided an update to members on Shropshire Council's (SC) financial status. The Council is currently seeking a £100 million loan to avoid the issuance of a Section 155 notice. Chief Executive Andrew Bagley has departed, and an interim officer has been appointed. Additionally, an internal audit conducted by other councils has identified issues which are being addressed. Since the election 7,980 pot holes have been repaired, a 55% increase on last year. A number of residents have raised concerns with hedgerows and these have been taken forward. There is The new Shropshire Partnership between SC, Town, and Parish Councils, to explore service provision. SC is looking to save money by only providing services which are a statutory requirement. He has met with other Local Councillors and Officers and welcomes suggestions for savings. He attended the recent conference on Wetlands.

He intends to organise a public meeting concerning wind farm developments. He commented on the progress of play areas in Morda and has visited residents in Coed y Go to address their concerns regarding flooding. Confirmation has been received for scheduled work in February 2026, pending landowner approval. In Nant Mawr, the implementation of speed monitors is under consideration. He continues to be actively involved in the campaign against pylons (Montgomery) and invites those interested or willing to offer support to contact him. He noted his participation on the SC Fostering panel.

Councillor Richard Fowler raised the issue of a noisy manhole cover that was reported to Shropshire Council in 2022 and subsequently taken forward with the utilities company.

The Chair thanked Cllr Andy Davis for his update and then stated :
"Cllr Davis, may I commend to you a piece of advice I received long ago. Speeches should be a bit like bathing costumes, brief and only covering the relevant points"

2334 Public Participation
A resident raised a question on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). Councillor Peter Richardson advised that the primary concern lies within Market Towns and referenced the Smithfield Hotel. He noted potential properties in rural areas and hopes the implementation of Article 4 Direction would encompass all of Shropshire.

2335 Minutes
The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 31 July 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.

2336 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.

Councillor Bob Kimber, in his capacity as Chairman of Trefonen Village Hall Management Committee, declared an interest in agenda item 26c grant funding request from Trefonen Village Hall. Councillor Peter Richardson also declared an interest in item 26c as he represents ORPC on the of Trefonen Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr Richard Fowler, in his capacity as a School Governor, declared in an interest in planning item 13. Trefonen School.

All agreed to remain in the room and refrain from commenting or voting.

2337 Dispensations
None received

2338 Declarations of Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality
None declared

2339 Policies
Members considered the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve the following policies:
1.Information Request
2.Media
3.Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk advised members there was one minor point on the Media Policy being checked with SALC.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to approve the polices. There were two abstentions.

2340 Co-option Applications – Trefonen with Treflach and Rhydycroesau and Llanforda
Before commencing the Co-option process, members agreed to suspend Standing Order items 8 a, b.

The candidate for Rhydycroesau and Llanforda gave an overview of her background, experiences, and motivation for seeking the Councillor position. Members asked questions about her availability for meetings, approaches to raising

the Council's profile, and her reasons for not standing in the May election. It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to proceed to a vote.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to appoint Audrey Hunter to be the Ward Councillor for Rhydycroesau and Llanforda. There was one abstention.

Cllr Audrey Hunter signed the declaration of acceptance of office before assuming her seat on the council.

A candidate for Trefonen with Treflach provided an overview of her background, experiences, and motivation for applying to the Councillor position. Members asked questions regarding her availability for meetings, methods to increase Council visibility, approaches to communicate with other Trefonen Councillors, and her interest in participating in specific working groups. It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to proceed to a vote.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to appoint Ingrid Knowles to the Ward Councillor for Trefonen with Treflach. There were two abstentions.

Cllr Ingrid Knowles signed the declaration of acceptance of office before assuming her seat on the council.

