

COUND PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr Simon James

Clerk: Lisa Harris
Clerk@cound.org.uk

MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Held at 7.00pm on 23 January 2025 at Cound Moor Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors S James (Chair), R Davies, J Hall, S Green, T Roberts, R Sartain, M Smith, K Symonds and Shropshire Councillor C Wild

Clerk: Lisa Harris

Also present: One member of the public

68.24 Apologies for Absence

None

69.24 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- a) No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.
- b) There were no applications for a dispensation regarding disclosable pecuniary interests

70.24 Public Participation Session - a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for the public to speak, with a strict 5-minute limit per speaker. Members of the public may speak on matters appearing on the agenda. However, if a matter does not appear on the agenda, a written request should be submitted to the Clerk no later than 2 working days before the meeting.

The member of the public present did not wish to speak.

71.24 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21 November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Roberts and seconded by Councillor Symonds and **resolved (without opposition)**

that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21 November 2024 be accepted as a true record.

The minutes were signed accordingly.

72.24 Clerk's report on matters arising since the Parish Council Meeting on 21 November 2024

- Updated website with Shropshire Council's Leader's Update.
- Responded to parishioner's email queries.
- Researched charges involved with Lloyds Bank's Community Account and Business Bank Instant Account and recommend keeping things as they are. However, if charges are introduced to the Business Bank Instant Account, then the account should be closed at that time as the charges would outstrip the interest gained.
- Website is now www.coundparishcouncil.gov.uk and the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair will shortly have domain email addresses for the purposes of conducting parish council business.
- Obtained update from the Digital Infrastructure Officer at Shropshire Council regarding mobile coverage within the Parish. Published some information on the current situation on the website at [Independent mobile coverage checker launched for Shropshire - Cound Parish](#)

[Council, Cound, Shrewsbury](#) There are only four Mobile Network Operators (soon to be three with the imminent merger of Vodafone and Three) – EE, O2, Vodafone and Three. There are a number of providers who “piggyback” off these operators (EE – 1pMobile, Ecotalk, IQ Mobile, Lycamobile, Mozillion, RWG Mobile, Spusu, Talk Home, Utility Warehouse, Your Co-op (formerly The Phone Co-op), O2 – Giffgaff, Sky Mobile, Tesco Mobile, Three – ID Mobile, Smarty, Honest Mobile, Superdrug, Vodafone – Asda Mobile, Lebara, TalkMobile, Voxi. To check the coverage at your location go to [Mobile Coverage Checker](#).

Advice given is that apart from switching provider, other ways for parishioners to improve mobile phone reception include:

- updating their phone to a newer handset
- ensuring that they keep their device’s software up-to-date

Future improvements in mobile phone coverage: Over the past year Shropshire Council has been collaborating with Atlas Tower Group (ATG) to bring forward neutral host lattice masts in rural not-spots. The first site to gain planning approval is: [24/04318/TEL | Proposed 24/7 telecommunications cell site. | Land At Frodesley Hall Farm Frodesley Dorrington Shropshire Shropshire SY5 7HF](#). Once the new mast has been built, ATG rent the space to the MNOs to improve indoor/outdoor mobile phone coverage. Atlas Tower Group is working with willing parish councils to install new mobile phone infrastructure in rural Shropshire. ATG have already engaged with neighbouring Berrington Parish Council to bring forward a mast site in the area. Councillor Wild confirmed that ATG are currently locating a suitable site along the A458 between Cross Houses and the Cound turnoff.

- The auditor who has performed the Parish Council’s internal audit for at least the last 7 years has been in touch enquiring if their services are required this year. It was agreed to proceed as the audit has always been carried out to a high standard ensuring that everything relating to Cound Parish Council’s finances is in order.
- The Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire is hosting a garden party at Orleton Hall in Wellington on 4 June 2025. The Parish Council has been asked to nominate an individual (plus their guest) to be invited to this event. The Councillors unanimously recognised a particular parishioner who has made a significant contribution to the community.

ACTION: Clerk to notify the Lord Lieutenant’s office of the chosen nominee.

- Prepared the 2025/26 budget and precept requirement to be discussed at 75.24

73.24 To receive report from Shropshire Councillor

Councillor Wild presented a report which covered:

- **National Planning Policy Framework**

On 12 December 2024, Government amended both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and “standard methodology” for assessing Local Housing Need.

You can read it [here](#). The government has outlined plans to tackle England's housing shortage, with local councils given targets for new homes in their area. This document confirms that Shropshire Council’s annual housing figure (currently 1,073) will rise to 1,994. In the current draft Local Plan, the number was 1,450 (high growth) so this represents a significant increase. The aim is for 370,000 new homes in England every year, to fulfil a government promise for 1.5m new homes within the next five years. Local authorities are being told to give developers permission to build.

