

**MINUTES OF
ALL STRETTON, SMETHCOTT AND WOOLSTASTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING
held at Picklescott Village Hall
Wednesday 21st January 2026**

Present

C'llr Phillips (Chairman); C'llr Starns, C'llr Naylor, C'llr Morris, C'llr Hibbot-Morris, C'llr Forbes

Shropshire C'llr R Houghton

Clerk :Mrs J Griffiths

Two representatives (Mr K and Mrs L Butcher) from the Hill Ford Rally attended the meeting.

4 members of the public attended the meeting.

Apologies

All Councillors were present at the meeting

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He told the meeting that they would move to Item 4 on the Agenda and following the presentation Standing Orders would be lifted to allow the representatives from the Hill Ford Rally to answer any questions.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Public Comments

One member of the public had sent a letter objection to the planning application for the formation of a car park at the nature reserve at Betchcott Hill. The same letter had been sent to Shropshire Council and the objection is logged on the Planning Portal.

Another member of the public thanked the parish Council for the quick response to the request for a grit bin on Colliers Bank and suggested that another grit bin is positioned on Parish Bank. The Clerk had also received a note handed to her at the meeting suggesting other sites for bins.

Jeremy Dale does have one further bin which he could position and it was agreed that all Councillors would consider and suggest positions within the Parish and a decision would be made where to place the existing bin. Any other sites could be requested on FixMyStreet.

4. Hill Ford Rally Stage – 20th September

Road closures in the Parish for the Hill Ford Stages Car Rally 19th-20th September 2026. A map of road closures affecting the Parish was circulated prior to the December meeting when it was agreed that someone from the Hill Ford Rally would be invited to attend the January meeting.

Kim and Bea Butcher explained how the Rally is operated and assured the meeting that all Health and Safety procedures would be in place, Marshalls would be placed at all road junctions and full insurance cover is carried by the Cheltenham Car Club.

They had visited the area and have spoken to local residents and have altered the route as one property at Walk Mills is immediately adjacent to the highway.

Officials from the Hill Ford Stage Rally visit the site when the route is agreed and examine the state of the highway and any defects are reported to Shropshire Council for urgent repair. For insurance purposes before the event they travel the route and video and record the state of the road and verges. If any damage is caused to the highway or surrounds claims can be made through the Rally's insurers.

Mr. Butcher explained that this was still in the very early stages and a six week consultation period was likely to start within the next few weeks. Full details would be sent to the Clerk who would circulate to all Councillors. At the end of the consultation period they would then formally apply to Shropshire Council for the road closures. It was agreed that if the consultation end before the date of the Parish Council Meeting in March a zoom meeting would be arrange to agree any comments to feed into the consultation.

Standing Orders were then lifted to allow members of the public to comment. Concern was expressed that the road closure was for 14 hours on Sunday 20th September, which not only affected the planned route but any roads leading on to the route.

C'llr Hibbot-Morris explained that milk tankers need access to collect milk from farms and agreed to provide Mr Butcher with this information.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December 2025

It was proposed by C'llr Starns, seconded by C'llr Naylor and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December provided a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chairman then signed a copy of the Minutes .

6. Matters Arising (not included on the Agenda)

There were no matters arising that were not included on the agenda.

7. Correspondence

The Clerk circulated the following correspondence between meetings:-

- SALC Weekly Briefing
- RSN Weekly Newsletters
- C'llr Houghton Community Updates
- Severn Valley Water Management Scheme consultation on emergency strategy to reduce flood risk circulated 12.12.25
- SALC Area Committee Meeting Minutes of Meeting held on 11.12.25. Next Meeting Thursday 19th March via Teams. Circulated 12.12.25
- Community Grants including churches and Village Halls. Circulated 7.1.26
- West Mercia Police Fraud and Scam Bulletin January 2026. Circulated 13.1.26
- Chairs Network Meeting 25.3.26 at 6pm via Teams. Circulated 16.1.26
- Buckingham Palace Garden Party – 12th May, 2026. Circulated 17.1.26. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Jeremy Dale and ask if he wished to be nominated.
- Clerk and Councils Direct magazine January 2026

8. Vacancy for a Parish Councillor – All Stretton Parish Council

Following C'lr Forbes being co-opted at the July meeting to serve as a Parish Councillor for All Stretton Parish this leaves a vacancy for another Councillor to serve All Stretton Parish. The Clerk told the September meeting that, as the Parish Council, have advertised this vacancy on two occasions the Parish Council were now free to co-opt anyone interested in filling this vacancy and anyone interested should contact the Clerk. The Clerk told the December meeting that no one had made contacted. It was further agreed at the December meeting that, as adverts have now been placed on Notice boards, the web site and village whatsapp groups on two occasions, Councillors would again approach residents and the Clerk asked that anyone interested should contact the Clerk. The Clerk told the January meeting that no one had contacted her.

9. Planning (a) Clerk to report on applications previously discussed

25/03427/FUL Hall Farm, Picklescott

Erection of agricultural equipment and livestock shed. This application was received and circulated to all Councillors on 18th September. This application was discussed at the September meeting when it was agreed that the size of the proposed building was not appropriate for the 5 acre holding. It was agreed that the Parish Council would not object to the planning but would make a comment. The Clerk agreed to circulate the comments to be agreed before they are posted on the planning portal. After consultation by e mail the following comments were posted on the planning portal.

