



# BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL



Gwilym J Rippon Cert. He CEG, PSLCC  
Town Clerk  
Tel: 01588 638141  
Email: townclerk@bishopscastle.co.uk

The Town Hall  
Bishop's Castle  
Shropshire  
SY9 5BG

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT	APOLOGIES
Cllr J. Carroll Cllr A. Stelman Cllr G Perry Cllr T. Halford Cllr R. Houghton Cllr J. Dickin Cllr S. Morris	

IN ATTENDANCE	
Mr G. Rippon, Mrs C. Owen, 2 members of the public	

Fire Procedure

Minute No.	Agenda Item	
1-24	1	<b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b> None
2-24	2	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b> a) To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests. None b) To declare any personal interests. Item 9 Cllr Houghton.
3-24	3	<b><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</u></b> of 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2023. <b>RESOLVED</b> Accepted. Proposed Cllr Perry; Seconded Cllr Stelman. All in favour.
4-24	4	<b><u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION</u></b> Bernard Edwards gave the quarterly report from the Climate Action Group. The Group had made presentations at two conferences: Restoring Shropshire Verges and the Nature Recovery Conference. Next month the CA Group will present the Council with the draft Action Plan for 2024-2025 for consultation before final approval in March. The Going Wild Group (part of the CAG) will make a presentation then, also. Cllr Perry thanked the CA Group for all their hard work. Bishop's Castle was becoming known as a leader for change.
5-24	5	<b><u>REPORT FROM THE MAYOR</u></b> <u>Items outstanding from ACTION Sheet:</u> Conversation needed with Matt Maddox re Youth Shelter. Fundraising for the Christmas Lights on-going. Sort temporary fencing issue for Pump Track.

– awaiting the water inspector’s visit to resolve the water bill.

Investigate if ash die back grants apply.

Follow up FIT readings for Auction Yard if not heard back.

Photograph the new lights on the mile straight for a promotional media piece.

– talk to Allotments Society at the Liaison meeting at end of month re new templates.

to review the Complaints Policy.

Cllr Dickin had a meeting with Lezley Picton and others from Shropshire Council and the Mayor of Clun. Highways issues dominated the discussion. In particular, the lack of a 20mph speed restriction on A488 by the Community College, resurfacing issues and the outstanding issue of repainting the white lines at junctions and in parking bays. (Reported in 2020). There have been several near misses at crossroads where white lines have worn away.

**RESOLVED.** Highways be asked to push ahead for the white-lining to be reinstated at the junctions and address the parking issues moving forward. Proposed Cllr Perry; Seconded Cllr Stelman. All in favour.

Cllr Dickin has requested another meeting with Shropshire Council to discuss the housing issue.

6-24

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### **REPORT FROM THE CLERK**

The photograph of the lighting on the mile straight still needs to be taken and an article prepared for the press.

Connexus has a new Chief Executive Officer. The Clerk will be in touch.

The CD Player at the Town Hall has broken. The Clerk will source a replacement. The Town Hall Trust will reimburse the council in due course.

The Clerk has been approached by the managing director of Trail Tale. This is an app providing walking or bicycle trails around a location. He is asking for expressions of interest to put a lottery bid together. No costs are involved.

The Clerk has supplied councillors with a comparative list of Council precepts and Council taxes. The Council uses its precept to provide services that are otherwise not locally available. The Town Council struggles to keep the precept low because it is a small parish with fewer people than the larger towns. The restriction on house building means that the population cannot grow and so any increasing costs are borne by the same few people. An article to that effect has been written for the newsletter.

The Neighbourhood Plan has gone through its inspection with little change. (The green spaces connected with the schools have been removed for now from the plan because they come under the remit of the Ministry of Education. However, should the schools be closed in the future, then this land would subsequently have to be brought under the protection of the Neighbourhood Plan).

This is very good news. Shropshire Council will decide on the Plan on 13<sup>th</sup> March, after which there will be a referendum (paid for by Shropshire Council). It was deemed a very good report.

Thanks go to Cllr Carroll and the Neighbourhood Plan team for all their hard work.

