



# **Much Wenlock Town Council**

## **Town Council Meeting**

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Supporting Papers**

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock  
 at 7 pm on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

**Present:** Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans (in the chair), Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West and Duncan White.

**In attendance:** Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, three members of the public in person, nine members of the public remotely.

Councillors were pleased to meet the new Curate for Holy Trinity Church, Mr Sam Rigby.

## 1. Mayor's Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported the following:

Once again the weather in September has been a washout, but Much Wenlock has fortunately been relatively lightly affected. The work on the flood attenuation on the Stretton Road is complete, although untested. However, it is disappointing that High Street residents are still living in fear of flooding, despite the promise of drain improvements. The sandbags are back in place, thanks to Councillor Dan Thomas.

Work is underway on the path extension on the Gaskell Ground to connect the perimeter path with Windmill Hill. We have also obtained a grant towards the installation of a defibrillator on the Gaskell Ground and await delivery.

Work to repair the Chapel porch in the cemetery and the replastering work in the Council office have both been completed.

The role of Town Crier has been advertised and there has been some great press coverage. We plan to hold a 'cry off' in the Square on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> October during the Made in Shropshire market.

Plans for the Christmas Lights Switch-on are in progress and we can look forward to another lovely evening - all we need is some kind weather!

On the weekend beginning Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> October the Get a Word in Edgeways Festival of the Spoken Word will be held in several locations in the town. This will be a celebration of the spoken word, shared by people all over the world, with participants from other countries. Further details are available on posters around the town and online.

It was heartwarming to hear that Jack Woodhouse from Northwoods Funeral Directors has become one of the youngest qualified funeral directors in the UK at the age of 22. Congratulations Jack.

Finally, I want to express thanks to fellow Councillors, and especially Dan Thomas, for the support during my recent hospitalisation and recovery. I am not quite there yet but I have a good long-term prognosis, for which I feel very lucky.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Benbow – work, Councillors Grainger and Toon – family matters.

## 3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the monitoring officer.

Councillor Thomas declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 15 and 16 in relation to site allocation and stated that he would leave the room should development sites be discussed.

## 4. Dispensations

None requested.

## 5. Public Session

A member of the public had asked to speak regarding agenda item 13. The Mayor advised that he would invite the individual to speak later in the meeting when that agenda item was considered.

## 6. Police Matters

Members noted a written update from the local policing team. Members of the team were unable to attend the meeting and had sent their apologies.

Councillors expressed surprise that there was no mention of the recent vandalism at St Mary's toilets in the police report. It was noted that anti-social behaviour associated with The Raven had been reported to the local team.

## 7. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

**Stretton Road Work:** since our last meeting, the Stretton Road work has opened and was tested in last week's severe weather. It seemed to cope well with the heavy rainfall. This is a small step in the work that this Council, our local Flood Group and I are pursuing for the town but an important step forward. The sandbags saved for the High Street were rather unhelpfully reported as a fly tip prompting Shropshire Council to pay Veolia to remove them. However, I personally went to the Craven Arms depot to retrieve 40 sandbags and these are now with the High Street residents who need them. If any other people need sandbags, please let me know.

**436 Bus Route:** some bus drivers on the 436 have suggested that Select Bus Services is planning to change the route to avoid Barrow Street. I have spoken to Shropshire Council, which subsidises this service, and expressed my opposition to the route change. I have pushed for a meeting with officers and Select's representatives to discuss this.

**HomePoint:** many of you will be aware that Shropshire Council's HomePoint system, used by people to register and apply for social housing, is rather dated. My view, which was expressed as part of a member's question last week at the Shropshire Council meeting, is that the system is a source of distress for many people. The system leaves families waiting far too long to learn the outcome of their applications; one resident had to wait over ten weeks before his registration was even accepted on the system. I have lots of friends as well as residents who can't stay in Wenlock when they'd like to, and it pains me to see them leave the town.

I'm delighted to announce that HomePoint is being upgraded in response, which will mean quicker and more user-friendly service. This will mean families won't have to put their lives on hold waiting for applications and can apply more easily for the houses they need. I will update you all as soon as I know the dates.

**Victoria Road Resurfacing:** Victoria Road will undergo a resurfacing this month to address issues with the road surface. The work will take place from 8 pm to 6 am each night, and the road will be closed during those times. During the work, access to the works area will be restricted to residents who live and work within the road closure, pedestrians, dismounted cyclists, and emergency vehicles. This road has been plagued with surface issues for years, and I am pleased to see the work take place.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** the review of the Neighbourhood Plan continues apace, and another public event, with details to be confirmed, is booked for Saturday, 9th November.

**Advice Surgery:** my next Advice Surgery is on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> October, between 10:30 a.m. and 12 noon at Much Wenlock Museum. No appointment is necessary. I'll be joined by Town Councillor John O'Dowd and PCSO Mal Goddard from the local policing team.

## 8. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of a HR Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024.**

## 9. Town Clerk's Report

Members noted the written report from the Town Clerk. The Clerk advised that no comments had been received regarding the closure of the Council office on Fridays.

## 10. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

- a. Members noted that the external audit had been concluded and that in the opinion of the auditor the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR was in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. Thanks were expressed to the members of staff who had been involved with the audit.
- b. Members noted that the relevant public notice of the conclusion of the audit had been displayed.

### 11. Banking Arrangements

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a change to the Town Council's bank mandates to remove the former RFO and add the current RFO as an administrator on the Council's bank accounts.

### 12. The Guildhall Project

Members noted that a meeting was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> October with an advisor from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Greenwood Projects to discuss the Council's application for funding. The Mayor, Councillor Crooke-Williams and the Clerk would attend along with a representative from Greenwood Projects.