A candidate for Trefonen with Treflach provided an overview of his background, relevant experience, and motivation for seeking the Councillor position. He mentioned previous ambitions to serve as a Unitary Authority Councillor and outlined his experience in finance and strategic planning. Members raised questions regarding his commitment to attending meetings, approach to addressing residents' needs in the ward, and management of political affiliations.
It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to proceed to a vote.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to appoint Tom Sanderson to be the Ward Councillor for Trefonen with Treflach. There were three abstention.

Cllr Sanderson signed the declaration of acceptance of office before assuming his seat on the council.

Whilst the signing of declaration of office was taking place, The Clerk spoke with all candidates advising she will be in contact, arrange for a Parish Council email account and provide details of the requirement to complete Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest forms.

The Chairman confirmed this leaves a vacancy for Trefonen with Treflach. This will be advertised once the Clerk has checked any legal requirements.

b) The Chairman proposed deferring the appointment of Councillors to vacancies on the various Committees and Working Groups. Councillor William Jones expressed his interest in joining the Communications Working Group (CWG). Councillor Richard Fowler indicated a preference for Councillor representation from each ward.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for Cllr William Jones to be appointed to the CWG and for the other vacancies to be revisited in October 2025. There were four abstentions.

2341 The Tonys' Community Service Award Presentation 2025
The Chairman formally presented the 2025 Tonys' Community Service Award to Loulou Blaze in recognition of her voluntary service to the community. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the Parish Council for her contribution.

2342 Planning Matters
Members **NOTED** the following applications. There was one abstention.

Planning Application Details	**Planning Proposals**
25/02544/FUL Brookside Farm, Albridge Lane, Morton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8AL	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 Decision: Grant Permission
25/01474/FUL Hope House Hospice, Nant Lane, Morda, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9BX	Refurbishment of an existing playground and creation of an accessible outdoor path network across the site Decision: Grant Permission

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/02415/FUL The Mile House Farm , Shrewsbury Road, Aston, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4JF	Change of use from Class B2 to Class E (gym) Decision: Grant Permission
25/02703/FUL Ash Cottage, Crickheath, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8BJ	Erection of single storey flat roof extension with balcony above following demolition of existing store building Decision: Grant Permission

b Planning Applications

Members provided retrospective **APPROVAL** for August 2025 planning applications. There were four abstentions.

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/02829/FUL Three Trees, Sandrock Lane, Trefonen, Shropshire, SY10 9DP	Erection of 1 dwelling and formation of vehicular access Response : **"It is the wish of the local member that ORPC OPPOSE the application, and that the comments of the Council from the application of 2014 be reiterated together with support for the views of the Trefonen Rural Protection Group**"

c)Members considered the following applications:

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/03119/COU Cadwallader Ltd, Unit Mr4, Maesbury Road, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8NJ	Change of use of existing B8 storage and distribution building to Class E(d) Indoor sport **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to SUPPORT this application. There were two abstentions**
25/03174/FUL The Elms, Middleton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4LT.	Construction of a replacement garage Cllr Peter Richardson noted the build remained within the original footprint, but the two-storey extension within the garage space was misleading. Cllr Martin Jones commented the plans on the portal were difficult to interpret. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment on this application. There was one abstention.**
25/03064/OUT NE of Morton Ley Farm, Morton, Shropshire.	Outline application (all matters reserved) for the erection of a rural enterprise dwelling and all associated works Members commented that the Parish Council had supported a similar proposition on the Oswestry Road and there was little difference. This is for an agriculture workers dwelling. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment on this application. There were two abstentions.**
25/03409/VAR Trefonen C Of E School, School Lane, Trefonen, Oswestry	Variation of Condition 1 attached to Planning Permission 15/02762/VAR dated 15 September 2015 to allow for the retention of the demountable accommodation for a further temporary period of 10 years. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to support this application. There were two abstentions.**
25/03467/AGR Field To The North Of B4396 (near Redwith Junction And Where The Montgomery Canal Crosses The B4396), And To The South East Of Morton Farm.	New farm road. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Planning Application Details	Planning Proposals
25/03509/CPL Clements Cottage, Gwern-y-Brenin, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 8AP.	Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed erection of replacement shed/workshop **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
25/03490/FUL Elm Cottage, Llawnt, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7PR.	Single storey side extension **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED not to comment. There were three abstentions**.

