

Minutes of a Council Meeting of the St Martins Parish Council held on Thursday 13th March 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, one member of the public and the parish clerk.

047/03/25.C	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Nina Mistry.</p> <p>Proposed, seconded and carried that this apology is accepted.</p> <p>The police had also forwarded their apologies Cllr Alan Langley was absent.</p>	Action
048/03/25.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. Cllr Andrew Cast disclosed a pecuniary interest in planning application 25/00361.</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>	Parish Clerk
049/03/25.C	<p>Parish Council Vacancies</p> <p>Cllrs considered an application from Steve Morris. This was accepted and brought the parish council up to full strength. Steve Morris had forwarded his apologies for this meeting but would sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next meeting.</p>	
050/03/25.C	<p>Council Minutes</p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 13th of February 2025 having been previously circulated be approved and adopted as a true record.</p>	Chairman
051/03/25.C	<p>Public Session</p> <p>The one member of the public present did not wish to raise any issues.</p>	
052/03/25.C	<p>Planning</p> <p>To consider the following application(s)</p>	

Reference: 25/00361/OUTLINE (validated: 12/02/2025)

Address: Proposed Residential Development Land South Of B5069, St Martins, Shropshire

Proposal: Residential development for up to 62 dwellings to include access, layout, open space and associated infrastructure.

Cllrs expressed numerous concerns over this proposed development which can be summarised as follows.

St Martins has seen extensive expansion over the past decade and to such a level where the village population now exceeds the criterion for consideration to become registered as a provincial Town.

The public drainage system remains at what was installed one hundred years ago with continual flooding of roads and properties along our main thoroughfare called 'Overton Road' with the main flooding area on Overton Road located near the anticipated site entrance to this proposed residential development.

Our local school has reached maximum capacity and does not have the physical land space for further expansion. Its present maximum level of pupils negatively impacts on parental delivery and the collection of children due to the lack of parking facilities and results in the Overton Road becoming gridlocked at pupil delivery and collection times, with cars parked along roadsides, grass verges and in the sole school bus stop and which in itself causes major Health & Safety issues.

Despite extensive discussions over many months with a variety of partners, there is NO medical facility within the village. Our nearest location is over the border with Wales at Chirk village. However, it is known and accepted that, on a pure financial basis, the Welsh Health Authority is quietly resisting providing access and services to patients from an address in England. Furthermore, there is no appropriate public transport service to allow patients from St Martins to access treatment in Chirk, even if they can gain an appointment. By this inability to provide medical provision, it is clearly in direct conflict with the latest government demands that "any expansion of housing should incorporate access to GP Surgeries".

The main road through the village (B5070) from the A5 road at Gledrid Roundabout has the same dimensions as it was in the 1950's. It is a winding narrow thoroughfare and across an ancient single-vehicle bridge, where traffic pays little attention to the regulatory signage demanding 'give way one vehicle only' and resulting in 'near misses' on a minute-by-minute basis. As this is the main employment outlet road from and into the village, extra vehicular use will therefore simply compound the problem.

Within the village we have recently witnessed that another village site, known as Ifton Green, built 34 homes. Whilst the initial development included 8 units for social housing, the demand for homes in the area is so low that 18no family homes were found to be impossible to sell and all were transferred to private housing associations or companies. Furthermore, according to the website 'Zoopla' there are presently more than 20 family homes for sale. This must surely bring into question whether our village as an entity is suitable for another 60+ family homes.

Resolved: with three abstentions to strongly object to this application on the above grounds.

Parish Clerk

The Chairman and Parish Clerk would now write a more detailed response which would be forwarded to all Cllrs over the weekend for their comments before being forwarded to Shropshire Councils Planning Department.

Chairman & Parish Clerk

053/03/25.C

Urgent Items

Cllr Natalie Rowley raised an issue over the content of the Chairman's report in the November Village Life. The Chairman declined to comment.

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

054/03/25.C

Parish Clerk's Progress Report

The Parish Clerk listed the following areas of non-progress that are still outstanding from previous meetings. These included,

Parish Clerk

- 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 responsibility 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.

The police had visited Oak Drive and indicated that no action could be taken over double parking in the area. Shropshire Council had also said that they can take no action over wheely bins being left on the pavement in this area after the day of collection.

Veolia have replaced the litter bin in the play area next to the village hall.

Highline Electrical have agreed to assist with their Cherry Picker to put up this year's hanging baskets.

As regards the additional defibrillator in the village, Lens Fish & Chip shop had now declined the offer of installing this on his shop as they were about to sell the business. However, the garage opposite have agreed a location on their property.

055/03/25.C	Police Report		
	The latest police report has been circulated to all Cllr's prior to the meeting.		
056/03/25.C	Highway Issues		
	All issues on highways are now being reported and listed on Shropshire Council's FixMyStreet.		Parish Clerk
057/03/25.C	Kimberley Lane		
	The Chairman updated Cllr's as follows,		
	You will recall from our last meeting my report on this matter, inasmuch that the Shropshire Officer handling the proposed works failed to action his own promise to respond and speak to me. That situation remains. He is currently 37 days late. When added to the 40 years of previous correspondence and Shropshire inaction, I suppose he considers another 37 days delay of little significance.		Chairman
058/03/25.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.		Parish Clerk
059/03/25.C	Financial Matters		
	Accounts for Payment		
	BACS Staff Salary & Expenses	£1438.81	
	BACS HMRC PAYE & NI	£386.25	
	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 Vision ICT New Cllr Email	£10.00	
	BACS Shropshire Council 4 th Qtr. Street Lighting Energy	£1128.48	
	DR HSBC Bank Charges	£8.00	
	DD Veolia Bin Emptying	£37.10	
	Resolved that the above payments be agreed in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.		Parish Clerk
	If Highline Electrical complete the following repairs and new installations before the end of the month, then the following payments would also be approved.		
	BACS Highline Electrical New Lights Oak Drive	£8838.87	Parish Clerk
	BACS Highline Electrical Upgrading 5 Columns	£21894.72	
	Income		
	CCLA February Reinvestment	£1,745.89	
	Cllrs considered a grant application from St Martins Village Hall which had been previously circulated to all Cllrs prior to the meeting.		

The Parish Clerk explained that there was £3200 left in this year's grants budget which ends on the 31st of March.

Following a discussion, it was

Resolved with 7 votes for, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions that a grant of £3200 is approved towards the alterations at St Martins Village Hall.

Parish
Clerk

At this point seven members of the public attended the meeting. The Chairman explained that the meeting had started at 7.00 pm as every other meeting does and had been advertised on all parish council notice boards.

Following this statement all seven members of the public left the meeting.

060/03/25.C Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Cllr Steve Davenport was asked to follow up a previous request to replace the damaged dog bin on Overton Road at its junction with School Lane.

061/03/25.C Funding various projects through CIL.

The Chairman read an email that he had submitted to Mr. Andy Wilde at Shropshire Council requesting his direct assistance to move the Puffin Crossing forwards to a successful conclusion. That letter was dated 28th February. He advised that, with some inevitability, Mr. Wilde had failed to respond within the Shropshire published policy time of "14 days from approach". He had then written to MP Helen Morgan with the same letter, hoping that she could intervene. No response has been received.

He still had no dates for work outside the school.

062/03/25.C St Martins Allotments

Following a previous update from the Chairman especially as we have a key date of 31st March when the Allotment users may / will / should attend at the Village Hall to sign their agreements, the Chairman asked if any allotment holder had made any payment by bank transfer. The Parish Clerk advised that no payments had been received.

The Chair advised that he had recently received a request from the Allotment Association asking if the Parish Council could pay the cost of individual members' insurance provided by their national body for £3.50 pp. He advised of the problems that would entail as all contracts had been with the allotment members since before Christmas and without any feedback as to this issue. To now make the request 16 days before the annual payments were due was unsatisfactory and would entail modified contracts being produced. The matter was discussed, a vote taken and the decision of the council was that the request would be declined.

Cllr Natalie Rowley reported on a recent meeting of the committee set up to investigate the conditions of the public liability concerning the pond. It was agreed that the focus should be on urgently getting an inspection of the site. She presented the checklist sent by RoSPA for scoping the Public Open Space Safety Review. A discussion was had on whether this was the appropriate action to take given the pond has lacked maintenance over the last couple of years. As none of the committee are safety experts, it was decided that a RoSPA inspection would be best to help us identify any areas that require improvement.

Resolved to accept the RoSPA quotation of £1,129 for the full day consultancy fee.

Parish
Clerk

063/03/25.C Member of Parliament

There had been no urgent issues since the last meeting that required the attention of our MP Helen Morgan.

064/03/25.C Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)

All correspondence received from the County Secretary had previously been circulated to all Cllr's.

065/03/25.C Correspondence

There were no additional items of correspondence to report on

066/03/25.C Members Reports

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 so that an award can be presented at the May meeting.

All Cllr's

Damage to the panels on the Bus Shelter on Ellesmere Road was reported.

Parish
Clerk

Extra dog bins were requested by the Pinfold in Church Lane and in Cottage Lane by the Orchard.

Parish
Clerk

Moles had again been reported on the football pitch at the rear of Stans.

Parish
Clerk

Mud was reported along the lane to Nefod at its junction with Esgob Bridge.

Parish
Clerk

Large amounts of foam were reported along the brook running through Ifton Meadows.

Parish
Clerk

An incident of flowering crocuses being cut accidentally by the grass cutting contractor was reported to the parish clerk on the day it happened

Parish
Clerk

067/03/25.C Next Meeting

Next meeting Full Council on Thursday 10th April 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