

St Martins Parish Council

Minutes of a Council Meeting of the St Martins Parish Council held on Thursday 13th February 2025 at 7.00 pm in St Martins Village Hall.

PRESENT: Cllr's Neil Arthan, Andrew Cast, Nigel Court, Mark Hayball, Peter Holmes, Sophie Hughes-Saunier, Craig Jones, Duncan Laing, Natalie Rowley, Sue Schofield, George Smith and Helen Williams.

Also in attendance, Shropshire Cllr's Steve Davenport, three members of the public and the parish clerk.

022/02/25.C	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr's Alan Langley and Nina Mistry.</p>	Action
	<p>Proposed, seconded and carried that these apologies are accepted.</p>	Parish Clerk
023/02/25.C	<p>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations</p> <p>a) Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests. None received.</p> <p>b) To consider any applications for dispensation. None received.</p> <p>c) Declaration of any other interests in the agenda items. None received.</p>	
024/02/25.C	<p>Parish Council Vacancies</p> <p>Cllr's considered an application from Craig Jones. This was accepted. Craig Jones then joined the meeting, signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>The Parish Clerk reported that there was still one vacancy on the parish council. Application forms can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.</p>	
025/02/25.C	<p>Council Minutes</p> <p>Resolved: with two abstentions that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 9th of January 2025 having been previously circulated be approved and adopted as a true record.</p>	Chairman
026/02/25.C	<p>Urgent Items</p> <p>Cllr Helen Williams reminded Cllr's of all the hard work the Chairman had been involved with on numerous projects during his term of office which comes to an end on the 10th of April this year. The Parish Clerk listed the following areas where Cllr's need to consider taking over the responsibility of these projects, including, the Recreation Partnership now in the hands of the school, the outstanding balance of consultancy fees on this partnership, highway safety issues outside the school, speed watch duties and now data analysis from the four Speed Indicator Devices, locations for additional mobile phone masts, speed and</p>	

vehicle restrictions in Kimberley Lane, the funding of various projects through CIL funding and the management of the Allotments and Arthan's Pond.

There were no other urgent items that related to financial, health and safety issues or issues that require immediate attention.

027/02/25.C

Public Session

One member of the public present raised concerns over wheely bins being left on the footpaths days after the collection day in Oak Drive, vehicles double parking at the end of the Cul-de-Sac. Additional streetlights were requested outside no's 4 and 14, also in Oak Drive and a salt bin at the top of the Cul-de-Sac.

Parish
Clerk

028/02/25.C

Parish Clerk's Progress Report

The Parish Clerk listed the following areas of non-progress since the last meeting but in some cases from many meetings ago. These included,

- Proposed sites for additional mobile phone masts from the Atlas Tower Group. They are still awaiting responses from various landowners.
- The locations in St Martins, where Shropshire Council's (SC) Street Scene Manager, who has been based in Devon since his appointment in March 2024, stated back in October 2024 that their grass cutting contractor KIER still cuts 6000 sqm of grass each month in St Martins.
- From the same Street Scene Manager whose responsibly it was to remove fly tipping that is not on the highway.
- No response from an Officer at SC on damaged fence and damaged litter bin at Ifton Meadows car park.
- No response from an Officer at SC on the potential timeline for the adoption of Orchard Close.
- No response from a Planning Office at SC on the outstanding issue, now over two years, of the Section 106 payment from Irvine Gardens.
- Still no action from the Street Lighting Manager at SC on the streetlight on Overton Road at its junction to Garden Village which has now been out for over a year.

As regards to a query raised by a Cllr over the re-installation of the swing seat, following the safety repairs to the ground under this swing, the Parish Clerk confirmed that this will be installed once the ground has dried out.

Parish
Clerk

029/02/25.C

Police Report

The latest police report has been circulated to all Cllr's prior to the meeting.

The Chairman reported on the data he had downloaded from the four Speed Indicator Devices. This data will be passed on to Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport and PC Mike Hogg.

030/02/25.C

Highway Issues

The main problems reported since the last meeting has been the flooding in Glyn Morlas along with other road problems, mainly caused by large tractors using these areas. Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport was aware of these issues and reported them to Shropshire Council Highways.

