

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of Council
Held at Council Chamber, Guildhall, Shrewsbury at
6pm on Monday 17 March 2025

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Mayor), E Addams, R Dartnall, M Davies, J Dean, N Green, K Halliday, C Lemon, P Moseley, A Mosley, A Phillips, A Wagner, B Wall & R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

78/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be received from Councillors Bentick, Gillam and Pardy.

79/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council
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80/24 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 27 January 2025 be submitted as circulated and read.

Councillor Dartnall stated that she was present at the meeting on 27 January 2025, but this was not showing on the minutes. Also, Councillor Pardy was showing as present, but he had sent his apologies.

Councillor Phillips reminded Council that he had proposed a zero percent council tax increase on the basic council tax rate not including the stepping up increase.

RESOLVED:

That upon correction of the attendance, the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 27 January 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

81/24 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising to report from the Town Clerk.

Councillor Dartnall raised the issue of the changing room facilities at Springfield in that there were separate changing rooms but there were no separate female toilets. She asked if this matter could be looked into.

Councillor Halliday reported to Council that at the Clean River Meeting in January they had proposed an extraordinary meeting with Severn Trent Water and key stakeholders but as there were a lot of River meetings being held at present this was not yet organised. The River Summit as mentioned in the Clean River Working Group minutes was a separate meeting being held in September to discuss improving water quality.

82/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

82.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had attended several events since the last meeting of Council including the High Sheriff of Shropshire High Tea and a Reception for French 6th Form Exchange Students held in the Castle. The Mayor had also held a charity Curry Evening which was a successful evening and raised around £1500 for his charities. He also reminded Members of the Mayoral fete in the Quarry that was scheduled to take place on the 8 May.

The Mayor pointed out that this would be his last Full Council meeting as the Mayor of Shrewsbury, and he thanked all staff who had supported him throughout his mayoral year.

The Mayor also thanked all his fellow Councillors and for those Councillors who would not be standing in this years election. He thanked those for their service as being a Councillor was an important public role.

82.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk had no announcements.

83/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that standing orders had been followed in seeking questions ahead of the meeting, but she had accepted questions up until 4pm on the day of this meeting.

There were no questions from the public.

84/24 TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITY DURING PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

The Town Clerk reported on the Town Council's activity during the pre-election period. The Town Clerk reminded Council that staff did not respond to requests due to the Councillors campaigning. If there was a matter raised that was a Health & Safety issue, then they would look at this but if it wasn't their requests would have to wait until after the election. The Communications Officer had compiled a report for members to inform them of activity during this time. He had also emailed details to all Councillors.

As part of the Council's statutory obligations and efforts to promote the upcoming local election on Thursday, 1st May, the following actions had taken place:

- The Notice of Election for both the Town Council and the Unitary Authority had been uploaded to the Shrewsbury Town Council website.
- This notice had also been delivered and displayed on all 25 notice boards under the control of Shrewsbury Town Council.

- A dedicated section on the website had been created to provide essential information for prospective councillors, addressing key questions such as: What does a town councillor do? How do you become a councillor? Why should you become a councillor? Who can become a councillor?

These pages also provided links to further resources available on the Shropshire Council website and the Electoral Commission. A downloadable nomination pack was accessible, which could be printed and submitted to the Returning Officer within the specified dates mentioned in the Notice of Election.

To ensure broad awareness and engagement, the Council's social media schedule had been aligned with the Shropshire Council's communication strategy. The campaign was structured in three key phases:

Phase 1: Encouraging Prospective Councillors (11th March – 2nd April, 4:00 PM)

- Informational posts linking to the website's councillor information pages.
- Promotion of the nomination deadline on Wednesday, 2nd April at 4:00 PM.
- Encouragement for residents to consider standing for election.

Phase 2: Voter Registration Awareness (Ongoing until 11th April)

- Posts reminding residents to register to vote before the 11th April deadline.
- Special focus on young voters and those who had recently moved to Shrewsbury.
- Information on applying for postal and proxy votes.

Phase 3: Postal/Proxy Voting and Election Day Promotion (Final Week of April – Election Day, 1st May)

- Encouraging voter turnout at polling stations.
- Reminders about the requirement to bring valid photo ID when voting in person.

Prospective Councillor Webinar

To further engage and inform potential candidates, a webinar would:

- Provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a Town Councillor.
- Highlight the key functions of the Town Council.
- Offer guidance on the nomination process and next steps.
- Include a Q&A session for attendees to ask questions.
- Be recorded and made available for later viewing on the website.

Next Steps

- Continue the communications schedule across all platforms.
- Ensure all public notices remained visible until the election date.
- Finalise the webinar schedule and promotion.

- Monitor engagement and adjust communications as necessary to maximise awareness and participation.

