

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bitterley Parish Council, on 19th January 2026.

Members Present: Cllrs Jon Reardon-Smith (Temporary Chair), Richard Osborne (Vice Chair), Anthony Bevington, John Gatehouse, Tony Millard, Karen Parry and David Rogers.

- 2026/001 Apologies:** None
- 2026/002 Declarations of Interest:** None
- 2026/003 Public Participation:** No members of the public were in attendance
- 2026/004 To Approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on the 17th November 2025**
RESOLVED: to accept the minutes as an accurate record and they were signed by the chair.
- 2026/005 Consider Candidates for Co-option to the Vacant Seats:** Councillors had contacted various people but at this stage no-one was willing to be considered for co-option. The councillors will continue to discuss the role with potential candidates, and they are welcome to attend meetings to get a better understanding of what is involved.
- 2026/006 Shropshire Councillor Report – Cllr Shackerley-Bennett:** Cllr Shackerley-Bennett was not in attendance and had not sent apologies or a report.
- 2026/007 Update on the Recruitment of a Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer:** Seven applications had been received. The Personnel Committee will shortlist and interview potential candidates for the position.
- 2026/008 Consider the Draft Agreement from Aukera for the Community Benefit Fund:**
Councillors discussed the agreement and were concerned that it did not allow payments to individuals which the Parish Council had requested. There also needs to be an understanding that some recipients of the fund may not wish to have their personal details shared with Aukera or the public. The guidance on distribution of the fund will need to be rewritten considering the fund is now much less than was originally offered by the developers.
RESOLVED: to write to Aukera asking that the agreement is changed to allow payment to individuals and to ensure recipients can remain anonymous.
- 2026/009 Update on Fly Tipping on Titterstone Cle:** Cllr Bevington reported that he visited the site in December. The Clerk is trying to identify the landowner concerned.
- 2026/010 Discuss Lack of SmartWater signs on Squirrel Lane:** Deferred to the next meeting
- 2026/011 Consider How to Ensure Ludlow Includes Neighbouring Parishes in its Devolution Discussions with Shropshire Council:** Cllr Reardon-Smith reported that last year he had attended a conference with Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council where it was proposed that town and parish councils take on non-statutory services presently provided by Shropshire Council. Cllr Wagner was encouraging town councils to consult with neighbouring parish councils to look at how to provide services. Ludlow Town Council has signed a Declaration of Understanding with Shropshire Council but has not communicated with Bitterley Parish Council as suggested by Cllr Wagner. Bitterley is concerned that Shropshire Council is not conducting regular gully sucking and jetting and may be interested in being responsible for this task.

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RESOLVED: to write to Alex Wagner expressing concern that Ludlow Town Council have not communicated with Bitterley Parish Council about working collaboratively to provide services. It will also ask for further details in the process of taking on gully sucking and jetting of drains within the parish.

- 2026/012 Consider Suggestions of Neighbouring Parishes Contributing to Services in Ludlow i.e., Libraries:** this item was discussed as part of item 2026/011. There is acceptance that this is a complex issue and there will need to be considerable debate about how such an agreement would work.
- 2026/013 To Note Concerns Raised and Proposal for Communication to Shropshire Council to Relocate Pole at Bitterley Yard Area if Damaged Again and Ask Them to Look at Concerns Raised:** Cllr Osborne reported that a resident has raised concerns about the Openreach pole and he has reported the pole to Openreach. There was discussion about the size of lorries turning on that junction and the effects upon the junction and nearby bridge.
RESOLVED: to write to Nick Newton (Shropshire Council Traffic Engineer) and Andy Keyland (Shropshire Council Highways Manager) to request they review the junction and advise what can be done to improve the access and ensure that the bridge is able to take the weight of the lorries.
- 2026/014 Financial Matters:**
- i. Adopt the Budget and Set the Precept for 2026-2027:
RESOLVED: to set the budget at £9,430 and to request a precept of £8,250 which means a Band D property will pay £23.16.
 - ii. Authorise Cllr Osborne to Become Online Signatory and Remove Mrs A Holman as Signatory
RESOLVED: to make the above changes.
 - iii. Note the Issue with Lloyds Bank Authorisations: there have been ongoing issues with the online banking allowing the Clerk to make payments without any further authorisations. This was reported to the previous chair and the present signatories and attempts made to request the set up to revert to needing two full signatories to authorise all payments. Cllr Reardon-Smith discussed the matter with Lloyds who have explained how to resolve the issue, and he will ensure this is changed before any further payments are made.
 - iv. Note Income: Lloyds Bank £50 re: complaint resolution regarding item 2026/014 iii. – Noted.
 - v. Approve Payments:

Payee	Inv No	Amount
SALC Training (Shropshire Together Conference- JRS)	2932	21.00
D Lewis (Environmental Maintenance)	911	187.00
H Coonick (Clerk) reimbursement for inks		30.97
Shropshire Council (Parish Council election May 2025)	7364239	250.00

RESOLVED: to make the above payments.

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2026/015 Consider New Tasks for the Environmental Maintenance Contractor

- i. Squirrel Lane – Cllr Reardon-Smith reported that the contractor has now done the work on Squirrel Lane.

2026/016 Councillors Reports: Cllr Osborne reported that acoustic panels have been installed in the village hall and they are a considerable improvement. There will be repairs to the car park, and he will ensure that a dropped kerb is installed to make the playground is accessible, but it is likely a further grant will be required to make the surface of the playground accessible. Cllr Reardon-Smith reported that the Solar Farm was not yet connected up.

2026/017 Items for the next Agenda: a. Consider Candidates for Co-option to the Vacant Seats
b. Update on the Recruitment of a Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer
c. Update on the Draft Agreement from Aukera for the Community Benefit Fund
d. Update on Fly Tipping on Titterstone Clee
e. Discuss Lack of SmartWater signs on Squirrel Lane
f. Update from Alex Wagner (Shropshire Council) re: letter on devolution of services.
g. Update on Letters to Nick Newton and Andy Keyland re: Bedlam Junction
h. Consider Expenditure on Projects

Next Ordinary Parish Council Meeting: 7.00pm Monday 16th February 2026 at Bitterley Village Hall