Cllr Steve Davenport

031/02/25.C

Kimberley Lane

The Chairman updated Cllr's as follows,

“You will hopefully recall my comments given at our previous meeting. We had agreed on a scheme to install, at our own cost, small signs at the ends of the road. We had written to Harry Guest, the Shropshire Officer, providing the schedule of work and advising that unless we receive comments from him by the end of January we would proceed with the work. At 5:30pm on 31st January I received a response, giving reasons why our proposal would NOT be acceptable. It did not contain any positive suggestions as to a likely acceptable solution, and indeed, confirming my personal bugbear of hearing Shropshire officers giving 20 reasons why a scheme could not proceed as opposed to the one reason it could proceed.

Mr. Guest suggested that we should hold a telecom during the week commencing 3rd February. I agreed, provided my contact numbers and at the same time asked him to prepare a solution to the problem. It is now 9 working days later and no incoming call has been received. Remarkably, I am not surprised”.

Chairman

032/02/25.C

Street Lighting

Apart from one light on Overton Road still not working, all other lights owned and maintained by Shropshire Council were now working.

Highline Electrical would be asked to look into the request from a resident in Oak Drive for two additional lights in this area.

Parish Clerk

033/02/25.C

Financial Matters**Accounts for Payment**

BACS	Staff	Salary & Expenses	£1219.69
BACS	HMRC	PAYE & NI	£386.45
BACS	Nigel Thomas	Play Area Inspections	£26.00
BACS	Huw Manford	Litter Picking, etc.	£319.55
BACS	St Martins Village H	Room Hire	£24.00
BACS	SLCC	Parish Clerks Membership	£190.00
BACS	Scribe Accounts	Annual Renewal	£806.40
BACS	Rich Mellor	Footpaths Working Group	£60.00
BACS	Office Express	Copier Paper	£25.74
DR	HSBC	Bank Charges	£8.00
DD	Veolia	Bin Emptying	£37.10
(It was noted that a new bin was needed)			

Resolved that the above payments be agreed in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Parish Clerk

Income

CCLA

January Reinvestment

£1,745.89

034/02/25.C

Planning

To consider the following application,

An outline application for Residential development for up to 62 dwellings to include access, layout, open space and associated infrastructure at Moors Bank, which had only been received on the day of the meeting has been deferred until the next meeting.

Cllrs noted the following planning decision and recommendation of the planning authority received since the last meeting.

Reference: 24/04411/LBC (validated: 25/11/2024)

Address: Ifton Hall Farm, Ifton Heath, St Martins, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3DN

Proposal: Installation of external lighting

Decision: **Grant Permission**

035/02/25.C

Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport updated the meeting on the following,
The booking system at the recycling centres will cease on the 17th February and SC have dropped their proposal to go to a three weekly bin collection.

036/02/25.C

Funding various projects through CIL.

The Chairman reported that you will hopefully recall my positive comments given at our previous meeting concerning the new Puffin crossing by Stans. I had confirmed that the non-Capital works would be covered by our Council CIL pot but wanted clarification of more accurate figures so that we could correctly apportion budgets.

Sadly, my enthusiasm has been knocked following a recent exchange of emails with the managing Shropshire Officer. You may recall being advised that one particular officer who had previously been less than helpful towards this Council had departed her position. When at the end of January, I enquired of the officer for an update, I was advised (quote) "The replacement officer had not been appointed and until the position had been filled, our application could not proceed". I was and still am speechless. Both myself and Councillor Davenport responded with "it's an urgent matter - please action". Today I received a further response as follows:

"I've managed to speak to Jason Hughes (the Highways Officer) and he wasn't able to give any more in depth costs at the moment and we unfortunately are still awaiting confirmation on who is able to take on the CIL project delivery role for Strategic Highways.

I can only apologise for not having more information to share at your meeting tonight. I'll be in touch to update you again next week".

Chairman

This project commenced in August and the outline costings were provided and clarification requested in September. It is therefore extremely annoying that it has taken 5 months for the costs to be confirmed but still outstanding.

Furthermore, if this was a private enterprise there would be contingency plans in place for the appropriate delegation of responsibilities. A vital process simply cannot come to a grinding halt due to one vacant position. The Shropshire CIL fund stands at over £37 Million Pounds. Our project would remove £45,000 from that reserve. In the big plan of things, it is a negligible amount. Something so insignificant that simply needs one Shropshire officer to stand up, take responsibility and sign off one piece of paper. No wonder Shropshire Council is in such a dire position”.