- **English Devolution White Paper**

On 16 December the Government released the English Devolution White Paper. You can read it [here](#). Effectively what this does is abolish every council except for those unitary councils that already have a population of 500,000 give or take 10%. In short, the first councils to receive letters were those County Councils and Districts with elections in 2025 asking if they wished to

postpone. This will not affect Shropshire's 2025 elections.

- **LG Finance Settlement**

In the week before Christmas the draft financial settlement landed. The government have said that there is, on average a 6% increase in Core Spending Power and yet we and several other rural authorities are seeing increases of only 3.1% but we should remember this includes council tax which has been raised 4.99% which means we have less funding than last year. We have received the third lowest settlement across England. The government have also removed several grants, put them in a pot and redistributed the monies based on deprivation. Their way of determining deprivation is based on Council Tax Band A properties. One of the major changes is the removal of the Rural Services Grant which was a pot of money specifically for rural councils to deal with some of the additional costs for providing services in a rural area. So, in summary Shropshire Council's current budgetary deficit for 2025/26 is circa £23m. The changes the government have made to the funding formulas has resulted in a loss of £28m including £16m of social care funding.

74.24 To receive any relevant updates from parish councillors

- Councillor Roberts had performed the audit checks for the period up to 16 January and confirmed that both defibrillators were ready to use as and when required.
- Councillor Sartain gave an update on The Guildhall: The events previously detailed to be taking part in late November and December (Flicks in the Sticks, Christmas wreath workshops, carol concert and Carols by Firelight) had all gone well.
- Councillor Symonds had been extremely impressed with the voluntary work carried out by Mr John Edwards who is a member of the Facebook group *Sign Cleaning enthusiasts UK*. This week he had visited the Parish and had cleaned the finger post signs. The Councillors all agreed that this was a wonderfully generous act, and they wished to express their thanks to Mr Edwards on behalf of the Parish.

ACTION: Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Mr Edwards.



- Councillor Smith provided an update on the Coronation Commemoration plaque.

It was proposed by Councillor Roberts and seconded by Councillor Sartain and **resolved (without opposition)**

that payment up to a maximum of £1,000 (including VAT) may be made by the Clerk upon receipt of an invoice from the fabrication company producing the components for the plaque.

- Councillor James praised the hard work of parishioners Matthew and Sophie Colgate who together with another family member, had spent a considerable amount of time over the Christmas period cleaning the historic Cound Arbour Bridge. All agreed that, in daylight hours, the improvement to the appearance of the white railings was noticeable and were grateful for this act of community spirit.

75.24 Current financial matters

a) Payments

Payee	Description	Amount
Miss L Harris	Clerk's expenses December 24/January 25	£ 61.00
Miss L Harris	Clerk's salary December 24/January 25	£ 681.00
HMRC	PAYE on Clerk's salary December 24/January 25	£ 170.24
Mr D Burn	Environmental Maintenance – November	£ 175.00
TOTAL		£ 1087.24

It was proposed by Councillor Symonds and seconded by Councillor James and **resolved (without opposition)**

that the above accounts be approved for payment.

b) Bank reconciliation to 16 January 2025

The bank was reconciled at £7,427.25, being the online banking balance on the date the meeting agenda was prepared. The bank reconciliation was agreed and signed accordingly.

c) Budget and Precept 2025/26

The Clerk had prepared a proposed budget for 2025/26. This was considered in detail, as were the various precept options.

It was proposed by Councillor James and seconded by Councillor Hall and

Resolved (by a majority vote)

that the precept for 2025/26 be set at £8,256.

ACTION: Clerk to apply to Shropshire Council for a precept of £8,256 by the 31 January deadline. Clerk to also investigate an insurance policy for the Parish Council that would include "key man insurance" to mitigate for the fact that reserves are below the recommended level.

76.24 Planning

1. Decisions to note

a. Ref: 24/04334/FUL

Address: 24 Upper Cound Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6AS

Description: Minor alterations to The Old Farmhouse, replacement workshop and landscaping

Validated: 14 Nov 2024

Status: Granted

b. Ref: 24/04335/LBC

Address: 24 Upper Cound Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6AS

Description: Internal reordering of ground floor and replacement of modern bay window

Validated: 14 Nov 2024

Status: Granted

2. Planning applications for consideration

a. Ref: 24/04551/LBC

Address: Harnage House Harnage Cound Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6EJ

Description: Minor alterations to The Old Farmhouse, replacement workshop and landscaping

Validated: 02 Dec 2024

Status: Pending Consideration

b. Ref: 25/00002/AMP

Address: 51 Upper Cound Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6AS

Description: Non-material amendment to planning application number 23/03955/FUL – Change shape of rear window to a rectangular window of the same width and height without the triangular top

Validated: 02 Jan 2025

Status: Pending Consideration

No objections nor comments were recorded on the above planning applications.

77.24 Correspondence

None.

78.24 Future agenda items

- Councillor Wild was asked to provide an update on the Cound Arbour Bridge works.

79.24 Date of next meeting

Thursday 20 March 2025 at 7.00pm at Cound Moor Village Hall.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed by Chairman:

Date: 20 March 2025