

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock  
at 7 pm on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Present:** Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Paul Madeley, Jill Robinson, Paula Sivertsen, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas (in the chair), Chris Tyler, Duncan White, Cherie Whiteman and Daisy Whiteman.

**In attendance:** Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, one member of the public remotely from minute 18g.

## 1. Mayor's Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the following report:

“Good evening all and welcome to tonight’s Town Council meeting. Following last month’s successful co-option we now have our full complement of Councillors and I’d like to give a special welcome to Councillors Cherie Whiteman, Paula Sivertsen and Jill Robinson. Welcome and well done.

As a Council, I’d also like to place on record our thanks to those who stood for co-option but were unsuccessful; coming forward isn’t easy, but as a town it’s brilliant that we had so many people apply.

At our last meeting we resolved to submit our National Lottery Heritage Fund application for the Guildhall project, and I’d like to say thank you to the Councillors and office staff involved in making this happen. We expect to hear the outcome during the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> September.

As Mayor, I gratefully accepted the invitations to go to Mayor Makings in Bridgnorth and Ludlow as well as the Mayor’s Civic Sunday in Shrewsbury. These were enjoyable and it was nice to represent Much Wenlock.”

## 2. Apologies for Absence

None – all Councillors were present.

## 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.

## 4. Dispensations

None requested.

## 5. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

## 6. Police Report

Councillors noted the written police report. Nobody from the local policing team was available to attend.

It was reported that there had been some incidences of suspicious activity involving men on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The Clerk was asked to seek an update on investigations from the local police.

It was understood that the youths seen climbing on the roof of the Spar store during the previous month had been identified.

Concern was raised about trading of vehicles in St Mary’s Lane, including during the night. Vehicles involved were also being parked in the lane. The Clerk was asked to raise this with the local policing team.

The Mayor would also discuss issues raised above at the Council surgery on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

## 7. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, gave the following report:

“**North-West Relief Road:** there has been some news about one of the bigger projects Shropshire Council is undertaking, or was undertaking - Leader Heather Kidd will meet with the Government’s Transport Minister, Lilian Greenwood MP, to discuss the Council’s proposed North-West Relief Road scheme at some point soon. Councillor Kidd has asked to discuss additional Government funding for the road or permission to use Department of Transport funding the Council already has, to offset the £38m of Government money that the Council has already spent. I will report back as soon as a date has been set for this meeting.

**New Pothole Team:** many of you will be delighted to hear that Shropshire Council is to launch a third, in-house pothole filling team within the next few months, speeding up the process of repairing roads. This was a decision made by the previous administration and I'm pleased to see it going ahead with the new one. I look forward to seeing it around Much Wenlock - as ever you can help this aim by reporting potholes and more online via Fix My Street.

**Advice Surgeries:** my next Advice Surgery will be on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> June, between 10:30 a.m. and 12 noon at Much Wenlock Museum. No appointment is necessary and I'll be joined by a Town Councillor and a representative from the Police."

**Leisure Centre:** Councillor Themans commented that there had also been a recent meeting about the Leisure Centre attended by himself, Councillor Thomas and other stakeholders, including Heather Kidd from Shropshire Council. The school had reported back on proposals from their architect to alter the building to make it more suitable for joint use at a cost of around £300,000, significantly less than the estimate of £3m from Shropshire Council. This would give an opportunity for Halo, who already ran Bridgnorth Leisure Centre efficiently, to also run Much Wenlock Leisure Centre. It was stated at the meeting that if Shropshire Council's withdrawal of the current subsidy led to a closure, then that Council would have to pay back nearly £300,000 to Sport England for closing the Centre.

The £3m cost previously estimated by Shropshire Council would cover extensive alterations and improvements, including adding an extension to separate the fitness suite, air conditioning, etc. The estimate of £300,000 from the school would allow the current premises to be reconfigured. Shropshire Council had begun to talk seriously about drawing on CIL money from the Buildwas development, as well as match funding.

A further meeting would be held in August/September. It was very encouraging that so many senior representatives and stakeholders had been present at the meeting and that discussions had been positive.

**North-West Relief Road:** it was noted that the pre-disposition of the Liberal Democrats prior to the recent elections had been to cancel the North-West Relief Road. However, it had now become clear that, if this were to happen, Shropshire Council would have to pay back the £38m received from central Government for the project, which would bankrupt the Council immediately. Discussions with the Government were ongoing.