### 13. Car Park at the Rear of the Corn Exchange

Members considered management of the Town Council's car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange. The Mayor outlined the background and reasons for considering the engagement of a parking management company. There were only six public parking spaces in the car park, plus two disabled spaces. Complaints had been received about several individuals working in the town persistently abusing the free, one hour, pop-and-shop parking restriction and parking for the whole day. This reduced space available to those wishing to shop and support the traders and other businesses in the town centre. The Council had discussed the situation with those individuals concerned who had, unfortunately, not changed their behaviour. As a result, the Council was seeking solutions to the problem and was considering the introduction of an automatic number plate recognition camera so that the parking could be monitored. It was proposed that following a limited free parking session, tickets could be purchased. Fines would be issued by the parking management company for non-compliance.

A member of the public was invited to speak. He stated that if the parking was restricted to one hour only, then the Council should police this. If two hours parking were provided and then drivers had to pay, that was not so bad. But what about tradespeople who used the car park when working the Town Centre? Parking in this car park made it easier for tradespeople to reach the place they were working in the town. Otherwise, they would need to pay for parking and the cost would go on the bill for the customer. If people working in the town parked in the car park, they were still contributing to the economy of the town.

Councillors made the following points:

- There was very clear signage publicising the on-hour parking restriction during the day, but this was still being ignored by some individuals. The Council relied on the good will of those using the car park to comply with the rules.
- This was a long-standing problem with letters about non-compliance having been issued as far back as 2018.
- There were concerns that parking management companies were not always responsive to complaints from members of the public about fines incurred.
- Shropshire Council would be unwilling to 'police' the car park without installing a ticket machine.
- The use of a mobile app to purchase parking tickets would not suit all residents, who might then incur a high fine.
- Several members of the community had raised concerns about the proposals for the car park.
- What arrangements could be made for visitors to the Council office?  
Councillors were advised that under the proposals, the Town Council would have the facility to add registration numbers to the system to give a period of free parking for particular days.
- It was extremely disappointing that some negative, offensive and inaccurate statements about the Council and individual Councillors had been made on social media in connection with this matter.
- A recorded vote was requested.

It was **unanimously RESOLVED** to refer management of the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange to the Finance & Asset Management Committee for further consideration and to seek a solution acceptable to all parties. Any alternative proposal should come back to full Council for discussion and approval. If no such solution could be found, then the current system of management would be retained.

In closing this agenda item, the Mayor urged members of the community to be mindful that personal attacks on Councillors were unacceptable. Councillors were volunteers who received no payment for the work they carried out in this role. They tried to do their best for the community and the car parking proposal had been put forward to try to improve life in the town. Members of the community were welcome to put forward their own ideas on how to solve this parking problem.

#### 14. Much Wenlock Place Plan

Members considered further additions to the Much Wenlock Place Plan. It was noted that it was dangerous for pedestrians to cross Victoria Road near Birchfield Garage and that this was an accident spot. Discussions were in progress with the Shropshire Council highways engineer about slowing traffic as it came into the town.

The running track at William Brookes School had deteriorated and, although suitable for school use, no longer met the UK Athletics Standard. This meant that it could not be used for the Wenlock Olympian Games, which would be forced to move elsewhere. If refurbishment/upgrade of the track were put into the Much Wenlock Place Plan, Shropshire Council would have to consider this matter seriously and it would also help in the search for external funding.

**It was RESOLVED to request that Shropshire Council make the following additions to the Much Wenlock Place Plan:**  
**a. The introduction of a pedestrian crossing near Birchfield Garage and b. Refurbishment/upgrade of the running track at William Brookes School to bring it to UK Athletics standard.**

#### 15. Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members were advised that Shropshire Council was currently screening the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Climate Change purposes and had given initial feedback. The Town Council's consultant was pulling together the elements of the Plan with the aim of finishing the draft Plan within the next couple of weeks. It was hoped that consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan could commence on 9<sup>th</sup> November, the date of the next public event, with consultation continuing through December. There would still be opportunity to make changes at this stage.

#### 16. Shropshire Local Plan Review

Having declared an interest in development sites in the town, Councillor Thomas left the room

- a. Members noted a correction to the Council's written statement to Stage 2 of the Local Plan Hearings: 'Place Plan' was replaced with 'Local Plan' at the beginning of paragraph three. The statement had been submitted between meetings.

**It was RESOLVED to retrospectively approve the Town Council's written statement to Stage 2 of the Hearings, Matter 19 – Much Wenlock Place Plan Area, as corrected.**

- b. Members noted that the hearing on Matter 19 – Much Wenlock Place Plan Area (policy 13) was scheduled for the morning of Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November and that Councillors Benbow and Tyler were registered to speak on behalf of the Town Council.
- c. Members considered the content of the Council's verbal representation. It was noted that those representing the Town Council were not obliged to make a verbal presentation but could be present to clarify matters, ask or answer questions, etc.

The Council's Planning & Environment Committee had considered what points might be made at the hearing. It had been agreed that the speakers should reiterate the need for policy S13 to specify that improvements should be made to the Gaskell corner as a result of any developments that would impact on the junction.

In addition, if the current preferred site were approved, some protection, such as a Bond, would be required for the town to avoid a repeat of the flooding problems which had arisen on Hunters Gate 1. Speakers could cite the Callaughtons Ash development and drainage problems that had arisen there.

Councillor Tyler had advised that he intended to speak purely on traffic matters and the impact on Much Wenlock of the developments proposed for Tasley, Ironbridge Power Station and Horsehay/Lightmoor.

Councillors were content with the approach to the hearing on Matter 19 outlined above.