This strategic approach ensured that all residents, potential candidates, and voters were well-informed about the election process, encouraging greater democratic participation in the upcoming election.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

85/24 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Restoring a Town Centre Police Base

Councillor Wagner presented his motion to Members. He proposed that;

This Council notes:

1. The recent appointment of a new Chief Constable for West Mercia Police.
2. That Shrewsbury Town Centre had continuously been served by a Police Station for all of modern history until the 2020 Riverside closure.
3. That the current Monkmoor Station provides some logistical difficulties for the Town Centre Police Team at busy times with congested traffic.
4. The benefit of a Town Centre Police Base in assisting hard-working Police Officers to do their jobs and protect our communities.
5. The improved public trust in Town Centre safety that returning a Police Base would have.

Councillor Wagner commented that the Town Centre was doing well but there was a loss of policing and a permanent residency. Shrewsbury residents and SNT (Safer Neighbourhood Team) were also frustrated as there were no central premises. Councillor Wagner also added that the motion doesn't involve the Town Council and he was asking if the Town Clerk could investigate costings, looking at the short and long term. Shropshire Council may not have the funding for some years. The motion was not to commit but to give options to future and current councillors. He proposed that;

This Council resolved to:

1. Welcome to new Chief Constable to his position.
2. Support the restoration of a Police Base to Shrewsbury Town Centre.
3. Task the Town Clerk with investigating the viability and costs of such a scheme, to be reported back to Council.

Councillor Mosley commented that the reason for this motion was due to the elections. Councillor Mosley proposed an amendment to the original motion and requested that the third point be deleted. He did not agree that the Town Clerk should be tasked with this work as she was already busy. The Town Council could not afford this or the Town Clerks time. He suggested that a request be sent to a senior police representative to attend a future meeting to explain the current situation and present any projects.

Councillor Wagner was happy to accept the amendment to his motion.

Councillor Phillips asked if the demand for the town centre base was coming from the Police and if it was in the Town Centre would it be beneficial and viable and would it be sacrificing anything else like CCTV

Councillor Wagner commented on the PCC's attendance at the recent Recreation & Leisure Committee where he confirmed that if certain criteria was met then yes he was supportive of a base.

RESOLVED:

That this Council resolved to:

- (i) Welcome the new Chief Constable to his position**
- (ii) Support the restoration of a Police Base to Shrewsbury Town Centre**
- (iii) Invite a senior Police Representative to attend a future meeting of Council to explain the current situation and detail proposals to be brought forward.**

86/24 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 3 February 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3 February 2025 be received and adopted

87/24 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 5 March 2025 were circulated as read.

Re Min 69/2 – Football fixtures; Councillor Dartnall reported on the difficulties Mereside FC were facing fitting in their fixtures and that they facilitated football at grass roots level. She also wished to reiterate her request for separate female toilet facilities at Springfield.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 5 March 2025 be received and adopted

88/24 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 28 January, 18 February and 11 March 2025 were submitted as circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 28 January, 18 February and 11 March 2025 be received and adopted.

89/24 WORKING GROUPS

89.1 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Service Level Agreement Working Group meetings held on 23 January, 5 February and 20 February 2025 were circulated as read.

Councillor Mosley commented on the Service Level Agreement and that whilst they had lost the Golf Course, there would be additional work. He hoped that all Councillors were aware of the “Stepping Up” arrangements and jobs that had already been undertaken. There was a lot of work being done at present by only two members of staff, but job adverts were currently out seeking more staff to join the team. The work undertaken so far had been greatly appreciated by residents. They were also looking at the possibility of an apprentice on the team but this had not yet been finalised to see if it would be possible.

Councillor Mosley commented that the criteria of the work needed to be looked at to ensure there was a needs-based allocation for the jobs. Software was looking to be implemented to monitor the Stepping Up and SLA performance so there was no duplication with Shropshire Council.

Congratulations was sent to the staff working on the SLA and Stepping Up work and it was hoped the team would be fully operational by the summer.

Councillor Dean added his thanks to the team for work that had been undertaken in his ward.

Councillor Vasmer also thanked staff for the work undertaken within his ward and that the postings on social media were very good.

Councillor Wagner commented that in the last SLA meeting it was agreed that the Working Group would now be known as the Service Development Working Group and not SLA Working Group.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the Service Level Agreement Working Group meeting held on 23 January, 5 February and 20 February 2025 be received and adopted;**
- (ii) That the Service Level Agreement Working Group be retitled the Service Development Working Group**

89.2 CLEAN RIVER WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 30 January 2025 were circulated as read.

Councillor Dartnall requested a change to Min 25/24 which had the line: *“Whilst there was to be significant investment this would result in significant rises to bills.”*

This line was not in the correct section of the minutes and should be in the Severn Trent section.

RESOLVED:

That upon correction of Min 25/24, the minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 30 January 2025 be received and adopted.

89.3 YOUTH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 20 January 2025 were circulated as read.

Councillor Wilson reported to Committee that two Youth Councillors would be talking at the Movement Festival this weekend which was encouraging to hear.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 20 January 2025 be received and adopted.

90/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following items being considered involve the disclosure of confidential information.

The Mayor advised that live streaming of this meeting would now stop. He thanked members of the public for logging in. All papers relating to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

91/24 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings held on 4 October 2024 and 13 March 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 4 October 204 and 13 March 2025 be received and adopted

92/24 CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor thanked members and staff for their attendance and closed the meeting.