

**ALL STRETTON, SMETHCOTT AND WOOLSTASTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING**  
**held at Picklescott Village Hall**  
**on**  
**Wednesday 25th March 2026**  
**at 7pm**

1. **Present**

C'lr Phillips (Chairman); C'lr Naylor (Vice Chairman); C'lr Morris; C'lr Hibbot-Morris; C'lr Starnes; C'lr Forbes  
Clerk Mrs Jennie Griffiths  
Shropshire C'lr R Houghton,  
4 members of the public attended the meeting

2. **Apologies**

No apologies were received. All Councillors were present at the meeting.

3. **Chairman's Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that this was the Annual Meeting held to receive reports of Parish Council activities throughout the year..

4. **Declaration of Interests**

The Chairman reminded all Councillors to declare any interests. No declarations of interest were received.

5. **Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

It was proposed by C'lr Phillips, seconded by C'lr Morris and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 26th March 2025 provided a true and accurate record of the meeting.

6. **Report from the Chairman**

The Chairman, C'lr Phillips gave the following report:-  
The Parish Council continues to meet bi-monthly and discuss matters concerning our 3 parishes. 2 new councillors have been appointed which has allowed the council to always be quorate even when councillors have had to give their apologies. We still have a vacancy for one councillor and continue to make efforts to fill that post.

We have continued to try and put pressure on the Council to carry out timely repairs to the roads/drains/lines in our area. At times we struggle to see any progress but we are grateful to our County Councillor, Ruth Houghton for her role in passing on our local concerns.

We are again indebted to Jeremy Dale for carrying out numerous works to remove debris, unblock culverts, gullies and drains, providing a salt box and salt amongst many others jobs. We have a small amount from the County Council and match that as best we can from Parish funds. In the end much of this work would never have been done without Jeremy's help and his work far exceeds the amounts we have available to recompense him. Thank you Jeremy.

As a result of our inability to pay enough to get these emergency road issues resolved we agreed at our last meeting to increase the precept.

We were advised that a 20% increase would equate to each household having their council tax increased by about £5. Even with this increase we are not able to fully recompense Jeremy.

**7. Footpath Warden Report**

C'llr Hibbot-Morris told the meeting that a footpath which had been blocked had now been cleared by a local resident.

She asked that anyone who knew of any blocked or problems on footpaths to contact her and she would report any issues.

**8. Rev Fletcher, Munslow and Poor Land Charity Report**

C'llr Phillips gave the following report:-

The Charity continued to meet twice a year, in April and October.

Carolyn Brunt resigned as a trustee representing Smethcote PCC and was replaced by Victoria Main.

Last year £2,530 was distributed between the local netball team, an individual who had made a significant contribution to the parish, repair work to the benches around the Picklescote village pump, the Village Hall and the children's Nativity walk.

The Charity continues to try to support deserving cases in the Parish and there is always an opportunity for organisations or individuals in the Parish to apply for funding.

**9. Tree Warden Report**

C'llr Naylor gave the following report:-

Over the past 12 months there has been a limited amount of tree-related activity within the parish. In general terms, the trees have continued to behave in a largely predictable manner, and most have remained where they are.

Routine observation of trees along parish lanes, field boundaries and public spaces has continued, particularly following the stronger winds experienced during the autumn and winter months. A small number of minor branches came down during these periods and were cleared, by contractors and/or willing parishioners, where they interfered with footpaths, roadside verges and, occasionally, fibre optic cables. None of the parish's larger roadside trees have made any serious attempt to relocate themselves, which is reassuring.

During the year the Coronation Wood at Picklescote was planted. A number of residents have commented that many of the newly planted trees appear not to have survived their first year. This has been noted and may warrant review by those responsible for the planting in order to establish how many of the trees are still with us and whether any replacements may be required.

At Batchcott Hill Nature Reserve, several trees were felled as part of habitat management works. A member of the public raised a concern that the felling might have been carried out illegally. The matter was passed to Councillor Ruth Houghton, who contacted Shropshire Wildlife Trust for clarification. The Trust confirmed that the works formed part of their habitat management programme and that planning

permission was not required. The individual who raised the concern was advised that, if they remained of the view that permission was required, they could pursue the matter with Shropshire Council through the appropriate complaint or planning enforcement channels.

Overall, the parish tree stock appears broadly stable. There has been the usual mixture of branches falling off in windy weather, trees being planted, and trees occasionally being removed for management purposes. None of this is especially unusual in the life of a parish, although it does at least ensure the Tree Warden continues to have something to report.

**10. Shropshire Council Report**

C'llr Houghton thanked everyone for the support they had given after the boundary changes when our Parish Council was transferred from Burnell Division to Bishops Castle Division. She recognised that this was not an easy transition for the Parish Council as there is no natural connection between the Parish and Bishops Castle.

She added that she continues to visit the parish on a regular basis to familiarise herself with the local area.

C'llr Houghton told the meeting that we are now 10 months into the new administration at Shropshire Council and they continue to operate under severe financial constraints, with the majority of funding going to statutory services such as child care and care for the elderly, with little money available for non-statutory services.

**11. Date of next Annual Parish Meeting - 24<sup>th</sup> March 2027**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.15pm.