“This application was discussed at the Parish Council meeting. The 18m x 7.2m building for agricultural equipment and livestock shed does not seem to be appropriate for the 5 acres of land in the ownership of the applicant. The Parish Council would ask that Planning Officers consider these comments”.

The Clerk told the January meeting that this application is shown as “Pending Consideration”.

25/03968/TPO Jordan Cottage, Picklescott

Fell 2 No Sycamore protected by SABC Tree Preservation Order. This application was received and circulated to all Councillors on 25.11.25.. C'lr Starnes immediately declared an interest as he is a neighbour of the applicant. He did not comment. The Parish Council did not comment on this application. The Clerk told the January meeting that this application was granted on 22.12.26

25/04289/FUL Rock Farm, Lower Wood

Extension to create a residential annexe. Received and circulated to all Councillors on 25.11.25. This application was discussed at the December meeting. It was proposed by C'lr Starns, seconded by C'lr Phillips and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would not comment on this application. The Clerk told the January meeting that this application was granted on 8.1.26

25/04257/FUL Meadow Place, Woolstaston

Temporary siting (initially 12 months) of a caravan within the residential curtilage, whilst development works are undertaken. This application was received and circulated to Councillors on 18.11.25. This application was discussed at the December meeting. It was proposed by C'lr Starns, seconded by C'lr Phillips and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council

would not comment on this application. The Clerk told the January meeting that this application was granted on 12.1.26

(b) Clerk to report on application received between meetings

No applications were received between meetings

(c) Applications discussed at the meeting

25/04682/FUL Formation of car park for nature reserve visitors and staff

Proposed car park at Betchcott Hill. This application was received and circulated to Councillors on 5.1.26. The Parish Council discussed this application at the January meeting. It was proposed by C'lr Starns, seconded by C'lr Naylor and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would support the application for five parking spaces, as this was preferable to cars parking on the highway. It was agreed that the formation of five parking spaces would keep traffic movements to a minimum and not impact of the road network but they would not have been willing to support any more than the five parking spaces .

10. Highways

(a) Clerk to report on highway matters previously reported

C'lr Houghton told the January meeting that she had contacted Shropshire Council to ask for confirmation that the white lines would be replaced at the crossroads for Smethcott off the Picklescott to Dorrington road when the resurfacing work is carried out in February.

Road closure at Lower Wood, due to storm damage to the culvert, had been in place since 25th October and has now been extended to 3rd April, 2026. C'lr Houghton told the December meeting that she was chasing Shropshire Council for an update when the repairs would be carried out.

On 28th December the Clerk had forwarded a notification received from the owners of Hall Farm Barns, Picklescott to all Councillors. This was giving prior notice that in order for services to be connected to the site they intend to close a section of Pease Lane between 7th April and 15th May, 2026. Councillors expressed concern and both the Clerk and C'lr Houghton contacted Shropshire Council to enquire if a road closure had been applied for. A Teams meeting was arranged by Andrew Beale (Shropshire Council Street Works); the agent acting for the owner, C'lr Houghton, C'lr Starns; C'lr Hibbot-Morris, C'lr Naylor and the Clerk and held on Tuesday 13th January. Concern was expressed at the impact this proposed closure would have to local businesses and in particular the milk tankers collecting milk on a daily basis from farms in the area. Concern was expressed that the proposed diversion was not suitable for the large vehicles.

It was agreed that a site visit would take place on Friday 16th January and C'lr Hibbot-Morris, C'lr Starnes and C'lr Naylor agreed to meet Andrew Beale and the Agent on site. C'lr Houghton apologised as she could not attend and stressed how important it was that disruption to local businesses and services was considered and kept to a minimum..

C'lr Starns told the January meeting that the site visit had taken place and they were satisfied that the closure and disruption for local residents would be kept to a minimum.

(b) Any further highway issues to be reported

The Clerk reported the following road closures: -

- A49 resurfacing scheme – road closure from 2.2.26 – 17.3.26 from 8pm – 6am Monday to Friday.
- Temporary Road closure – Cardingmill Valley 1.2.26 – 30.6.26 - implemented on an ad hoc basis when car parks are full.

(c) Grit Bins – Shropshire Council Policy

Following the December meeting the Clerk had contacted Shropshire Council to enquire if they could provide their policy for replenishing grit bins and had also asked for a map showing the position of grit bins in the Parish. No reply has been received. However, the SALC weekly newsletter included a request for grit bins which were low on salt to be reported on FixMyStreet and where possible to include a photograph of the empty or half full bin and also include MY3Words to indicate the position wherever possible.

A member of the public had requested a grit bin to be placed on Olivers Bank. The Chairman had agreed the position at the top of the bank and Jeremy Dale has placed the bin and filled with salt.

C'llr Houghton told the meeting that a decision would soon be made by Shropshire Council as to whether they would be responsible for refilling bins provided by Parish Councils.