It was noted that the Town Council had requested that Shropshire Council remove the confidentiality requirement from proposals drafted for the Gaskell corner, but these were on hold due to current funding constraints.

Members noted that the Transport Working Group would be meeting to agree a response to concerns raised by Councillors with regard to statements relating to traffic matters.

Councillor Thomas returned to the meeting.

**17. Environmental Maintenance in Much Wenlock**

Members noted that the condition of several public spaces in Much Wenlock had become untidy with weeds and overgrown vegetation. These included St Mary's car park, the Mutton Shut and the top of the Square, areas which were not the responsibility of the Town Council. This was unattractive and gave a bad impression to visitors.

Councillors had previously tried to set up voluntary groups to help with maintaining these areas but had not been successful. Councillor Crooke-Williams informed Members that she had received several complaints about the weeds and that one person had offered to set up a working party to deal with the vegetation.

**It was RESOLVED that Councillor Crooke-Williams would speak to the person who had offered to set up a group to tidy the overgrown vegetation in the town and report back.**

**18. Christmas Lights Switch-on 2024**

It was reported that arrangements were progressing for the Christmas Lights Switch-on 2024 which would be held on the evening of Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> November. The school choir was booked to perform during the evening. Discussions had been held with the newly formed Guild, who were considering late night opening of the shops on Thursday evenings in the run up to Christmas. Plans for arranging a Santa's grotto with storytelling were under discussion.

**19. VE Day Commemoration 2025**

The Tourism and Events working group were considering options for commemoration of VE Day in May 2025.

**20. Correspondence from Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust**

Members considered correspondence from the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust.

**It was RESOLVED to invite representatives of the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust to give a brief talk at a Town Council meeting.**

**21. SALC AGM and Conference**

Members considered attendance at the SALC AGM and Conference on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 4.00pm at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**It was RESOLVED that the Mayor, Councillors Fenwick and Thomas and the Town Clerk should attend the SALC AGM on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024.**

**22. Nature Recovery Town and Parish Councils Conference**

Members considered attendance at the Nature Recovery Town and Parish Councils Conference on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 10am to 4pm in Church Stretton. **It was RESOLVED that Councillor West and the Clerk should attend the Nature Recovery Town and Parish Councils Conference on 6<sup>th</sup> December.**

**23. Broadband Infrastructure Briefing Note from Shropshire Council**

Members received a Broadband Infrastructure Briefing note from Shropshire Council entitled 'The delivery of gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure: A guide for councillors September 2024'.

The report outlined measures to extend broadband coverage and the use of telegraph poles to carry cables, which saved installing new poles. Councillor Thomas expressed concern about the impact of installing new poles in the Conservation Area.

**It was RESOLVED that the Council supported the initiative outlined in the briefing note in principle.**

**It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should make a further attempt to arrange a meeting with a representative from Gigability, who were working on the rollout of a full fibre network in Much Wenlock.**

**24. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items, which they had received by email between meetings:

- a. SALC information bulletins and other information
- b. NALC newsletters and other information
- c. Selected press releases from Shropshire Council
- d. Rural Bulletins from the Rural Services Network
- e. VCSA Shropshire newsletters
- f. The Rural Services Network Bulletins and Rural Funding Digest
- g. Marches Energy Agency September newsletter
- h. Selected Neighbourhood Matters alerts
- i. 'Our News' Newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters September 2024
- j. Friendly Transport Service October newsletter

- k. Mailings from The Edge Cinema
- l. Correspondence from Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- m. Shropshire Hills National Landscape newsletter
- n. RAF Shawbury Helicopter Liaison Group Newsletter Edition 1 2024

**25. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting**

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting.

Members of the public left the meeting, expressing support for Councillors.

**26. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall.

**Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was **RESOLVED** that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.

**27. 10 High Street**

Members received an update on progress with letting the premises at 10 High Street.

**It was RESOLVED to proceed with letting the premises to the potential tenant on the terms outlined.**

**28. Intruder Alarm Response for Council Premises**

Members considered arrangements for the intruder alarm response for Council premises.

**It was RESOLVED to purchase a EufyCam S220 4 Cam Kit for installation in the Guildhall.**

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed ..... Mayor Date .....

10/24

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**  
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

**Present:** Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Linda West

**In attendance:** Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk

## 1. Apologies

Councillor Chris Tyler – holiday.

## 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the Register of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

CLlr Thomas declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 25.

## 3. Dispensations

None requested.

## 4. Public Session

None.

## 5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

## 6. Planning Applications

Members considered the following application and resolved to respond as noted:

24/02876/FUL Hopes Edge, Presthope, Much Wenlock	Alterations to form new entrance doors and rear door, new windows and internal alterations to existing layout. <b>It was RESOLVED no objection.</b>
24/03040/PA3MA 13 St Marys Lane, Much Wenlock	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). <b>It was RESOLVED no objection to the proposal to date.</b>
24/03206/TCA Holy Trinity Church - Churchyard, Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock	Crown lift to first triple unions & reduce the tops of the two heavy lateral limbs (See Doc 3) by approx. 15% and remove deadwood of 1no Wellingtonia (T16), crown lift to approx. 8m above churchyard 1no Sycamore (T15) & crown lift to approx. 4m and remove deadwood of 1no Wellingtonia (T21) within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. <b>It was RESOLVED no objection.</b>

## 7. Planning Decisions

Members noted the following planning decisions.