2343 Clerk's Report

Members reviewed a written report from the Clerk detailing actions taken following decisions at previous council meetings.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to accept the report and for all completed actions to be removed.

2344 Payments for August 2025

a)Members considered retrospective approval for the income and expenditure to 31 August 2025.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to provide retrospective approval for income and expenditure to 31 August 2025. There were four abstentions.

b) Members considered for approval I & E year to date balances and forecasted outturn position to 31 March 2025 at 30 September 2025.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the year to end balances and forecasted outturn position for 2025/26 at 30 September 2025 be APPROVED.

c)Bank Reconciliation

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

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the bank reconciliation statement to 31 August 2025 totalling £244,044.15 be APPROVED.

d) Members considered the provisional payments for September 2025.

Supplier	Details	Gross £
EE	Mobile charges	15.74
HSBC	Bank charges - 30/07/2025 - 29/08/2025	8.00
Shropshire Council - Energy Costs	2nd Quarter for period July - September 2025	769.40
Rhydycroesau Village Hall	Hire of Hall - September Meeting	35.00
Maesbury Women's Institute	Hire of Hall - Trefarclawdd Farm Meeting	13.00
K Lloyd	Cemetery Works - 50 % remaining balance for completion of works	8,400.00
Mark Evans	Bus shelter Cleaning September 2025	60.00
Colin Turner	Bus shelter Cleaning September 2025	25.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Clerk's pay and allowances September 2025	1,544.55
HMRC	PAYE / NI Clerk Pay September 2025	359.85
Shropshire Council	Pension Contributions September 2025 - Employees / Employers	487.04
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Reimbursement - Microsoft License 2025/26	84.99
PKF Littlejohns LLP	External Audit Fee 2024/25	378.00
K Lloyd - The Clerk	Reimbursement - Postage September meeting, other postage costs and envelopes	41.52
A G Royce	Grounds maintenance 24/07/2025 & 07/08/2025	602.00
Highline Electrical Ltd	Street Lighting Maintenance - replaced lantern and photocell	444.00
A G Royce	Grounds Maintenance Works 07/08/2025, 20/08/2025	804.00
Total		**14,072.09**

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that provisional Payments for September 2025 be APPROVED.

e) Members considered the CIL 2025 return.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for this to be APPROVED and submitted to Shropshire Council.

Members **NOTED** the following :
f) Increased fees for use of Rhydycroesau Village Hall from October 2025
g) Banking issues with HSBC – The Clerk confirmed compensation payments of £25.00 and £100.00
h) Pension redeclaration completed 15 August 2025 to Comply with Pension Regulations 2008

2345 Finance Committee Update
Councillor Peter Richardson informed the members that the Finance Committee met on 16 September 2025, during which he was elected Chairman. There was one abstention. The committee reviewed several documents: the Audit Plan and recommendations prepared by the Clerk, the External Audit Report and Certificate, as well as the CIL statement and CIL Reserves.

It was proposed and recommended to reduce the Traffic Calm funding allocated to Mant Mawr and Aston from £40,000 to £20,000. Of the reallocated £20,000, £12,000 would cover recent cemetery works, with the remaining £8,000 assigned as unallocated. Additionally, £10,000 designated for Trefonen play improvements would be redirected to Morda Play improvements, and communications funding of £2,500 would be marked as unallocated and funded from the General Reserve.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to approval the CIL reserve reallocations. There were four abstentions

The Finance Committee recommended deferring the Financial Regulations and Standing Order to the October meeting. Policies on Information Request, Media, and Councillor Vacancy were reviewed and agreed, along with changes proposed by the Clerk; members have received the revised documents. A minor query is pending with SALC. The following were deferred to the next Personnel Committee: Councillor/Clerk Protocol, Dignity at Work, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and Lone Working.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the recommendations. There were four abstentions.