(d) Highways Maintenance Grant

Jeremy Dale continues to carry out Highways Maintenance work in the parish and would submit the invoice before the end of the financial year..

11. Parish Council Web site

Ahead of the January meeting the Clerk had emailed all Councillors explaining that the existing web site was built very cheaply 10 years ago and no longer meets all the requirements to be legal and compliant..

Time and legislation has moved on and this site is no longer compliant. From the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return parish and town council will be required to complete a new Assertion 10 Annual Governance Statement and the Parish Council when signing the AGAR has to comply with new regulations imposed under Assertion 10. To satisfy the Auditor the Parish Council do have to have a new web site designed by one of the two Government approved main providers of Parish Council web sites. These being Vision ICT or Hugo Fox both of whom take care of everything from application, purchasing and configuring the domain to adding an SSL certificate and ensuring all compliance standards are met. They also ensure that the website meets all WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards, GDPR requirements, and digital governance obligations, allowing PC's to answer "Yes" on the AGAR with confidence. To comply with assertion 10 the Clerk and Councillors all have gov.uk email address set up. At this time, the Clerk works from a private e mail address and forwards correspondence to Councillors private email boxes. This is not compliant and does not meet the requirements of Assertion 10. The Clerk is required to have a gov.uk e mail address Clerk@ etc which can be passed on if another Clerk took over.

The Clerk had circulated the NALC guidance and quotations from the two companies and explained that she is familiar with working with Vision ICT as they set up the web site for the other Parish Council where she is Clerk. She is confident that both companies are totally up to date with all the latest rules and regulations and make absolutely sure that their web sites are always totally compliant with Government legislation.

It was proposed by C'llr Phillips, seconded by C'llr Starns and unanimously agreed that the quotation from Vision ICT would be accepted

12, Finance

(a) Accounts due for payment

The following cheques were due for payment:-

Shropshire Council fee for un-contested elections May 2025 in the sum of £375. Cheque No. 000565

Picklescott Village Hall. Hire of hall for 2026 Meetings. Cheque No 000566

Clerks Salary Dec/Jan plus expenses amounted to £539.45. Cheque No. 000567

HMRC Tax due on Clerk's salary £133.80 Cheque No 000568

It was proposed by C'llr Starns, seconded by C'llr Morris and unanimously agreed that the above accounts be paid.

(b) Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk circulated the Bank reconciliation showing a balance held at bank, after payment of the above accounts, amounting to £5,242.18. It was proposed by C'llr Starns, seconded by C'llr Hibbot-Morris and unanimously agreed that this provided a true and accurate financial record. The Bank reconciliation and bank statement were then signed by the Chairman.

(c) Agree 2026/27 Precept

The Clerk had circulated a spreadsheet showing the 2025/26 precept and the likely outturn against each heading and estimated a £414 underspent which added to the parish council funds carried forward in April 2025 would amount to an estimated £875 parish council funds carried forward on 1st April 2026. Excluding the Neighbourhood Fund and CIL totals to be carried forward.

The Clerk told the meeting that the precept had remained unchanged at £7,250 for the last two financial years. In order for Council Tax Demand Notices to show a 0% increase for a Band D Council Tax charge the precept requirement would need to be £7127 and every £100 above this figure would result in an additional charge of 55p and every £1,000 above that figure would result in an additional £5.46.

The precept was discussed in detail and it was proposed by C'llr Morris seconded by C'llr Starns and unanimously agreed that the 2026/27 precept would; be set at £8,565, which would include the cost of the new web site and a sum set aside for Environmental Maintenance work.

13. Shropshire Council report

C'llr Houghton reported the following:-

- Shropshire Council Full Cabinet Meeting had taken place today and is available on the web site.
- Shropshire Council new Capital Plan is aimed at little or no borrowing and capital projects will be put on hold as the County Council cannot afford to finance them
- Shropshire Council are planning to dispose of assets at the current market value.
- The Council's revenue budget is under considerable pressure and they have applied to Government for a £71m loan in this financial year and £133m in 2026/27 making a total borrowing of £201m on which interest is payable. They are applying for an "interest holiday". Shropshire Council are 1 of 120 Councils applying for support.

- The Redundancy Programme had been very random with anyone eligible and applying for redundancy had been granted. This now left the remaining staff under considerable pressure with only 2 members of staff left in some areas.
- The main pressure remains of Children and Adult Social care. 25% of the Shropshire population are aged over 65 and the settlement for this provision is extremely low.
- An Improvement Board is in place to look at all services.
- A Spend Control Board has been set up and any costs in excess of £500 have to be approved.
- It is hoped that the level of funding will help to stabilise the financial position and year by year help to build reserves to achieve a more stable position.
- Shropshire Council had avoided issuing a 114 Notice
- The budget consultation ends on 26th January
- The Consultation on Tourism ends on 2nd February.
- Food waste collection is being re-examined and more information should be available in the next six weeks.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 25th March – Annual Meeting commencing at 7pm followed by Parish Council Meeting

The remaining 2026 meetings are as follows:-

27th May (Annual General Meeting)

22nd July

23rd September

25th November

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.05pm