24/02453/FUL 2 St Owens Drive, Much Wenlock	Erection of a single storey extension to rear. <b>Decision: Grant Permission</b>
24/02430/TPO Larch House, Southfield Road, Much Wenlock	Crown reduce and thin by up to 30% and crown lift up to 20% 1no Larch protected by The Bridgnorth District Council (Southfield Road, Much Wenlock) TPO 1985 (Ref: BR/TPO/53). <b>Decision: Grant Permission</b>



11/24

<p>24/02214/TCA 12 Victoria Road, Much Wenlock</p>	<p>Reduce back branches so trees are in line with stone wall of line of Yew within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. <b>Decision: Consent by Right – Trees</b></p>
<p>24/02520/LBC 3 St Marys Lane, Much Wenlock</p>	<p>Replacement of all four timber casement windows on the road-facing elevation affecting a Grade II listed building. <b>Decision: Grant Permission</b></p>

**8. Licensing application**

Members noted the following licensing application.

<p>58 Sheinton Street, Much Wenlock</p>	<p>Small bakery and deli with coffee and bottle shop sales on and off the premises. Between 20 and 30 covers. Licensable activities: recorded music and supply of alcohol. Supply of alcohol between 11am and 9pm. Opening hours up to 10pm latest.  The hearing of the Licensing Act Sub-Committee had been held earlier in the day on 3<sup>rd</sup> September but no decision had yet been announced.</p>
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**9. Draft Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016 - 2038**

- a. Members noted that the Clerk had registered the intention of Much Wenlock Town Council and Associates to speak at the Stage 2 Hearings on Matter 19 – Much Wenlock Place Plan Area (policy S13), currently scheduled for the morning of Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- b. Members noted that the Programme Officer had written to other representors in the group of Much Wenlock Town Council and Associates to request that they be represented by a single spokesperson if several representors wished to make the same points.
- c. Members noted that written and verbal representations should not cover the same ground. Written representations submitted would be taken as read and would not need to be reiterated verbally. A concise summary of relevant points should be presented at the hearing. Matters to be considered could include flooding and detailed mitigation proposals for the Hunters Gate 2 site, employment land, housing for older people and the strategic transport corridor.

**It was RESOLVED to invite representatives of the Council’s Associates (Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group, Civic Society and Howard Horsley) to meet with members of the Planning & Environment Committee the following week to discuss representations for the Stage 2 Hearings for the Local Plan and to agree the content of the joint representation.**

It was noted that written submissions needed to be made by Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> September. Councillors not on the Planning & Environment Committee should also be informed of proposed submissions.

- d. There were no other relevant matters.

**10. Neighbourhood Plan Review**

The Neighbourhood Plan Review Steering Group had met the previous week. It was intended to send a draft of the revised Plan to Shropshire Council for review in October and to issue this for public consultation in November. A consultation event was being arranged for Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 10am to 4pm, at the Priory Hall.

**11. Flooding Matters**

- a. Members received a verbal update from the Strategic Flood Working Group: Councillor Benbow wished to step down as Chair of the working group and the group would elect a new chair when they met next. A meeting had been held with a representative of Severn Trent Water which gave Councillors the opportunity to explain more about conditions and problems in Much Wenlock. It was valuable for the Council to have a point of contact at Severn Trent Water.

The Council had received an update on the Department for Transport Floodwater Management Grant and flood mitigation measures proposed for Bourton Road. A planning application was expected in October 2024.

12/24

- b. Members considered a report from the meeting with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) regarding their 'Slow the Flow' initiative, held on 27<sup>th</sup> August. A couple of areas had been identified where measures to slow the flow might be introduced, particularly on land above Stretton Road. Information about local landowners had been shared. The importance of water quality was highlighted - attenuation ponds might collect very dirty water and the SWT representative hoped to introduce a reed bed in front of the attenuation ponds to help clear this. Members noted that references to water quality should be included in the revised Neighbourhood Plan. The draft Plan could be sent to the SWT for comment on the flooding section.

A visit had been made to the allotment site on Bridgnorth Road and contact details provided for adjacent landowners for further discussion. The SWT would come back to the Town Council to report progress in due course.

- c. Preparation of a report to the Health & Safety Executive about risks from the potential collapse of the boundary wall at Shadwell Quarry was ongoing. Further evidence regarding the current size of the pool had been obtained from the Flood Action Group.
- d. Councillor Thomas was thanked for unblocking a drain on Oakfield Park. Members noted that the drain was not adequate to cope with the water flow.

**It was RESOLVED to write to Andy Wilde, Head of Highways at Shropshire Council, copying to John Bellis, to request an upgrade of this important drain at Oakfield Park.**

## 12. Transport and Highways Matters

- a. It was noted that members of the Transport Working Group had met to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan. They had considered areas where accessibility was poor – inadequate road crossing points, limited and narrow footpaths, etc. The focus had been on identifying and prioritising improvements required. The group had also considered recreational access to footpaths and bridleways to provide circular routes.
- b. Members noted that the Stretton Road drainage work had been delayed by a week and that the completion date was now 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The High Street drainage upgrade would be going ahead at the end of the month. A blocked drain opposite the Gaskell Arms been cleared. Councillor Thomas stressed the importance of reporting highways issues on Fix My Street so that they would be addressed. Concerns were expressed about the reactive, rather than proactive nature of Shropshire Council in fixing highways problems and the time taken to do so.

## 13. Climate Change and Ecological/Nature Emergencies\*

### 14. Street Lighting

### 15. Street Naming \*

### 16. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders\*

### 17. Footpath Diversion Orders\*

### 18. Road Closures\*

### 19. Tree Preservation Orders\*

### 20. Stopping Up Orders\*

### 21. Speed Limit Orders\*

Members noted the following Speed Limit Order, The Shropshire Council (District of Bridgnorth) (Speed Limits) Order 2007 (Amendment No. 3) Order 2024, which came into effect on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024:

#### 30mph Speed Limit

A458 Shrewsbury Road, Much Wenlock

From a point 40 metres north-west of its junction with the B4371 Stretton Road to a point 214 metres northwest of that junction (a distance of 174 metres).

