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## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 21 JANUARY 2025

### LEIGHTON VILLAGE HALL

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Present: Councillors M Thorn (Chair), A Bain, M Budgen, S Dawes, S Jones, W Vernon and Shropshire Councillor C Wild

Clerk: Lisa Harris

In attendance: 2 members of the public

#### 79.24 Apologies for absence

None

#### 80.24 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- a) Councillor Thorn declared a pecuniary interest in 87.24 and would withdraw from the meeting while the planning application in question was considered. Councillor Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in 87.24.
- b) There were no applications for a dispensation regarding disclosable pecuniary interests

#### 81.24 Public Participation Session - *a period of 20 minutes will be set aside for the public to speak, with a strict 3-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.*

No member of the public present wished to speak to an agenda item.

#### 82.24 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19 November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated.

**It was proposed** by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Vernon and  
**resolved (without opposition)**

that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19 November 2024 be accepted as a true record.

The minutes were signed accordingly.

#### 83.24 To receive report from Shropshire Councillor

Councillor Wild provided a recap of the following report which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- **Planning Reform: Planning Committees**

On 9 December a consultation for the future of Local Planning Committees was unveiled. You can read it [here](#). In effect this consultation will lead to most applications being dealt with by officers and if a site is agreed within a local plan, it will get built

out. This consultation does not have a specific closing date, but the government are seeking views on the following questions:

- Do you think this package of reforms would help to improve decision making by planning committees?
- Do you have views on which of the options we have set out in regard to national schemes of delegation would be most effective? Are there any aspects which could be improved?
- We could take a hybrid approach to any of the options listed. Do you think, for instance, we should introduce a size threshold for applications to go to committees, or delegate all reserved matters applications? d. Are there advantages in giving further consideration to a model based on objections?
- Do you agree that targeted planning committees for strategic development could facilitate better decision making?
- Do you have a view on the size of these targeted committees?
- How should we define strategic developments?
- Do you think the approach to mandatory training is the right one?

- **National Planning Policy Framework Final Document**

The Planning Committee Consultation was quickly followed by the release of the new NPPF document. You can read it [here](#). This document confirmed that our annual housing figure (currently 1073) will rise to 1994, in our current draft local plan the number was 1450 (high growth) so this represents a significant increase. What it didn't talk about specifically was the idea of a regional committee/board determining our local plan, this was surprising as it had been leaked to the Local Government Association that this would be in the paper.

To put some colour on this, most rural counties have seen large increases in housing targets whilst urban areas have seen a reduction. So, Shropshire has seen a 100% increase (1000 to 2000) and Telford has seen a 50% decrease (800 to 400).

- **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.

In short, the White Paper seeks to abolish two tier authorities and create unitary councils. All unitary councils need to cover a population of a minimum 500,000 population. This will inevitably mean that we will have to merge with another authority but there are no timescales for this.

Once these changes have been made (or alongside these changes) Unitary Councils will be asked (or mandated) to come together in a combined authority under a mayor. The mayor will also be the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Chief, there is also a suggestion that the mayor should be the chair of the Integrated Care Board.

It is within the White Paper where they discuss the issue of Local Plans and Planning, and the White Paper seeks to form a committee or board to determine spatial development at a regional level.

- **LG Finance Settlement**

In the week before Christmas the draft financial settlement landed. Having now worked through the detail it is, without doubt, disappointing.

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. The Labour Government's 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 our current budgetary deficit for 2025/26 is circa £23m. The changes the Labour Government have made to the funding formulas has resulted in a loss of £28m including £16m of Social Care funding which is ridiculous, and we will be making the strongest representations to get this money replaced.

So, once again, we will have more difficult decisions to make for our 2025/2026 budget and those items we listed in our budget consultation are very likely to happen. Of course, there is always the chance that the settlement could change when it comes to the confirmed amount (February). The Leader of the Council will be speaking to all our MPs on Friday to impress upon them how bad this settlement is for a rural county such as ours.