The latest Forecast outturn position at 31 March 2026 was reviewed.

The Clerk requested quotes for the annual sanding and varnishing of the noticeboards, which had not been received by the time of the meeting.

The Finance Committee plans to meet on 21 October 2025, with the Personnel Committee meeting either before or after. This will depend on the Clerk's availability.

2346 Annual Internal Audit Action Plan
The Clerk advised that following the internal audit report a number of recommendations have been proposed. An Action Plan has been developed to address these. Members **NOTED** this. There were two abstentions

2347 External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25
The Clerk confirmed the External Auditor's Report and Certificate has been passed as noted in Cllr Peter Richardson Finance update. The Clerk advised the Conclusion of Audit notice will be published by 30 September 2025. The Chairman raised the question of any preparation the Council will need to make in respect of the new assertion 10 relating to Data Protection and members training. The Clerk advised no guidance relating to this has been received from the External Auditors. When notified, The Clerk will place it as an agenda item. Members **NOTED** the External Auditor's report and certificate for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25. **There were three abstentions.**

2348 Yareal Estate Management Meeting
The Chairman advised a number of confusions led to the meeting being aborted. At the last Parish Council meeting he assumed this was a formal informal meeting. Although he had not provided the farm managers details to The Clerk, he assumed she would issue the invitation. He now hoped the meeting will be rescheduled. Cllr Martin Jones clarified that the Clerk was not at fault and that all other Councillors had convened at the correct location at the agreed time. The Chairman noted the summons lacked a venue and there was a miscommunication. The Chairman directed members to proceed to item 19 HMO which Cllr Peter Richardson noted as agenda item 20.

Cllr Iain Campbell advised that he did not appreciate The Chairman trying to shout down Councillors or being spoken to in a raised voice. The Chairman explained his raised voice was only in response to Cllr Jones having raised his.

He stated his unwillingness to accept any further criticism and if any Councillor felt his behaviour is inappropriate to refer the matter to the SC Monitoring Officer.

Cllr Kimber objected to the Chairman shouting. In response, he stated the reason for his raised voice was to ensure everyone could hear and part of his role is overseeing the meeting. Cllr Jones asked The Chairman to explain why he had shouted on the telephone at The Clerk. He advised he had been under stress for lateness and had apologised for his tone. He asked The Clerk to confirm this. The Clerk acknowledged an apology for his tone of voice but not for assigning blame. The Clerk advised that a draft agenda had been circulated and no comments received on the absence of a specified venue. She further explained that at the July meeting members had been advised that Trefonen and Rhydycroesau Village Hall were unavailable and an alternate venue would be sought. The Clerk had informed delegated members of the availability of The Women's Institute at Maesbury from 6.00pm by email and all members had responded and agreed to this

The Chairman ruled he was not accepting item 19 and members response was giving an extremely poor impression to new members.

Cllr Iain Campbell asked members to note no apology from The Chairman.

2349 Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Oswestry
a)Cllr Peter Richardson provided an update to members on the HMO . The application for 23 Cross Street has been disallowed and the applicant has resubmitted this without change or explanation. Oswestry Town Council has opposed the Smithfield application. It is believed the applicant is considering an appeal.

b)Members considered the amended HMO Article 4 Directions in Oswestry and Shropshire Market Towns which had been circulated by The Clerk. Cllr Richard Fowler commented existing developments / properties are becoming HMOs without planning. Cllr Ingrid Knowles questioned the problems with HMOs and Cllr Martin Jones provided a detailed explanation for the issues.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to APPROVE the amended HMO Article 4 Direction to be submitted to SC.