#### 40mph Speed Limit

A458 Much Wenlock to Beggarhill Crossroads

From a point 42 metres south-east of its junction with Oakfield Park to a point 432 metres south-east of that junction.

13/24

**22. Prohibition Orders\***

**23. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> October at 7.00pm at the Guildhall.

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**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 was RESOLVED that the public and press should not be present.**

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**24. Planning Enforcement**

Members noted the new enforcement case 23/09704/ENF and updates on 24/10275/ENF, 24/10325/ENF and another long running matter.

The Clerk was asked to seek a meeting with Shropshire Council regarding enforcement matter 24/10161/ENF.

Having declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item, Councillor Thomas left the meeting.

**25. Correspondence**

Members noted correspondence received. **It was RESOLVED to decline the invitation for a meeting.**

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....

07/24

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a  
**FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
 meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock  
 at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**Present:** Susan Crooke-Williams, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Duncan White.

**In attendance:** Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Janet Evans – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

## 1. Apologies

Councillor Fenwick and Councillor Toon – family matters.

## 2. Disclosure of pecuniary interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the Register of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

## 3. Dispensations

None requested.

## 4. Minutes

**It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.**

## 5. Town Clerk's report

Members noted the Clerk's written and verbal report on action taken since the last meeting.

## 6. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. The RFO advised that the Council was liable for a standing charge for the water supply at 10 High Street, which was approximately £5 per week, payable from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. Payment of the ongoing charge should be transferred to any future tenant of the property. The RFO noted that she had responded to further questions from the external auditor to their satisfaction and the Annual Governance & Accountability Return had now been signed off. The petty cash records and reconciliations had been checked by Councillor Crooke-Williams.
- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.
- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to date.**

## 7. 2025/26 Budget

Members considered arrangements for drafting the 2025/26 budget. **It was RESOLVED that the RFO and Clerk should prepare a first draft of the 2025/26 budget for consideration at the next meeting.**

## 8. The Guildhall Project

Members noted that a meeting was being arranged with the Council's contact at the NLHF to provide guidance on the full application for funding.

## 9. Public Toilets

Councillors noted recent vandalism to the public toilets at St Mary's Car Park. The matter had been reported to the police and the local PCSO had visited the office earlier in the day. A repair had been arranged. Members noted that since the installation of CCTV at the public toilets in Broseley, ASB and vandalism had significantly reduced.

**It was RESOLVED to obtain quotations for a stand-alone CCTV system for the public toilets at St Mary's Car Park.**

08/24

**10. Stalls for Christmas Lights Switch-on Event**

Member considered introducing a charge for stallholders attending the Christmas Lights switch-on event. No charge had been made previously as it was not known how successful the event would be. However, the event had grown and had become a regular feature in the calendar.

**It was RESOLVED to ask each stallholder attending the Christmas Lights Switch-On to make a donation to the Council’s chosen charity.**

**11. Old Cemetery – Poetry Trail**

Members reviewed a proposal from the Friends of the Old Cemetery to introduce a Poetry Trail in the old part of the Cemetery.

**It was RESOLVED to support the initiative of introducing a Poetry Trail in the Old Cemetery and to ask whether the Church would allocate donations from one of the regular soup lunches to raise funds for the Poetry Trail.**

**12. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at 7.00pm at the Corn Exchange.

**PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**  
**Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.**

**13. 10 High Street**

Members received an update on progress with the rental of 10 High Street.

**14. Meeting re Library SLA and Lease**

Members noted that a meeting had been arranged with Shropshire Council to discuss renewal of the agreement for financial support for Much Wenlock Library and the lease for the premises.

**15. Cooke Clock**

Members considered the repair of the door to the Cooke Clock. **It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation of £183.80 from Michael Baugh for repairs to the door to the Cooke Clock.**

**16. Winter Floral Displays**

Members considered provision of the winter floral displays. **It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Abbey Nursery for winter floral displays in the amount of £280.**

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Signed.....  
 Chairperson

Date.....

## Actions from Town Council meetings

MONTH	MINUTE NUMBER	RESOLUTION / ACTION	TASK COMPLETE	COMMENT
June 2022	13	Continue to check the Local Plan EIP website for updates.	Ongoing	Councillors and associates also requested to check EIP website themselves, in case of delay with Clerk checking.
<b>2024</b>				
May	18	Revised Financial Regs would be presented to Council for consideration at the June full Council meeting.	In progress	Review not completed by June, regs to be presented at a future meeting.
September	14	Request that SC make additions to the Much Wenlock Place Plan	In progress	
	19	Advertise the vacancy for a Town Crier with a deadline for applications of 5pm on Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> October and applications to be considered by the HR Committee. Arrange a trial 'cry' in the Square on Saturday, 26 <sup>th</sup> October.	Yes Yes	On agenda for decision 7 <sup>th</sup> November.
October	11	To approve a change to the Town Council's bank mandates to remove the former RFO and add the current RFO as an administrator on the Council's bank accounts.	In progress	
	13	Refer management of the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange to the Finance & Asset Management Committee...	Yes	Discussed at meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> October.
	14	Request that SC make the following additions to the Much Wenlock Place Plan: the introduction of a pedestrian crossing near Birchfield Garage and refurbishment/upgrade of the running track at WBS to bring it to UK Athletics standard.	In progress	
	20	Invite representative of the Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust to give a brief talk at a Town Council meeting.	Yes	Reply awaited.
	21	The Mayor, Cllrs Fenwick and Thomas and the Town Clerk should attend the SALC AGM on 30 <sup>th</sup> October.	Yes	Report on agenda for 7 <sup>th</sup> November.
	22	Cllr West and the Clerk should attend the Nature Recovery Town and Parish Councils Conference on 6 <sup>th</sup> December.	Event awaited	Places booked
	27	Proceed with letting 10 High Street to the potential tenant on the terms outlined.	No	On agenda for 7 <sup>th</sup> November
	28	Purchase a EufyCam S220 4 Cam Kit for installation in the Guildhall.	In progress	Equipment ordered. Installation to be arranged.

