

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of Council
Held at Livesey House, 7 St Johns Hill, Shrewsbury at
6pm on Monday 17 November 2025

PRESENT

Councillors A Wagner (Mayor), B Bentick, J Daniels, J Dean, A Fejfer, R Gratton, K Halliday, H Hancock-Davies, B Jephcott, E Micklewright, V Moore, A Mosley, K Pardy, J Tandy and R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

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

67/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be received from Councillors Dartnall and Vasmer.

68/25 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
Councillor Wagner	Declared an interest in Item 14 of the agenda (SC Memorandum of Understanding) as he is the Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and will not take part in any discussions

69/25 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 29 September 2025 be submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 29 September 2025 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

70/25 MATTERS ARISING

The Town Clerk had no matters arising.

Councillor Mosley commented on the recent letter drop that had been sent out to households within the parish as he was surprised it was addressed from the Mayor and asked for it to be explained. He commented that Councillor Wagner should not have been involved as he was Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and it should have been Councillor Wilson as his role of leader of Shrewsbury Town Council. The Mayoral role is civic and should not be an announcer of council policy.

Councillor Halliday commented that they needed to ensure decisions were worth councillors time but had not had the opportunity to comment.

The Town Clerk reported that discussion had been held with both the Mayor and Leader and it was collectively decided that the Newsletter introduction should be sent from the Mayor as first Citizen of the Town. This was a purely factual newsletter that was designed to seek the public's views on the Town Council's role in addressing the current financial crisis. The newsletter had been circulated to all Councillors for comment ahead of its printing and distribution; unfortunately very few Councillors had responded.

Councillor Dean asked if there could be a statement placed on the Town Council website regarding dispensations; the Town Clerk would look into this.

71/25 ANNOUNCEMENTS

71.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had a very busy calendar since the last meeting of Full Council and that there were too many announcements to go through individually as he had attended around 32 events. He wished to thank all officers involved in the Remembrance service that was held in the Quarry. This was a lovely event that worked well, with larger audience numbers than previous years. The event is incredibly hard to coordinate, and thanks were passed to the Mayor's Secretary for organising the event so well.

71.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that Christmas Lights Switch On would be taking place on Wednesday 19 November with the lights being switched on at 6.30pm.

Carols in the Square would be taking place on Wednesday 17 December starting at 6.00pm and would be broadcast live on BBC Radio Shropshire.

72/25 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.

RESOLVED:

There were no questions from the public.

73/25 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no motions submitted by Members.

74/25 END OF YEAR AUDIT

The Head of Resources reported that he had previously reported that on 24 September 2025, the External Auditor issued a report detailing the results of the limited assurance review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Council's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025. They were unable to certify completion of the review at that time. They were now in a position to certify completion of the review. The external auditor report given in Section 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return required amendments as follows:

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

It was confirmed that they had also dealt with the challenge correspondence.

Councillor Halliday asked if they could be told about the AGAR challenge and the RFO replied that it was a resident in Greenfields who was not happy and challenged that the Town Council were holding money relating to donations made to fund the residents' challenge in the Supreme Court. She asked if there was any additional information on this and it was confirmed no.

Councillor Halliday also enquired on the current and expected workstreams for the Town Council authority and if there would be any requirement for a more thorough audit. The RFO confirmed that the thresholds for the current Lighter Touch Audit regime would still accommodate the financial arrangements of the Council.

Councillor Hancock-Davies enquired to the cost of the audit. The RFO confirmed that it was a set fee charged at £3780 for the external auditor. There was an hourly rate, but he did not have that information to hand.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Town Council notes the completion of the 2024/25 Audit;**
- (ii) That all relevant notice of completion be uploaded to the Council Website and placed on Noticeboards.**

Councillor Wagner left the meeting. Councillor Bentick took over the role of Chair.

75/25 FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

75.1 Update on ongoing discussions with Shropshire Council

The Town Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council regarding the new administration and their wish to engage with Parish Councils, in particular the delegation and devolution of services, especially street scene.

Oswestry, Broseley and Shifnal parish Councils had been chosen, and a Memorandum of Understanding had been completed, all of which had been considered by the Service Delivery Working Group, Policy & Resources Committee and Full Council.

Over the last month the Town Council had received a briefing note regarding the street scene and within the document were top level costings regarding services provided. A list of questions were compiled and communicated to Shropshire Council of which they were looking at and would provide more financial detail as the Town Council were in the process of planning their budget and would look at doing a financial plan for this electoral term.

The Service Delivery Working Group increased its meetings to fortnightly as there was still work to be done for services to be transferred, it would be a long process.

The Town Council had communicated its concerns and that the Service Level Agreement had still not been signed by Shropshire Council, but the Town Clerk had been assured details would be forthcoming this week. She had spoken to the Chief Executive's Office and the Administration and senior officers of Shropshire Council were keen that devolution was progressed through the Town Council by Friday of this week.

Councillor Halliday was pleased they were pressing for further information as street scene was not the most organised service at present. Were the Town Council

confident they were going to get a clear picture of what would be involved and would there be any hidden costs.

The Town Clerk answered by saying all they could do was to understand the picture as best as they could and the awaited discussions at senior officer level, officers should have a comfortable understanding of the requirements. The question was raised regarding TUPE staff and equipment as this information would need to be known sooner rather than later as orders would need to be put in place by Christmas if they wished to have them by 1 April 2026.

Councillor Dean commented that there were principles behind this, and the Town Council needed to have their eyes wide open and communicate with the public. This was an opportunity to do better than Shropshire Council and this would mean increasing the cost to the public, but they must be open with the public.

