

BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bitterley Parish Council on 20th January 2025

Present: Cllrs A Holman (Chair) G Dolphin, J Gatehouse, P Martin, R J Osborne, K Parry, J Reardon-Smith. **In Attendance:** H Coonick (Clerk).

2025/293 Apologies Received and Accepted: Cllrs T Millard and D Rogers.

2025/294 Declarations of Interest

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

2025/295 Public Participation: No members of the public were in attendance.

2025/296 To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting on the 18th November 2024:
RESOLVED: to accept the minutes and they were signed by the chair.

2025/297 Shropshire Councillor Report: Cllr Huffer was not in attendance. A letter will be sent to Shropshire Council expressing disappointment at Cllr Huffer's lack of attendance at such an important time for Shropshire Council.

2025/298 Clerks Report: H Coonick reported that the batteries in four of the defibrillators and one pad have been replaced and they are all operational. The National Air Traffic Service gate has now been removed and NATS will store it for three months before disposing of it. The member of the public who asked for it to be removed thanked the PC. The streetlight bulbs have been changed and the post at Bedlam removed as it no longer had an electricity supply. Cllr Gatehouse asked about whether the bulb would be changed in the outstanding streetlight but it was not clear who owned it, the Clerk will investigate.

2025/299 Review the Website and Consider a .gov.uk Domain and Email Addresses for Clerk and Councillors: The Parish Council website needs to comply with WCAG2.2AA as required by the Accessibility Guidelines as set out in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations. The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide 2024 for Parish Council states that '*all parish, town and community councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications.*'
RESOLVED: to obtain a bronze Hugo Fox website package that is WCAG2.2AA compliant and is on the list of registrars for the .gov.uk domains and set up 15 .gov.uk email addresses. To thank Rocking Horse Media and give notice that the Parish Council will cease using its service once the new website is set up.

2025/300 [25/00091/FUL](#) - Erection of a single storey split level extension, Lavender Cottage, 4A Angel Bank, Bitterley:
RESOLVED: to neither support nor object to the application but to note on the planning portal that the case officer needs to check the drainage as this is close to an area prone to flooding.

2025/301 Ledwyche Liaison Group Update: Cllrs Holman and Reardon-Smith are meeting Stuart Anderson MP to discuss the planning conditions. The site will be connected to

the electricity supply which will mean the footpath will be closed for a brief time in March.

2025/302 Update on the Meeting with a Mobile Telephone Infrastructure Provider: Cllrs Holman and Reardon-Smith and the Clerk met with Atlas Tower Group who are looking for support from the Parish Council to site a mast in the parish to improve the mobile signal in Bitterley.

RESOLVED: to write a letter of support to Atlas Tower Group and ask that they inform the Council when they have identified a potential site to allow further debate.

2025/303 Highways

- i. Update on the Environmental Maintenance Contractor: Cllr Holman met with Mr David Lewis and visited the sites where he will start work. The sites are those which risk life or property as the funding is limited. The Clerk will ask Mr Lockett for Public Liability Insurance in readiness of using him for digger work.
- ii. Consider Setting Up a Voluntary Environmental Maintenance Group: the Clerk will contact Shropshire Council to check what can be carried out by volunteers. The Council will then trial a group to maintain a particular area. A meeting will be held to look at arrangements for the trial group.
- iii. General Highways Issues: Any issues with highways should be reported on Fix My Street. The Clerk will enquire when Bitterley Lane/Angel Bank and Round Thorn to Bitterley will be resurfaced.

2025/304 Financial Matters:

- i. Note the Interim Internal Auditors Report: The new auditor has completed her initial review of the adherence to the Transparency Code and last year's Accounts and Governance Return. Her findings questioned the lack of a bank reconciliation for the savings account. The Council needs to request monthly statements. The Expenditure Report should be for items over £100 rather than £250. The Clerk has amended the Expenditure Report and uploaded it to the website.
- ii. Note Payments Since Last Meeting: Shropshire Council Electricity for Streetlights Inv 7298037 £239.89, Highline Electrical for Streetlight bulb replacements and post removal inv 6830 £2,520.00: Noted.
- iii. Consider the Introduction of a Fee for Lloyds Bank Business Accounts: From January 2025 Lloyds will be charging £4.25 per month for the Current Account. Cllr Holman will investigate whether Nat West offer a free service.
- iv. Approve Payments: Rocking Horse Media website hosting inv 52 and 56 £80, MedUk defibrillator batteries and pad inv 11988 £976.14, Cllr T Millard (Wreath) £29.49.
RESOLVED: to make the above payments.
- v. Consider the Level of General and Ear-Marked Reserves:
RESOLVED: a. to increase the election expenses reserve annually until £1600 is accrued in the year elections are expected in this case 25/6 for spend in the following year as costs are allocated to the PC. b. the Parish Plan Reserve is retained for 25/26 year and either spent on the parish plan or returned to general reserves in 26/27. c. the Highways maintenance reserve is set annually to reflect the difference between the original £1500 budgeted (split 50/50 with SC) and what SC will now fund (50% of the original 50/50 split) - to be reviewed annually as part of the budget process. As no new projects have yet been identified for 2025/6 the reserves will be revisited in July 2025 and reallocated if required.
- vi. Adopt the Budget and Set the Precept:

RESOLVED: to adopt the budget and set the Precept for 2025-2026 at £8,551.81.

- 2025/305** **Consider the National Garden Scheme Village Garden Trail:** Defer to the next meeting.
- 2025/306** **Consider a Nomination to the Shropshire Garden Party:** there will be no nomination.
- 2025/307** **Planning Enforcement:** the Clerk reported that the original report was made in April 2024. The enforcement team reported in November that the Council could expect a retrospective planning application in due course.
RESOLVED: to ask for a further update from the Planning Enforcement Team.
- 2025/308** **Councillors Reports:** Cllr Holman reported on the Parish Council Chair's meeting. The inspectors had rejected Shropshire Council's Local Plan, and they had six months to submit a new plan. The concerns over the Shropshire Council having to declare itself bankrupt had diminished but they have had the worst deal from the government they have ever had. The next meeting will consider a charter between town and parish councils and County Councils.
- 2025/309** **Action List:** Defer to the next meeting.
- 2025/310** **Items for the Next Agenda:** a. Update on meeting with MP regarding Ledwyche Solar Farm Planning Conditions b. update on Volunteer Highway Maintenance Group C. Consider the National Garden Scheme Village Garden Trail d. Action List.

Next Meeting: 7.00 Monday 17th February 2025 at Bitterley Village Hall

Signed by the Chair:

Date: