

ASTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Chair: Councillor Kate Lloyd

Clerk: Lisa Harris

Email: Clerk@astleyshropshireparishcouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held at 7.00pm on 15 January 2025 at Astley Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors K Lloyd (Chair), E Bedell, H Mardell (Vice-Chair), R Peate, S Robinson, K Sumner, D Williams and Shropshire Councillor L Picton.

Clerk: Lisa Harris

Also present: 1 member of the public

64.24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Flt Sgt A Foxall.

65.24 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- a) No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.
- b) There were no applications for a dispensation regarding disclosable pecuniary interests

66.24 Public Participation Session - *a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for the public to speak, with a strict 5-minute limit per speaker. Members of the public may speak on matters appearing on the agenda. However, if a matter does not appear on the agenda, a written request should be submitted to the Clerk no later than 2 working days before the meeting.*

The member of the public present did not wish to speak to any agenda item.

67.24 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20 November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Bedell and seconded by Councillor Sumner and

resolved (without opposition)

that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20 November be accepted as a true record.

The minutes were signed accordingly.

68.24 Clerk's report on matters arising since the Parish Council Meeting on 20 November 2024

- Updated website with latest Leader's Update, upcoming temporary roadworks and details of the consultation into proposed changes to the speed limit on the A53 at Brightlee.
- Submitted comments on behalf of the Parish Council to Traffic Engineering at Shropshire Council regarding the consultation. Councillor Picton informed the meeting that she had been advised that the A53 works should be carried out in the first half of 2025.
- Transferred from astleypc@hotmail.co.uk to clerk@astleyshropshireparishcouncil.gov.uk . all email data. Website is now www.astleyshropshireparishcouncil.gov.uk and the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair have domain email addresses for the purposes of conducting parish

council business.

- Reported on FixMyStreet the first road sign after the Upper Astley turn (heading towards Shawbury) as being obscured with detritus possibly lost from passing lorries using the route.
- Prepared notice for the Parish Council noticeboard on the A49 at Upper Battlefield.

ACTION: Councillor Bedell kindly offered to laminate the notice and place on the noticeboard at Upper Battlefield.

- Prepared the 2025/26 budget and precept requirement to be discussed at 70.24.

69.24 To receive reports from

a) Shropshire Councillor

Councillor Picton presented the following report:

- **Planning Reform: Planning Committees**

On 9 December a consultation for the future of Local Planning Committees was unveiled. You can read it [here](#). In effect this consultation will lead to most applications being dealt with by officers and if a site is agreed within a local plan, it will get built out. This consultation does not have a specific closing date, but the government are seeking views on the following questions:

- Do you think this package of reforms would help to improve decision making by planning committees?
- Do you have views on which of the options we have set out in regard to national schemes of delegation would be most effective? Are there any aspects which could be improved?
- We could take a hybrid approach to any of the options listed. Do you think, for instance, we should introduce a size threshold for applications to go to committees, or delegate all reserved matters applications? d. Are there advantages in giving further consideration to a model based on objections?
- Do you agree that targeted planning committees for strategic development could facilitate better decision making?
- Do you have a view on the size of these targeted committees?
- How should we define strategic developments?
- Do you think the approach to mandatory training is the right one?

- **National Planning Policy Framework Final Document**

The Planning Committee Consultation was quickly followed by the release of the new NPPF document. You can read it [here](#). This document confirmed that our annual housing figure (currently 1073) will rise to 1994, in our current draft local plan the number was 1450 (high growth) so this represents a significant increase. What it didn't talk about specifically was the idea of a regional committee/board determining our local plan, this was surprising as it had been leaked to the Local Government Association that this would be in the paper.

To put some colour on this, most rural counties have seen large increases in housing targets whilst urban areas have seen a reduction. So, Shropshire has seen a 100% increase (1000 to 2000) and Telford has seen a 50% decrease (800 to 400).

- **English Devolution White Paper**

On Monday 16 December the Government released the English Devolution White Paper. You can read it [here](#). Effectively what this does is abolish every council except for those unitary councils that already have a population of 500,000 give or take 10%. In short, the first councils to receive letters were those County Councils and Districts with elections in 2025 asking if they wished to postpone. This will not affect Shropshire's 2025 elections.

In short, the White Paper seeks to abolish two tier authorities and create unitary councils. All unitary councils need to cover a population of a minimum 500,000 population. This will inevitably mean that we will have to merge with another authority but there are no timescales for this.

Once these changes have been made (or alongside these changes) Unitary Councils will be asked (or mandated) to come together in a combined authority under a mayor. The mayor will also be the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Chief, there is also a suggestion that the mayor should be the chair of the Integrated Care Board.

It is within the White Paper where they discuss the issue of Local Plans and Planning, and the White Paper seeks to form a committee or board to determine spatial development at a regional level.

Whilst the paper is quite long it lacks detail and the meetings, I have attended, have been full of questions that, at present, no one can answer.

Let me be clear, what is being proposed will happen, it is just a matter of when.

- **LG Finance Settlement**

In the week before Christmas the draft financial settlement landed. Having now worked through the detail it is, without doubt, disappointing.

The government have said that there is, on average a 6% increase in Core Spending Power and yet we and several other rural authorities are seeing increases of only 3.1% but we should remember this includes council tax which has been raised 4.99% which means we have less funding than last year. We have received the third lowest settlement across England.

The government have also removed several grants, put them in a pot and redistributed the monies based on deprivation. The Labour Government's way of determining deprivation is based on Council Tax Band A properties.

One of the major changes is the removal of the Rural Services Grant which was a pot of money specifically for Rural Councils to deal with some of the additional costs for providing services in a rural area.

So, in summary our current budgetary deficit for 2025/26 is circa £23m. The changes the Labour Government have made to the funding formulas has resulted in a loss of £28m including £16m of Social Care funding which is ridiculous, and we will be making the strongest representations to get this money replaced.

So, once again, we will have more difficult decisions to make for our 2025/2026 budget and those items we listed in our budget consultation are very likely to happen. Of course, there is always the chance that the settlement could change when it comes to the confirmed amount (February) but somehow, I doubt it. I will be speaking to all our MPs on Friday to impress upon them how bad this settlement is for a rural county such as ours.

- **Draft Local Plan**

Call me cynical, but I do believe that the letter received from the Planning Inspectors is directly related to the new NPPF numbers.

The letter and our statement have now been released to the press. You will see from the statement we are really disappointed by the findings and am curious as to why some of these matters were not raised months (or years) ago? My view is that the moment the NPPF was released, most councils that have seen an increase in their housing targets, are left without a five-year land supply, perhaps just what the government wanted. I should add that it wouldn't have mattered if the plan was adopted tomorrow, we still we wouldn't have a five-year land supply.

We need to prepare ourselves for more unwanted planning applications although we do have a 4.7-year land supply so we are working through current applications to see if we can remedy this situation.

Happy New Year.

Lezley Picton
Councillor for the Tern Division

[Councillor Picton left the meeting after presenting her report]

b) RAF Shawbury

No report was available.

70.24 Current financial matters

a) Payments

Payee	Description	Amount
Miss L Harris	Clerk's expenses December 24/January 25	£ 42.75
Miss L Harris	Clerk's salary December 24/January 25	£ 833.04
HMRC	PAYE on Clerk's salary December 24/January 25	£ 208.00
E.ON	Street lighting maintenance contract (2 of 2)	£ 44.26
TOTAL		£ 1128.05

It was proposed by Councillor Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Mardell and

resolved (without opposition)

that the above accounts be approved for payment.

b) Bank reconciliation to 15 January 2025

The bank was reconciled at £9,673.70, being the online banking balance on the date the meeting agenda was prepared. The bank reconciliation was agreed and signed accordingly.

c) Budget and Precept 2025/26

The Clerk had prepared a proposed budget for 2025/26. This was considered in detail, as were the various precept options.

It was proposed by Councillor Mardell and seconded by Councillor Bedell and

Resolved (without opposition)

that the precept for 2025/26 be set at £10,155

ACTION: Clerk to apply to Shropshire Council for a precept of £10,155 by the 31 January deadline.

71.24 Planning

1. Decisions to note

a. Ref: 24/03985/FUL

Address: The Firs Farm Astley Shrewsbury Shropshire

Description: Proposed Farm Building

Validated: 16 Oct 2024

Status: Granted

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

b. Ref: 23/04146/FUL

Address: Proposed Development Land North of Greenfields Bings Heath Astley Shropshire

Description: Discharge of Condition 3 (Drainage) relating to Planning Permission 23/04120/FUL

Validated: 29 Oct 2024

Status: Granted

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

c. Ref: 24/04235/TCA

Address: The Drift House Astley Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 4BP

Description: Fell 7no Leyland Cypress (T1, T5, T6 & T8), 1no Hornbeam (T2), 1no Amelanchier (T7), 2no Silver Birch (T11&12), 1no Contorted Willow (T14) and 1no Horse Chestnut (T16), crown reduce by up to 30% and shape 1no Hornbeam (T3), 1no Laburnum (T9), 1no Silver Birch (T10), 1no Purple Maple (T13), by up to 20% 1no Twisted Hazel (T15) & reduce height by 2m of 1no Hawthorn (T4) within Astley Conservation Area

Validated: 6 Nov 2024

Status: Consent By Right - Trees

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

d. Ref: 24/04638/TCA

Address: Church Farmhouse Astley Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 4BP

Description: Reduce by 30% 1no Horse Chestnut, 1no Whitebeam & 1no Sycamore within Astley Conservation Area

Validated: 29 Nov 2024

Status: Consent By Right - Trees

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

e. Ref: 24/04532/TCA

Address: 19 Astley Court Astley Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 4DG

Description: Reduce crown of 1no Liquidambar by approx. 50% within Astley Conservation Area

Validated: 02 Dec 2024

Status: Consent By Right - Trees

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

2. Planning applications for consideration

a. Ref: 24/02095/FUL

Address: Shrewsbury Selfstore Battlefield Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 3DB

Description: Proposed industrial/commercial development and all associated works

Validated: 30 May 2024

Status: Pending Consideration

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

No comments were recorded on the above planning application. However, an objection was previously submitted regarding application 24/02095/FUL.

72.24 To receive any relevant updates from parish councillors

- Councillor Williams had been asked by a parishioner about whether it was possible to get an additional salt bin in the vicinity of Astley Court.

ACTION: Clerk to investigate with Shropshire Council

- Councillor Sumner advised that she had agreed to act as the liaison representative between Astley Parish Council and Astley Village Hall.
- Councillor Peate is yet to complete the "Fundamentals for Councillors" training but will endeavour to attend the next scheduled course, delivered via Zoom.

ACTION: Clerk to advise Councillor Peate of possible training dates.

- Councillor Bedell confirmed that both defibrillators are ready to use as and when required. The Circuit is updated accordingly on a regular basis. Replacement pads have been ordered for one of the AEDs.
- Councillor Bedell reported on the condition of the bus shelter on the A53.
 - Having spoken to the landowner, who granted permission regarding the sycamore on his land, heavily trimmed back the bush. This will greatly improve visibility through the "window" when waiting inside the shelter.
 - The landowner kindly offered to repair/replace the fencing to the side of the shelter in order to tidy up the area.
 - Picked up any litter in the immediate vicinity of the shelter and swept the floor.
 - Will return shortly armed with a spade/hoe to remove the weeds.
 - When the weather warms up, plans to revarnish the bench and repaint the rusting solar panel control box.

The Parish Council wished to put on record its thanks to Councillor Bedell for his hard work not only in monitoring the defibrillators but also for carrying out maintenance on the bus shelter.

73.24 Highway matters

- A53 speed reduction - see 68.24.

74.24 Correspondence

Nothing beyond what already mentioned.

75.24 Future agenda items

- None

Astley Parish Council resolves that by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item 74.24 business on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

76.24 Appointment of internal auditor for 2024/25

Three quotes were considered, and it was unanimously agreed to appoint one of the applicants to act as the internal auditor for Astley Parish Council at the end of this financial year.

ACTION: Clerk to advise applicants of the outcome.

77.24 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19 March 2025, 7.00pm at Astley Village Hall

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed by Chairman:

Date: 19 March 2025