It was suggested that the character and conservation area assessment (that Mrs Jackson and others had worked on) be produced as a separate document for ease of reference in the future.

7-24

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### **CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS**

Cllrs Halford, Stelman and Perry had interviewed five prospective candidates and asked the Council to coopt them all. Michelle Gayle; Leon Kosciuczyk; Brigit Drake; Sharon Jones; Lucy Blundell. The Council will now have its full quota of councillors. It is proposed that the new councillors are assigned a councillor buddy to act as mentor to help them settle in and receive training in council procedures and good practice.

**RESOLVED.** Co-opted. Proposed Cllr Stelman; Seconded Cllr Perry. All in favour.

8-24 8 **UNITARY COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Houghton is putting pressure on Mark Barrow to apply for a grant towards Mitigation costs re the Pearl River Mussel issue that is preventing houses being built locally. The deadline is fast approaching. Cllr Houghton asked for the Town Council to write to him also as a matter of urgency.

The Ofsted report on Shropshire's Looked after Children has highlighted a lot of incorrect processes. There are serious problems with 17/27 cases. This is exacerbated by difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified social workers and increasing numbers of young people and under 2-year-olds being brought into care. An improvement board has been set up. Cllr Houghton has been asked to be on it. Ofsted will return in July.

Cllr Houghton has asked for an update on the Telford Sexual Exploitation Report. (Cllr Stelman did not get a reply from his letter last year).

Connexus housing. Two properties are changing tenants. The Council should be consulted to ensure that local needs are met by future tenants. The Clerk has only been notified of one, so he will chase.

9-24 9 **SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULATION**

Shropshire Council's budget consultation closes on 27<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr Houghton encouraged Councillors to reply as individuals and as the Town Council. There is local concern that Shropshire Council must protect rural services, such as library, SpArC, bus services etc.

10-24 10 **WAR MEMORIAL**

Work will start on 8<sup>th</sup> April. The Mayor is organising a Mayor's Social and a Bingo to fund-raise for it.

11-24 11 **PLANNING**

None received.

12-24 12 **PUMP TRACK AND YOUTH SHELTER**

Cllr Houghton has applied for two grants of £15000 and £1500 respectively from the Commonwealth Fund and Delamere Dairy. The young people are expected to fundraise to raise £3000. More money will be needed.

13-24 13 **COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

There was a positive recruitment day on 12<sup>th</sup> January with more staff recruited. (ITV attended). 2 nurses are now needed to re-open. A fifth recruitment day has been planned for March. The board will meet on 4<sup>th</sup> April. Some members of the campaign group will be invited to attend.

14-24 14 **MONTHLY FINANCES**

i) To receive the bank reconciliation.

**RESOLVED.** Noted. Proposed Cllr Perry; Seconded Cllr Morris. All in favour.

15-24 15 **MONTHLY FINANCES**

Payee	Item	Invoice	Amount
Shropshire County Pension Fund	Monthly pension payment	January Return	1042.29
HMRC	PAYE and NI	January Return	738.06
Staff salaries	4 staff	January Return	3080.64
C. Owen	Minute taker	300.	40.04
G. Dudley	Toilet cleaning	301.	500.00
D. Turner	Grass cutting	302.	1115.75
Exemplum	Printing	303.	439.95
Exemplum	Printing	304.	320.55
G.J. Rippon	Expenses	305.	68.51
Lennox Electrical	LED tubes	306.	108.00
BCBS	Maintenance	307.	9.17
Allotment Society	Grant	308.	650.00
For information			
BT	telephone /broadband	309.	428.58
SSE	Electricity	310.	474.59
Lloyds Bank	bank charges	311.	3.00
	Total		<b>£9019.13</b>

Extra Invoice for plant and materials for the French drain for the Pump Track £1836.

**RESOLVED** The invoices plus the extra one be paid. Proposed Cllr Perry; Seconded Cllr Houghton. All in favour.

16-24 16 **REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ATTENDED** None attended.

17-24 17 **NEXT MEETING** Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm. Meeting closed at 21.02pm.