## Other activities:

- Monthly piece for the Wenlock Herald
- Attendance at remote meeting with NLHF on 7<sup>th</sup> October
- Participation in meeting with SC Library officers on 10<sup>th</sup> October
- Attendance at meeting with Gigability on 15<sup>th</sup> October
- Staff appraisals

Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 16:07:18 British Summer Time

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**Subject:** FW: Exploring future options

**Date:** Tuesday, 8 October 2024 at 13:24:27 British Summer Time

**From:** Dianne Dorrell

Forwarded, on behalf of Shropshire Council, to Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings,  
Shropshire  
Cc: SALC Executive

Dear Sir/Madam

Earlier this year, we contacted you as part of our engagement with all town and parish councils, to open a discussion about different ways to support services in your local area. We are grateful for all the responses we received.

In order to progress the project at the required pace, and following on from some early discussions, we contemplated a standard starting point of a uniform nominal uplift to the precept for town and parish councils, as unlike council tax, this charge is not capped by regulation and can be changed from time to time to meet local priorities. Any final uplift in charges is of course entirely at the discretion of each local council, and subject to their own local consultation

This suggestion was placed before a SALC Focus Group for initial discussion., However it was agreed that this approach, while simple, would not meet the range and complexity of local priorities and preferences.

Therefore, with thanks and appreciation to all who have been contacted and engaged with us to date, we have concluded that without the realistic potential to apply a uniform approach across Shropshire, the timescales we must work to make it too impractical to achieve significant benefits.

Therefore, we will suspend our current interactions with local councils on this subject.

Please note that if you are already in discussions with an officer about supporting a specific service or services in your areas, these will continue to explore longer term opportunities.

Kind regards,

Shropshire Council

Exploring Future Options

**ID46**

**Shropshire Council. Examination of Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038**

**Inspectors:** Louise Crosby MA MRTPI, Elaine Worthington MTP MUED MRTPI  
IHBC and Nick Palmer BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

**Programme Officer:** Kerry Trueman

Tel: 07582 310364, email: [programme.officer@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:programme.officer@shropshire.gov.uk)

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Mr West  
Planning Policy  
Shropshire Council  
PO BOX 4826  
Shrewsbury  
SY1 9LJ

29 October 2024

Dear Mr West

**Shropshire Local Plan Examination**

1. The first 2 weeks of the Stage 2 hearing sessions were held between 15 and 23 October 2024. Over these five days we heard a great deal of evidence on a number of strategic matters, in addition to that heard at the stage 1 hearings sessions in 2022 and 2023. We would like to thank the Council and all other participants for their helpful contributions to the hearings.
2. We are writing now because we have significant concerns about the soundness of the Plan in respect of a number of areas. We will set these out in detail in a separate letter as soon as possible. However, as things stand, there are further hearings arranged in weeks commencing 18 and 25 November and 2 December. Given the seriousness of our concerns we consider it would not be appropriate to hold these hearings. We have therefore asked Kerry Trueman, the programme officer, to cancel them and to notify those registered to attend.
3. We understand how important it is for the Council to be able to move forward to get an up to date local plan in place, and that you will be disappointed with what we are saying here. However, we have only come to this view following a great deal of thought and after hearing all the evidence from both the Council and representors. We will aim to provide our detailed letter as soon as we possibly can.
4. We are not inviting responses to this letter from the Council or representors.