He also commented that there needed to be clear guidance on non-statutory services and being 'dumped' with them was a real threat. Councillor Dean commented on the library and the town should save the library, but this was a county wide service and was it fair for the Town Council to take that on. Principles were needed behind how they approached this. How real was the threat on non-statutory services.

The Town Clerk confirmed that officers did have their eyes open on the provision of non-statutory services particularly with a local context and the potential level of support that might be needed for those existing services. She commented that six libraries were retained by Shropshire Council and others had already been transferred or were funded by Parish Councils. The Shrewsbury Library couldn't just be taken out of a county library service.

Councillor Mosley commented that if the Town Council thought they could do it all and represent residents well it was wishful thinking that it would be completed by 1 April. They were six months into a financial year, and residents were paying twice for some services. He added that briefing notes needed to be distributed to all and finance needed to be looked at closely.

Councillor Bentick commented that not all needed to be in the initial agreement and could be phased.

Councillor Wilson commented that if the service was left with Shropshire Council, they would see the worst service in the town. Deferring was also not an option as the Kier contract was coming up and it needed to be resolved by April.

He suggested that the Town Council set up a meeting with David Mears, Town Clerk at Bridgwater, to outline the journey they took for the transfer of services from Somerset Council. This would be open to all Councillors to attend.

In regard to the big mail drop completed by the Town Council this was the best way to inform residents and have an open conversation with them. Not all members of the public were on social media. The previous consultation only went online and now all households would receive a letter.

Councillor Wilson also confirmed that services like libraries were not part of the current negotiations for the new financial year operations but they needed to be alert to likely impact on those services.

Councillor Wilson commented on the public 'paying twice'. He disagreed with this comment as Shropshire Council had an obligation to provide services which comes out of the precept. The Town Council were improving those services. The Operations Managers were doing a good job looking into this and the Stepping Up Team had also done excellent work, but it needed to be enlarged.

Councillor Halliday commented on the possible section 114 notice but hoped that this would not happen. She asked if there were mitigation plans in place? If they bought machinery, would they be insured for this and did they understand what may happen.

The Town Clerk commented that she had spoken to law firms making sure an agreement would be in place, this had already been drafted under the previous administration. A discussion with the Chief Executive understood the Town Council's need for urgency in this matter. The Town Clerk further added that as there was suggestion that the whole council didn't know the full situation an informal briefing session could be arranged.

Councillor Jephcott commented that he hoped the Town Council could make this work, and they should not wait. Shropshire Council was dysfunctional. They did well in some services but in some nothing was happening at all. They needed to pull together to make this work. It appeared people on both sides were now talking and there were enthusiastic officers at the Town Council that also wanted this to work.

The Town Clerk stated that the Town Council should proceed with the whole Street scene as there was hardly any service left at present.

All members were in agreement except Councillor Hancock-Davies who wished to abstain from a vote.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a briefing session be arranged for all Councillors ;**

- (ii) **That briefing notes are provided to all Councillors**

Councillor Wagner re-joined the meeting and took over the role of Chair.

75.2 Authorise signing of lease agreement in relation to Countryside Land

The Town Clerk reported that she had hoped this would be finished by the time of this meeting but at this time she did not have the information and would update at the next Full Council in January.

76/25 UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Town Clerk reported that a request had been received from Councillor Hancock-Davies asking to stand down from the Operations Committee due to work commitments. Councillor Bentick had also requested to stand down from the Grants Sub Committee.

Councillor Wilson had approached members to ask if any would like to represent the committees and thanked members who had offered.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That Councillor Mosley becomes a member of the Operations Committee;**
- (ii) **That Councillor Fejfer becomes a member of the Grants Sub-Committee**

77/25 COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Communities & Environment Committee held on 8 October 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Communities & Environment Committee meeting held on 8 October 2025 be received and adopted.

78/25 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Operations Committee held on 5 November 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on 5 November 2025 be received and adopted.

79/25 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held 14 October, 11 November and 12 November 2025 were submitted as circulated as read.

Councillor Dean informed Committee that there were three current live planning consultations and they needed to consider the Town Council's response to each. Responses had been circulated to all and the question was asked that if by accepting these minutes, were members happy with the proposed responses.

There were a couple of tweaks required around sustainability, highlighting the opportunity to promote the design code and potential involvement of the Town Council in pre-application engagements. Councillor Dean was mindful to support the minutes and the submissions subject to a couple of tweaks.

Councillor Wilson was in agreement as there was scope for a Design Code for the town.

Councillor Halliday wished to stress that that Shrewsbury had a mix of housing periods, and they didn't want the town looking like a museum and would like to include some modern designs within the code.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That pending alterations as suggested the draft responses to the three Supplementary Planning Guidance Consultations be ratified at the next Planning meeting in December;**
- (ii) That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 14 October, 11 November and 12 November 2025 be received and adopted.**

Councillor Hancock-Davies voted to abstain against the approval of Planning minutes for 12 November 2025.

80/25 WORKING GROUPS

80.1 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 October 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 October 2025 be received and adopted

80.2 GRANTS SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Grants Sub Committee meeting held on 24 September 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Grants Sub Committee meeting held on 24 September 2025 be received and adopted.

81/25 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

82/25 APPEALS COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 17 October 2025 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 17 October 2025 be received and adopted.

83/25 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 23 October and 14 November 2025 were circulated as read.

Councillor Wilson commented on the new post for a Transitional Project manager as agreed at the last Full Council. The job description was almost completed, and this would be circulated to members. A job advertisement would also be completed as soon as possible.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk confirmed this the post needed to be a fixed term post.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 23 October and 14 November 2025 be received and adopted.

84/25 CLOSING REMARKS

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