**It was RESOLVED to send a letter of congratulation to Heather Kidd on being elected as Leader of Shropshire Council and to invite her to visit Much Wenlock to either speak at a Town Council meeting or hold an informal meeting with Councillors.**

## 8. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.**

## 9. Town Clerk's Report

Members noted the written and verbal report provided by the Town Clerk. In addition to those activities noted, an organisation called AccessAble had carried out a remote audit of accessibility of the Guildhall, facilitated by the Clerk and Admin Assistant earlier in the week. This would result in a report which would provide a baseline and also provide some guidance on improvements that could be made to the Guildhall, in connection with the Guildhall project. The information would also be uploaded to the AccessAble website to inform members of the public planning a visit.

Councillor White provided more details on the cancellation of fish and chip sales from the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange.

## 10. Annual Accounts 2024/25

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve income and expenditure from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve the balance sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

## 11. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/2025

- a. Members reviewed the Internal Audit Report for 2024/25. **It was RESOLVED to note the Internal Audit Report for 2024/25 and to approve the follow up proposed by the RFO.**

Members reviewed and **RESOLVED to note the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 forming part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**

- b. Members considered the Town Council's response to the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, Section 1. **It was RESOLVED to approve the Town Council's response to the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.** It was noted that it would be necessary to respond 'no' to assertion 4 and that an explanation would be provided to the external auditor.
- c. **It was RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statements for 2024/2025, Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to approve the Explanation of Variances.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve the reconciliation between boxes 7 and 8 in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**
- f. **It was RESOLVED to note and approve the dates for the period for the exercise of public rights as Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025.**

## 12. CCLA Bank Mandate

Members reviewed changes to the mandate for the Town Council's CCLA Bank Public Sector Deposit Account proposed by the RFO. **It was RESOLVED to approve the proposed changes to the mandate for the Town Council's CCLA Bank Public Sector Deposit Account, as outlined in the report, with the Town Clerk as 1<sup>st</sup> Director (or equivalent) and the RFO as 2<sup>nd</sup> Director (or equivalent).**

## 13. Finance & Asset Management Committee

**It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Finance & Asset Management Committee: Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, Jill Robinson, Paula Sivertsen, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas and Duncan White.**

## 14. Planning & Environment Committee

**It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Planning & Environment Committee: Councillors David Fenwick, Paul Madeley, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Cherie Whiteman and Daisy Whiteman.**

## 15. HR Committee

**It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the HR Committee: Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Paula Sivertsen and Daniel Thomas.**

## 16. Discipline & Grievance Panel

**It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Discipline & Grievance Panel: Councillors Jill Robinson, Chris Tyler, Cherie Whiteman.**

## 17. Working Groups

### a. Friends of the Cemetery Working Group

**It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Friends of the Cemetery Working Group.**

**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Paula Sivertsen, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Friends of the Cemetery Working Group.**

### b. History and Archives Working Group

**It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the History and Archives Working Group.**

**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Paul Madeley, Paula Sivertsen and Marcus Themans to the History and Archives Working Group.**

### c. Property Working Group

**It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Property Working Group.**

**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors David Fenwick, Paul Madeley, Marcus Themans, Duncan White and Cherie Whiteman to the Property Working Group.**

### d. Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group

**It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group.**

**It was RESOLVED to appoint all members of the Planning & Environment Committee to the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group.**

- e. **Strategic Flood Working Group**  
It was RESOLVED to amend membership of the Strategic Flood Working Group to all members of the Planning & Environment Committee and to approve the revised Terms of Reference.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint all members of the Planning & Environment Committee to the Strategic Flood Working Group.
- f. **Strategic Plan Working Group**  
It was RESOLVED to amend the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Plan Working Group to five members plus the Town Clerk and to approve the revised Terms of Reference.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Jill Robinson, Marcus Themans, Duncan White and the Town Clerk to the Strategic Plan Working Group.
- g. **Tourism and Events Working Group**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Tourism and Events Working Group.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Paula Sivertsen, Daniel Thomas, Duncan White and Cherie Whiteman to the Tourism and Events Working Group.
- h. **Transport Working Group**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Transport Working Group.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Paul Madeley, Jill Robinson, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Transport Working Group.
- i. **Restoring Roadside Verges Working Group**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Restoring Roadside Verges Working Group.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Paul Madeley, Jill Robinson and Paula Sivertsen to the Restoring Roadside Verges Working Group.
- j. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler and Cherie Whiteman to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**18. Review/appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies**