037/02/25.C Shropshire Council Ward Division

A Councillor proposed that, following comments at both Weston Rhyn Parish Council and Ellesmere Rural Parish Council, a letter should be sent to Shropshire Council requesting a change of name for the newly named ward of St Martins. There was general agreement across all Parish Councils that the preferred name should be 'St Martins, Weston Rhyn and Ellesmere Rural'. It was noted that such a change would not affect the forthcoming elections and that Shropshire themselves has no jurisdiction over the request, but it was agreed that our Parish Clerk should approach the Clerks of both other Parishes, to seek their authorisation for St Martins PC to take the lead. I was agreed that, upon confirmations from the other PC's that our Parish Clerk to be solely responsible for contacting Shropshire Council with any correspondence. It was also noted that there was no urgency for the matter.

Parish
Clerk

038/02/25.C Pinfold

The Parish Clerk reported on the specification and associated schedule of work, including a planning application that he was working on for Listed Building Consent, for the Pinfold in Church Lane, St Martins.

Parish
Clerk

039/02/25.C Hanging Baskets

The Parish Clerk reported on the planting and hanging of the baskets this year including the planting of the memorial garden. Unfortunately, the nursery who provide the baskets would not be able to hang these to the street lighting poles. The Chairman suggested we all make enquiries to see if anyone locally can assist with this.

All Cllr's

040/02/25.C Morlas Meadows

The Parish Clerk, after recent discussions with the Commercial Director of Primoris Homes, on the maintenance of the public open space on this estate, reported on the progress of these areas now that the site was nearing completion. Wildflower beds would be planted but the Parish Clerk suggested we approach Primoris Homes to see if they could fence off the area at the back of the three Take-a-Ways which is an eyesore looking from the estate.

Parish
Clerk

041/02/25.C	<p>St Martins Allotments</p> <p>The Chairman advised the Parish Council on the process to which we must adhere to satisfy the demands of our legal agreements with each Allotment holder. There was an overriding and time-sensitive date of Monday 31st March for our Clerk and a Councillor to liaise with Allotment holders here at the village hall. He needed a volunteer to assist Parish Clerk and, more importantly, to take knowledge forward as the process annualised. Cllr's Sue Schofield and Helen Williams agreed to assist on this.</p>	Parish Clerk & Cllr's Sue Schofield & Helen Williams
042/02/25.C	<p>Member of Parliament</p> <p>There had been no urgent issues since the last meeting that required the attention of our MP Helen Morgan.</p>	
043/02/25.C	<p>Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)</p> <p>All correspondence received from the County Secretary had previously been circulated to all Cllr's.</p>	
044/02/25.C	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There were no additional items of correspondence to report on</p>	
045/02/25.C	<p>Members Reports</p> <p>A Cllr suggested that if anyone has any suggestions for nominations for the Unsung Hero Award, now is the time to send in their nomination.</p> <p>It was reported that the balancing pond on Hollands Drive after heavy rain floods Clarkes Lane.</p> <p>A Cllr suggested we should enquire through the Institute whether they would be prepared to allow park of their carpark for public parking.</p> <p>A Cllr asked if our website could have a search engine installed to allow the searching through previous minutes.</p> <p>A question was raised on whether planning permission had been granted for the development at Merville House Mount Bradford Lane, SY11 3HQ. Located on the corner of Mount Bradford Lane and Ellesmere Road.</p> <p>A litter bin was reported not being usable due to the lid not opening wide enough.</p> <p>The Chairman referred to an email received that morning from our insurers concerning our responsibilities for Insurance at Arthan's Pond. The demands were clearly in excess of our ability to conform and to continue its operation as a 'Fishing Pond'. He wished that a small subcommittee could be formed to investigate our options in more depth. Four Cllr's put their name forward under the Chairmanship of Cllr Natalie Rowley.</p>	<p>All Cllr's</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Parish Clerk</p> <p>Cllr Natalie Rowley</p>

046/02/25.C

Next Meeting

Next meeting Full Council on Thursday 13th March 2025 @ 19.00 in St Martins Village Hall.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.50 pm.

Signed
Chairman

Date

Chairman