*Louise Crosby and Elaine Worthington*

Examining Inspectors



## Market Town Collective

### Meeting Notes 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 -2:00pm – 4:00pm

	Item	Detail
1	<b>Welcome, Introduction &amp; Apologies</b>	<p>Present – Joe Bubb, Lucy Roberts, Emma Williams, Sarah Jones, Eloise Allen, Ben Walker Penny O’Hagan, Helen Ball, Seb Slater, Mark Hooper, Adele Nightingale, Sue Thomas, Sally Themans, Clare Turner, Jo Butterworth, Denise Reynolds, Gina Wilding, Karen Woodcock, Nicky Hook, Trudi Barrett, Helen Ball, Carmel Wilson, Mike McDonald,</p> <p>Apologies – Kate Gittins, Lindsey Pierce, Emma Molyneux, Arren Roberts, Corrie Davies</p>
2	<b>Challenges, Priorities and Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the main challenges discussed was the Shropshire Council finances and the impact this will have on the market towns in the future.</li> <li>- Lack of communication with Shropshire Council was a concern, and loss of contact with staff members, due to restructures and redundancies.</li> <li>- Potential opportunities would be to give greater permissions to town councils.</li> <li>- Signage concerns were raised amongst several clerks.</li> <li>- Concern on the income stripping model and any implications on parking availability and prices.</li> <li>- Apathy from businesses and lack of involvement with agents and landlords.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://highstreettaskforce.org.uk">Place investment and engaging landlords   Resources   High Street Task Force (highstreettaskforce.org.uk)</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having named contacts with Shropshire Council – example included occasional use of car parking for events.</li> <li>- How can we bring forward planned housing developments.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Town Centre Revitalisation Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vacant windows examples included Ludlow working with letting agents to dress windows, use of vinyl on windows in Oswestry.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://mkmapps.com/tackling-high-street-vacancy.pdf">tackling-high-street-vacancy.pdf (mkmapps.com)</a></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other opportunities raised included trails around towns, galvanise litter pickers, gardening groups, use of town ambassadors to meet and greet.</li> <li>- Discussions focused on the high streets and opportunities for grants to repurpose empty shops (Oswestry and Telford&amp; Wrekin) and the development of shop front design guide for the market towns. Discussed need for involvement of conservation officers and enforcement.</li> <li>- Towns across North Shropshire discussed a collective market offer to support the longevity of the markets in each of the towns. This in turn would support the growth of pop-up traders and emerging small businesses. A standardised collective package to market traders to encourage trading at North Shropshire Markets has previously been discussed by the Market Towns.</li> <li>- Opportunities to extend the stay of visitors were discussed including discovery trails around the town centres and joint marketing of our towns with the potential to package up itineraries e.g. trips/attractions/activities across the market towns which could be promoted to coach operators.</li> <li>- Visit Shropshire recently held a workshop on being on coach friendly presentation to be shared and how to achieve coach friendly status.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborative Discussions</b></p>	<p>Collaborative discussions focused on several topics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transport links across the county and how towns in South Shropshire are losing several key bus links.</li> <li>- This directly links to education and how we are losing some of our key higher education facilities in the county. It was noted this has a detrimental effect for the opportunities of our younger residents.</li> <li>- Towns across North Shropshire with a train station discussed how they can promote this important infrastructure asset.</li> <li>- Visit Shropshire branding and supporting the unique offer Shropshire presents. Details of new brand for Shropshire to be shared.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Outlining Next Steps and Future Meetings</b></p>	<p>Follow up discussions / presentations identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Licencing</li> <li>• Visit Shropshire</li> <li>• Public Transport</li> <li>• High Street Boost, Staffordshire Council future meeting</li> </ul> <p>Calls to be set up for specific topics in the interim.</p>

## Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Open consultation

# Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings

Published 24 October 2024

Applies to England

## Scope of this consultation

### Topic of this consultation

This short consultation seeks views on the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings in England.

### Scope of this consultation

Government is consulting on introducing powers for local authority members to apply to the relevant authority for a dispensation to attend formal council meetings remotely and vote by proxy in certain circumstances.

If any changes to legislation are made as a result of this consultation would apply to England only local authorities meaning:

- a county council
- a unitary authority
- a London borough council
- a district council
- the Common Council of the City of London
- the Greater London Authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- a parish council
- a joint board continued in being by virtue of section 263(1) of the 1972 Act
- a parish meeting constituted under section 13 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Transport for London, Para.5 of Schedule 10 of the GLA 1999 allows the GLA to regulate its own procedures and committees
- an authority established under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint authority established under Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint committee constituted to be a local planning authority under section 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- a combined county authority established under section 9 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- a fire and rescue authority constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies, or created by an order under section 4A of that Act

- a National Park authority as referenced at section 184 of the LGA 1972 and/or established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995
- the Broads Authority established by section 1 of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988
- a conservation board established under section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- a police and crime panel established under section 28 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

### **Geographical scope**

The questions in this consultation apply to all relevant local authorities in England as defined above. They do **not** apply to authorities in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

### **Impact assessment**

If any policy changes are made following this consultation they will be subject to appropriate assessment. No impact assessment has been conducted at this time.

## **Basic information**

This is an open consultation. We particularly seek the views of individual members of the public; prospective and current local authority members/representatives; all relevant local authorities defined above; and those bodies that represent the interests of local members/representatives at all levels.

### **Body/bodies responsible for the consultation**

The Local Government Capability and Improvement Division in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for conducting this consultation.

### **Duration**

This consultation will last for 8 weeks from 24 October 2024.

### **Enquiries**

For any enquiries about the consultation please contact: [remoteattendanceconsultation@communities.gov.uk](mailto:remoteattendanceconsultation@communities.gov.uk)

### **How to respond**

You can only respond to this consultation through our online consultation platform, Citizen Space. [Respond via Citizen Space](#).

## **Ministerial foreword**

The government has set out its intention to reset the relationship between central and local government as partners in delivering better outcomes for the communities we collectively represent. Key to this is supporting the sector to modernise democratic engagement, raise standards and widen the range of candidates standing for council by removing unnecessary barriers.

The attendance of elected members at local authority meetings is a core part of the democratic process at the local level and is integral to members carrying out their functions effectively. In addition to the value of members coming together to debate and discuss the issues which impact the lives of the people they represent; it is also important that local residents have the opportunity to engage directly with the people they have elected to take key decisions on their behalf.

At the same time, the government recognises that there are circumstances in which it may not always be possible for members to attend council meetings in person. It is with this in mind that the government intends to amend the law to introduce provisions for remote attendance at local authority meetings.

The intent is that this increased flexibility will strike the balance between the principle that significant in-person engagement remains vitally important, and a recognition that there will sometimes be a need to accommodate members' requirements to attend council meetings remotely. We hope it will encourage a wider diversity of people willing and able to stand and actively participate in local democracy by creating improved conditions where meetings are accessible and inclusive.

In addition, we are seeking views on the possible introduction of proxy voting for those occasions when an elected member, due to personal circumstances, may be unable to attend even remotely, for example during maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

In line with the government's commitment to working with local government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration, and meaningful engagement, this short consultation seeks your views on the detail and practical implications of this proposition to inform our ongoing policy development.

