

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bitterley Parish Council Held on 21st July 2025

Present: Cllr A Holman (Chair), Tony Millard, Richard Osborne, Karen Parry, Jon Reardon-Smith and Dave Rogers. **In Attendance:** Cllr Charles Shackerley Bennett (Shropshire Council) and Heather Coonick (Clerk/RFO)

2025/410 Apologies: None

2025/411 Declarations of Interest

- i. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none
- ii. To declare any Non-Pecuniary Interests – none.

2025/412 Public Participation: no members of the public were in attendance.

2025/413 To Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 16th June 2025:
RESOLVED: to accept the minutes as an accurate record and they were signed by the chair.

2025/414 Councillor Vacancies and Resignation: Cllr Worth has resigned, and the vacancy has been published. Adverts for the other vacancies have been placed in West of Cleve Magazine and on the notice boards.

2025/415 Shropshire Councillor Report – Cllr Shackerley-Bennett (CSB) reported that he is now a member of the Pension Committee and the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He stated that he had no intention of getting deeply involved in parish council business and advised that if issues arise the first port of call are the council officers, and a copy of the communication should be sent to him. If that does not produce a satisfactory outcome then he would become involved. He does not intend to attend all parish council meetings but will if invited for specific items. The Northern Relief Road has been cancelled, and the Biochar project will be built in Ludlow but as there had been no budget for ancillary costs there will now be additional expenditure on the project. Many services were restricted due to limited funds, and the council needs to save £60 million in this financial year. Cllr Osborne raised the role of the Divisional Council in 'calling in' planning applications to the planning committee – Cllr CSB responded that he will look at this if it arises. Cllr Holman asked that if he was unable to attend a meeting that he sends a report. Cllr CSB responded that he did not feel that attending parish council meetings was best use of his time and most information was available on Shropshire Councils website. Cllr Holman expressed her concern that if he did not attend parish council meetings, he would not understand the details of local decisions and that a Parish Council is the tier of government closest to the local people. Cllr CSB will discuss the role of the divisional councillor with the Reform group within the council

2025/416 Ledwyche Liaison Group - Update and Actions on the Community Benefit Fund – Cllr Reardon-Smith reported that he had written to Stuart Anderson MP regarding the CBF that BPC has been offered. It was also noted that Stuart Anderson MP had visited the Solar site with Aukera representatives.

Cllr Heather Kidd (Shropshire Council Leader) is setting up a Solar Farm Policy Group which Cllr Reardon-Smith has been asked to join. He will present 'an approach by local councils to solar farm development' based on the experience of BPC, to this group.

The advice provided by NALC suggests that the documents held by the council constitute a contract with the developer. Cllr Reardon-Smith suggests that the Council seeks legal advice. The original proposal was a payment in the region of

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

£400,000 over 40 years (the lifetime of the solar farm). The most recent offer is £36,000.00.

RESOLVED: to seek legal advice via the National Association of Local Councils regarding the Community Benefit Fund. Write to Aukera asking for a plan for the clearance and cultivation of the site.

2025/417

Highway

- i. Highways Group Update - as insurance is not available this group will be postponed.
- ii. Response to the BC418LW2WFTJ557K Diversion: Cllr Reardon-Smith will review the latest proposals and respond if necessary.
- iii. Response to Shropshire Council regarding Fix My Street response to query re overgrown hedge on A4117 on Angel Bank Corner: Fix My Street report states that the hedge 'isn't the responsibility of Shropshire Council. However, if possible, we will raise the issue with the appropriate organisation.'

RESOLVED to report this matter again with reference to the original report asking for clarification on which other organisation Shropshire Council intends to contact.

2025/418

Financial Matters:

- i. Review the Finance Report: As of the 16th July the Instant Access Account held £10,922.93 and the Community Account held £9,208.10. Expenditure was within budget except a small overspend on subscriptions.

RESOLVED: to accept the report and Cllr Millard signed the bank reconciliation.

- ii. Agree Grant Allocation for 2025-26: The council had received one grant application from Bitterley and Middleton PCC for the maintenance of the Churchyard at St Marys, Bitterley. The Council raised concerns about the accounts and some of the information in the application.

RESOLVED: To reject the application and seek clarification on the matters of concern before including in the September Agenda.

- iii. Approve Payments: Bitterley Village Hall Fee (Extra meeting with MP) 20250614 £11

RESOLVED: to make the above payment.

2025/419

Discuss Benefits of Affiliation to Shropshire Association of Local Councils:

RESOLVED: Deferred to the January 2026 meeting.

2025/420

Review the Information Technology Policy: deferred to the next meeting.

2025/421

Consider the Future of Neighbourhood Plans Questionnaire: no response.

2025/422

Consider the Youth Offer Questionnaire: to inform SALC that the council will discuss the matter with local youths and respond directly to the Youth Officers.

2025/423

Consider the Elections Survey: The Clerk will collate the comments of councillors and complete the survey.

2025/424

Volunteer Groups:

- i. Footpath Group – Cllr Reardon-Smith has met with the group, and they are identifying impassable paths.
- ii. Highways Group – remove from the agenda as insurance is not available for this group.

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

- 2025/425** **Consider New Tasks for the Environmental Maintenance Contractor:**
Councillors will meet on the 18th August to discuss the tasks.
- 2025/426** **Consider a Motion to Put to SALC to Request that John Campion (Police and Crime Commissioner) Attends a Future SALC South Shropshire Area Committee to Discuss the Crime Solution Rate in South Shropshire.**
RESOLVED: to ask SALC to invite John Campion to the next SALC meeting.
- 2025/427** **Consider a Photography Competition for Photographs for the New Website:**
Deferred to the next meeting.
- 2025/428** **Agree Attendance at the Shropshire Together Conference:**
RESOLVED: that Cllr Reardon-Smith will attend the conference and the fee and expenses will be paid by the council.
- 2025/429** **Councillor Reports:** Deferred to the next meeting.
- 2025/430** **Action List:** Deferred to the next meeting.
- 2025/431** **Items for the next Agenda:** a. Information Technology Policy b. Consider a Photography Competition for Photographs for the New Website c. Councillors Reports d. Action List

Signed:

(Chair)

Date:

Next Meeting: Ordinary Parish Council Meeting 7.00pm Monday 15th September 2025 at Bitterley Village Hall