2350 Cemetery Working Group (CWG)
Cllr Peter Richardson presented the report on behalf of the CWG. He advised the cemetery works have been completed and recommended payment of the final balance to the contractor. Members APPROVED this. The CWG is seeking another proactive Councillor to join and assist with future projects. It was **AGREED** for this appointment to be considered at the October 2025 meeting.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to ACCEPT the report. There were three abstentions.

2351 Environment Working Group
Cllr Martin Jones advised his report has been circulated by The Clerk. Water testing has been completed and linked with Baschurch which will allow comparison of data on pollution in The Perry. There have been initial conversations with the Environment Agency (EA). Cllr Iain Campbell has engaged with a qualified scientist who is prepared to review the results and arrange these in a structure which can be published on the website. The results should be more easily understood and illustrate the impact on public spaces. Cllr Andy Davis expressed the data is impressive and will meet with members to discuss further. Cllr Iain Campbell advised his response letters to EA and Water Company are pending.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to ACCEPT the report. There was one abstention.

2352 Communications
a) Councillor Richard Fowler noted that the Clerk has distributed the Communications Working Group report. He is requesting that each ward have a representative on the group and will send the report to new members.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to ACCEPT the report

2353 Social Media
No further update.

2354 Website
Councillor Richard Fowler provided an update, noting that the initial version of the website has been received. Aubergine, the web provider, recommended including videos of each ward and images that represent the Parish. A presentation of the website will be required, which is likely to take place online.

Councillor Peter Richardson advised that Councillor Fowler has engaged a professional photographer to take new photographs of Councillors for the website. The photographer is scheduled to attend the October meeting.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to suspend standing order 3x an allow the meeting to continue beyond 2 hours.

2355 Email Etiquette

b) Councillor Martin Jones gave a verbal report to members regarding proper email etiquette within the Council. He explained how the Clerk prefers to be addressed, emphasising that the Clerk should be copied on all communications, to protect members and ensure compliance including GDPR. Members were reminded not to use personal email addresses for Council business. Email exchanges should remain polite and courteous, with recipients addressed by name, correctly spelt, with messages signed off properly. Members **NOTED** this. **There was one abstention.**

2356 Correspondence

a) Members considered a request by Community First Responder for Oswestry, to cover the costs for the replacement of the battery and pads for the defibrillator located outside Morda Village Shop.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to fund the costs of the replacement battery and pads for the defibrillator located outside Morda Village Shop. There was one abstention.

b) Members considered a request by Chris Mellings (SALC) to attend the October Parish Council meeting with Cllr Ray Wickson to provide an update on working with Shropshire Council following the Shropshire Together Conference. Members **AGREED** to this. There were three abstentions.
c) Members considered requests for grant funding from Rhydycroesau Church PCC and Trefonen Village Hall Committee.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to approve £300 to Rhydycroesau Church PCC and £500 to Trefonen Village Hall Committee. There were two and four abstentions, respectively.
d) Cllr Peter Richardson advised members a request had been received from Trefonen Village Hall to move the December meeting from 4 to 11 December 2025.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to move the December meeting from 4 to 11 December 2025. There were three abstentions.

2357 Consultations

None

2358 SALC AGM 29 October 2025

The Chairman proposed that The Clerk attend the SALC AGM being held on 29 October 2025. Cllr Andy Davis agreed to attend this subject to availability. There was one abstention.

2359 Date for Next Meeting

Member **NOTED** the next meeting will take place on Thursday 30 October 2025 at Weston Village Clubhouse from 7.00pm. There was one abstention.

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

2360 NALC Pay Award 2025/26

The Clerk advised members the NALC Pay Services Agreement 2025 had been agreed. Members **NOTED** this.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED for the Clerk to receive the arrears of pay due as part of the NALC Pay Services Agreement 2025, payable from 1 April 2025. There was one abstention.

2361 Planning Enforcement

a) Members **NOTED** a planning enforcement case. There was one abstention.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.13 pm

Signed: ______________________________________ Date: _____________________________

The Chairman