## Who we would like to hear from

Responses are invited from local authority elected members, all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. We are also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

### Question 1

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as:

a) an elected member – if so please indicate which local authority type(s) you serve on

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

b) a council body – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

c) a member of the public

d) a local government sector body – please state

## The proposal for remote attendance

The government intends to legislate to give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely. We believe that this modernising measure of providing broad flexibility to enable remote attendance will have the dual positive impacts of diversifying the representation of those willing and able to stand for elected office and enhance the resilience of local authorities in the face of local or national emergencies.

The intent is that this legislative change would give local authorities the flexibility to allow members to attend remotely.

### Question 2

Do you agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings?

Yes/No

If you answered No to the above question please go directly to question 4.

### Question 3

If you answered Yes to the above question, do you think that there should be specific limitations on remote attendance?

Please tick all the options below that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

- a) Any formal meeting allowing remote attendance should have at least two thirds of members in physical attendance.
- b) Members should only be able to attend council meetings remotely in exceptional circumstances, such as those who are medically or physically unable to attend, or for reasons of local or national emergencies.
- c) There should be no limitations placed upon councils with regard to setting arrangements for remote attendance of council meetings, up to and including full remote attendance.
- d) [Free text box]

### Question 4

If you are an elected member can you anticipate that you personally may seek to attend some of your council meetings remotely?

- yes
- no
- I am not an elected member

### Question 4a

If you answered No please use the free text below

[Free text box]

**Question 4b**

If you answered Yes, could you indicate below which of the following options best describes your likely pattern of attending meetings remotely

- very occasionally
- from time to time
- regularly but not always
- all the time

**Question 5**

If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of a council as a whole, what proportion of the council's current elected members are likely to seek to attend council meetings remotely over the course of a year?

- less than 10%
- more than 10% but less than 50%
- more than 50% but less than 90%
- most of them 90% to 100%

**Question 6**

The government recognises that there may be cases in which it is necessary for councils to hold meetings fully remotely. Do you think there should be limitations placed on the number of fully remote meetings councils should be able to hold?

- a) Councils should be able to allow full remote attendance at up to half of council meetings within a twelve-month calendar period.
- b) Councils should only have the flexibility to change a meeting from in-person to online, or vice versa, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances.
- c) Councils should not have the flexibility to conduct fully remote meetings to ensure there is always an in-person presence.
- d) [Free text box]

**Question 7**

Do you think there are there any necessary procedural measures that would help to ensure a remote or hybrid attendance policy is workable and efficient?

Please tick all the options that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

- a) Councils should be required to publish a list of attendees joining the meeting remotely and give notice if a meeting is being held with full remote attendance.
- b) Councils should be required to ensure that standard constitutional arrangements are followed for hybrid and fully remote meetings.
- c) Councils should be required to make arrangements to ensure restricted items (where a council decision is taken in private to protect confidentiality) are managed appropriately and to require remotely attending members to join from a private location.
- d) Other [Free text box]

**Question 8**

Do you think legislative change to allow councillors to attend local authority meetings remotely should or should not be considered for the following reasons?

Tick all the statements below that apply to your point of view.

**Should be considered because**

**Should not be considered because**

It is a positive modernising measure.

Councillors should be physically present at all formal meetings.

It would likely increase the diversity of people willing and able to stand for election in their local area, making councils more representative of the communities they serve.

It could lead to a significant number of councillors habitually attending remotely and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of councils.

Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance.

It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues, and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings.

Free text box – please state any other reasons

Free text box – please state any other reasons

**Question 9**

In your view, would allowing councillors to attend formal local authority meetings remotely according to their needs particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit members
- it would disadvantage members
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

[Free text box]

**Proxy voting**

Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to another representative to enable a vote in their absence.

It is possible some members may find that, due to their personal circumstances, they are temporarily unable to participate in meetings even if remote attendance provisions are in place. Provisions for proxy voting could provide additional flexibility to those who really need it on a time-limited basis, allowing affected members to indirectly exercise their democratic duty, participate in their local authority’s governance, and ensure that their views are taken into consideration. In the context of local authorities, the representative would have to be another elected member of the local authority.



**Question 10**

In addition to provisions allowing for remote attendance, do you consider that it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting?

- yes
- no
- unsure

**Question 11**

If yes, for which of the following reasons which may prohibit a member's participation in council meetings do you consider it would be appropriate?

Please select all that apply:

- physical or medical conditions
- caring responsibilities
- parental leave or other responsibilities
- other [Free text box]

**Question 12**

Are there circumstances in which you feel proxy voting would not be appropriate?

[Free text box]

**Question 13**

If you think proxy voting is appropriate, are there any limitations you think should be placed upon it?

[Free text box]

## About this consultation

This consultation has been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office. Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, as a public authority, the Department is bound by the Freedom of Information Act and may therefore be obliged to disclose all or some of the information you provide. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the law and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included at Annex A.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond. Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed the Consultation Principles? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact us via the [complaints procedure](#).

### **Annex A: Personal data**

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are be entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018. Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the consultation.

#### **1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at [dataprotection@communities.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@communities.gov.uk)

#### **2. Why we are collecting your personal data**

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

#### **3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data**

The Data Protection Act 2018 states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a consultation.

#### **4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data**

We use a third-party platform, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance, your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based servers.

#### **5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.**

Your personal data will be held for 2 years from the closure of the consultation.

#### **6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure**

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a) to see what data we have about you
- b) to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c) to ask to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d) to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/>, or telephone 0303 123 1113.

#### **7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas**

#### **8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making**

#### **9. Your personal data will be stored on a secure government IT system**

Your data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible after the consultation has closed, and it will be stored there for the standard 2 years of retention before it is deleted.