- a. **Bridgnorth and Shifnal Local Area Committee of Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)**  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams and David Fenwick to represent the Council on the Bridgnorth and Shifnal Local Area Committee of SALC.
- b. **John L Edwards Trust**  
Councillors noted that Councillor Daniel Thomas was nominated to represent the Town Council on the JL Edwards Trust until October 2026.
- c. **Much Wenlock Almshouses**  
Members noted that Councillor Duncan White had been nominated to represent the Town Council on the Much Wenlock Almshouses Committee for a term of four years in May 2024.
- d. **Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust**  
Members noted that Mr Mark Laws had been nominated to represent the Town Council on the Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust for a term of four years from May 2025.
- e. **Much Wenlock Windmill Trust Management Committee**  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Duncan White to the Much Wenlock Windmill Trust Management Committee.
- f. **Priory Hall Management Committee**  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Duncan White to the Priory Hall Management Committee.
- g. **Shropshire Council Emergency Planning**  
Members noted information from SALC stating that there was currently no defined mechanism for engagement from Parish Councils with Shropshire Council's emergency planning team.  
It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Jill Robinson to represent the Council for Shropshire Council Emergency Planning.

**h. Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership**

Members noted that arrangements for the Shropshire Hills destination management were under review and the appointment of a representative would be revisited at a later date.

**i. Plastic Free Much Wenlock**

**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Cherie Whiteman to represent the Council on Plastic Free Much Wenlock.**

**19. Gaskell Recreation Ground Charity**

- a. Members noted that all Town Councillors were Trustees of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Charity, by virtue of their office. Two other Trustees represented Wenlock Estates.
- b. Members noted that Town Council members of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee were appointed by and drawn from the Trustees at a meeting of the Charity. The AGM would be held on 17<sup>th</sup> June this year. A decision would be taken at that meeting on whether to hold the AGM in June each year going forward rather than in December, as previously.

- c. Councillors Fenwick reported on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. Ground conditions had been difficult the previous year with significant rainfall but, so far, this year had been better. The Charity's financial position was good and this would be reported on at the AGM. There had been one or two incidences of vandalism during the year which had been addressed. Members of the Management Committee would be appointed at the Charity AGM.

The boundary between the Gaskell Ground and Shropshire Council owned land was clarified, as well as responsibility for the different areas. It was noted that a tree survey had been carried out last year by Shropshire Council officers. A local tree surgeon could be asked for an informal opinion on any trees causing concern.

**20. Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Councillor Thomas provided an update on the Neighbourhood Plan Review. Shropshire Council had now considered the draft Plan submitted in May and confirmed this was legally compliant and could proceed to Regulation 16 consultation, due to commence on 13<sup>th</sup> June and run until 25<sup>th</sup> July. Hard copies would be available in the library and Council office. Following review and possibly further recommendations by a Planning Examiner, there would be a local referendum when parishioners would be asked to vote on whether the plan should be formally adopted by Shropshire Council. The outcome would establish whether the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan should be used to determine planning applications in Much Wenlock. It was hoped that the referendum would be held in September and that the Neighbourhood Plan would then be formally adopted at the next meeting of Shropshire Council.

**21. Loss of Electricity to STAR Housing Homes in Much Wenlock during High Winds in December**

Members noted the further response from STAR Housing regarding the provision of emergency support to residents during the loss of electricity during high winds in December and future emergency provision. Members were disappointed with the response but agreed there would be no benefit in pursuing the matter further.

**22. Consultation**

Members noted the following consultation:

- a. Public Consultation on a new five-year plan to set the direction for the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, open until the end of July 2025.

**It was RESOLVED to consider a response to the consultation at the July full Council meeting following review by Councillors, in particular Councillors Jill Robinson and Paul Madeley.**

**23. 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. Press releases from Shropshire Council
- d. Rural Bulletins from the Rural Services Network
- e. VCSA Shropshire newsletters
- f. News from Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- g. What's On at The Edge Arts Centre
- h. Friendly Transport Service Newsletter
- i. Climate Action News for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- j. The Rural Services Network Rural Funding Digest

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

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting: date of Christmas Lights Switch-on.

(Tidying of sandbags by Back Lane car park and provision of dog poo bags would be considered by the Planning & Environment Committee)

**25. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall, Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock.

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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.**

**26. Lease of Library Premises**

Members considered the draft Heads of Terms for a lease of Much Wenlock Library premises.

**It was RESOLVED to approve the draft Heads of Terms for a lease of Much Wenlock Library.**

**It was RESOLVED to undertake any necessary legal work in-house.**

**It was RESOLVED to commission an Energy Performance Certificate for the library and also for the whole Corn Exchange building.**

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

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