

ALVELY AND ROMSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING 4th November 2025

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Isley Jakeman (Chair) and Councillors Christine Brown, Colin Taylor, Ian Braithwaite, Chris Edwards, Russ Dowson and Richard Narburgh

Attending Steve Kerry, Parish Clerk, Mr Bill Smith and Mr Joseph Clayton

2025/26.77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors James Cumiskey, James Taylor and Stuart Price (possibly arriving later).

2025/26.78 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

2025/26.79 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that the correct title for the nature initiative is Local Nature Recovery Partnership. With that amendment it was proposed by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Brown and unanimously

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 7th October 2025 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

2025/26.80 OPEN FORUM

The Chair invited Mr Smith to address the meeting. He introduced an item on behalf of the Strollers and Striders, namely an initiative to replace stiles with metal sprung kissing gates. These are much more accessible to people with limited mobility, require very little maintenance and are easier to navigate with dogs, pushchairs etc. There is a bill before Parliament calling for an obligation on owners to install them and he asked the Council to write to the local MP to support this. Although the gates are more expensive, Shropshire Council has funding and will pay for 75% of the cost. Councillor Braithwaite that he has five of these self-closing gates on the paths across his fields and they are a very good solution and present no risk to his livestock. The long life and low maintenance compared to wooden stiles is an advantage and where stiles become damaged people push through adjacent hedges or fences and create a problem in controlling animals.

It was proposed by Councillor Jakeman, seconded by Councillor Taylor and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Council supports the proposed legislation and directs the Clerk to contact the local MP to inform him of our position and ask for his support for the measure in Parliament.

The Chair invited Mr Clayton to address the meeting. He introduced the petition regarding the state of Chapel Lane. The Council has already cited this road in its correspondence with Shropshire Council regarding a possible statutory breach of their obligations under the Highways Act. The road is in a very poor state, one part appears to be near collapse, this is more than merely potholes. He also referred to notice of works in Chapel Road due from around 15th January.

The Chair noted that many of the petitioners were not parish residents, and that highway repairs were outwith the remit of a parish council. We had secured a promise of action in response to our lobbying and Councillor Taylor confirmed that Chapel Lane would have a full makeover, not just resurfacing.

Weather permitting this would be early in the New Year. The works in Chapel Road were separate and both items were funded from capital resources that were not affected by the current revenue crisis faced by the Shropshire Council. The petition has not made any difference to this; these decisions were made some weeks ago. Finally, it was noted that anyone who had damaged a car because of highway defects may claim for reimbursement of repair costs against the Council and that Shropshire has had to settle hundreds of these claims every year.

2025/26.81 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Councillor Dowson confirmed that he had checked this month's payments against invoices and there were no discrepancies. It was noted that there were two copies of one invoice on file, but only one payment had been made.

The Clerk reported that he had checked the cost of installing McAfee anti virus on the Council's laptop which would be just under £60-00. This was agreed.

The report on transactions since the last meeting was accepted.

2025/26.82 TRAFFIC CALMING

This item was postponed pending Councillor Price's arrival.

2025/26.83 LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Brown updated the Council about the meeting that had taken place between herself the Clerk and Paul Thompson which had set out some useful next steps. Any group that is formed will be community led, it is not going to be dominated by the Council. A lot of possible stakeholders were suggested, and Councillor Braithwaite was specifically asked to join the group to represent the farming community. There will be no major action until the Spring, leading to a focus on this project at the Annual Parish Meeting. In the meantime, potential stakeholders would be contacted, and some general publicity would go out asking for expressions of interest. Some local landowners are keen on restoring ancient woodland and it would be good to get the church involved because the churchyard is an obvious site for a possible project. Councillor Taylor also suggested contacting the volunteers at the Old Chapel Café.

In order to provide administrative support, it was proposed by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Jakeman and unanimously

RESOLVED That subject to the prioritisation of time for parish council work, the Clerk be authorised to use some of his working hours to support the formation of the group by, for example, preparing agendas and producing notes or minutes of meetings.

2025/26.84 PLANNING MATTERS

25/03933 66 Daddlebrook Road extension over garage – no comments

2025/26.85 EVENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS

Councillor Brown reported a very successful meeting of the Committee. It was noted that not everyone is on the new mailing list, and this will be completed today. The website is on track to go live at the end of November. We would like photos of every councillor for the web page. Material from the old site will be archived going back one year. It was suggested that we start the next meeting early to create a space for some website and related IT training for members.

In terms of events – the Council will be represented at St Mary's on Remembrance Sunday, the Clerk will do one of the readings and the Chair will lay a wreath. Members attending are asked to be at the church by 10.15 and a pew has been reserved.

For Armistice Day the school have confirmed two children and a teacher will attend. Revd Aldwinkle will preside and Councillor Taylor will lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

For the Christmas Tree switch on, Revd Aldwinkle will organise some carol singers and the song sheets. Councillor James Taylor is over-seeing the construction of the plunger for the countdown and switch on. Tony Head will do the switching on. The contractor has confirmed the arrangements with the Clerk. The tractor parade in Bridgnorth which used to come through the village has had to be cancelled because of difficulties with crowd management and insurance. The organisers have enquired about having a tractor present at our switch on. It was felt that this was a good idea as long as it did not compete for attention with the carol singing or the lights. With proper timing it could work well. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the tractor organiser and suggest they park on the Pavilion roadway and switch on lights after the tree lights and final carol, before rolling along Daddlebrook Road to the Three Horseshoes.

The Committee had also agreed to run a "best decorated house" competition with the prize being a hamper. It was proposed by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Jakeman and unanimously

RESOLVED To authorise the spending of £75-00 on a hamper as the prize for the best decorated house in the village competition.

It has been suggested that there might be a commemorative event for the centenary of the birth of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth in April 2026. This will be an agenda item for the next committee meeting.

2025/26.86 LOCAL YOUTH TRANSFORMATION PILOT

Councillor Brown suggested that we look at this at the next meeting of the Play Area Committee. This would be called shortly as the anal safety inspection was now due and would also be on that agenda. This was agreed.

2025/26.87 SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Taylor reported that the Council is running various consultations around the County Planning Strategy, covering housing, industrial and other development issues. New design guides and the new local plan is the subject of online consultation. Running alongside this is a consultation on extensions and alterations to residential properties. He urged members to look at these consultations and respond as they felt about them.

Overview and Scrutiny is now operating properly and looking at a number of serious issues including council tax collection rates and SEND provision. In September the Chief Financial Officer had made a s114 declaration requiring officers to do a line by line review of all spending. This has unearthed a £60-90m shortfall, far more than the loss from the abortive bypass proposal and the lack of government funding which was being relied upon. For the last six years the Council's auditors have only given a limited assurance because of extensive borrowing and inadequate reserves. By the end of November the Council, along with 15 others in the country will know if there is to be a central government bailout. The alternative will be a crisis in service provision. The Chief Executive retired at the beginning of November.

On more local matters, Councillor Taylor has followed up with Councillor Dainty, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, who visited the village last year regarding the lack of a quote for the proposed works at Cooks Cross. He has confirmed that officers have received a quote which they felt was far too high for the work required, and it has been sent back for a cost cutting review. Councillor Taylor has made the point that communication with council officers on a joint project is vital if we are to be kept up to date with developments.

2025/26.88 ROMELEY MATTERS

Nothing to report.

2025/26.89 UPDATES

These had all been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2025/26.90 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion

(Note, members will be asked to meet at 6.30 pm for IT training which will not be open to the public)

The agenda will include a review of budget pressures and a discussion of intentions regarding next year's precept.

Signed

Date