- **Draft Local Plan**

The letter received from the Planning Inspectors and our statement have now been released to the press. You will see from the statement we are really disappointed by the findings and are curious as to why some of these matters were not raised months (or years) ago? My view is that the moment the NPPF was released, most councils that have seen an increase in their housing targets, are left without a five-year land supply, perhaps just what the government wanted. I should add that it wouldn't have mattered if the plan was adopted tomorrow, we still we wouldn't have a five-year land supply.

We need to prepare ourselves for more unwanted planning applications although we do have a 4.7-year land supply so we are working through current applications to see if we can remedy this situation.

#### **84.24 Clerk's report on matters arising since the Parish Council Meeting on 19 November 2024**

- Updated website with latest Leader's Update.
- Attempted to escalate deterioration of potholes on Kynnersley Lane with the relevant department at Shropshire Council but advised that they were aware of the situation and the repairs were already on a list of similar surface repairs throughout the county.
- Notified the Lord Lieutenant's office of the Parish Council's chosen nominee for the summer garden party being held at Orleton Hall.
- Submitted a comment of support on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal in relation to application 24/03988/FUL.

- Spoke to the relevant department at Shropshire Council to establish the costs involved in obtaining statistics (broken down at a daily data level) from the four VAS on the B4380 sited within the Parish. The charge would be £75 per VAS for a month's worth of data.
- On the recommendation of Councillor Thorn, contacted Bespoke Computing about secure disposal of the old parish council laptop. Unfortunately, had not received a response. Will now try Salop Technology in The Parade, Shrewsbury.
- Collated councillor's Place Plan priorities to be discussed at 74.24.
- An email had been received from Under the Wrekin advising of increased production costs and requesting a donation towards its operation in 2025. To be discussed at 86.24.
- An email had been received from Eaton Constantine Village Hall Committee seeking financial assistance from the Parish Council to maintain its defibrillator. To be discussed at 86.24.
- Shropshire Green Spaces and Active Travel Fund was seeking expressions of interest from parish councils who would like to take the opportunity to obtain a "Health and Wellbeing" bench made from local sustainable woodland. Local councils can express an interest in obtaining up to three benches at a cost of £100 per bench. The balance would come from The Fund. At this stage possible siting locations are not required. Local councils would be responsible for the installation and upkeep of any benches supplied.

**ACTION:** Clerk to respond to SALC by the deadline on Wednesday 22 January with Leighton & Eaton Parish Council's expression of interest in obtaining three benches. If the application is successful, siting locations will be discussed at a later date.

- Website is now [www.leightonandeatonconstantineparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.leightonandeatonconstantineparishcouncil.gov.uk) and the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair will imminently have domain email addresses for the purposes of conducting parish council business.
- Prepared the 2025/26 budget and precept requirement to be discussed at 87.24.

#### **85.24 To receive any relevant updates from parish Councillors**

- Councillor Vernon:
  - Attended the SALC organised Nature Recovery Conference in Church Stretton at the start of December. It could be worthwhile to develop a nature recovery plan within the Parish involving such ideas as rewilding of verges and introducing bat boxes.
  - The VAS coming from Upper Longwood towards Eaton Constantine appears to be defective as it has become very dim and cannot be seen in daylight. This is regardless of weather conditions as it is the same in bright sunlight or when full cloud cover. Has been reported via FixMyStreet.

**ACTION:** Clerk to report to Shropshire Council's Street Lighting and Traffic Signals Commissioner.

- Councillor Jones:
  - Attending the next meeting of Ironbridge Power Station Redevelopment Liaison Group on Wednesday 22 January. Will report back at March's meeting.

- Councillor Dawes:

- Extremely frustrated that nothing has been done about all the potholes reported via FixMyStreet. Photographic evidence was provided in each instance and all considered likely to cause accidents.

FixMyStreet Reference	Location
14166363	From Cressage by last farm gate on left hand side before crossroads
14166374	On Cressage/Eaton Constantine crossroads
14166365	From Cressage/Eaton Constantine crossroads towards Eaton Constantine on left hand side at first farm gate
14166366	Ridge pothole by hydrant opposite The Hollies on brow of hill going up Eaton Constantine main street. Pedestrian slipped and fell in middle of road 12/24
14166367	Deep potholes outside No 3 Upper Longwood
14166368	2 potholes loose stones by Upper Longwood Farm barns
14166369	Either side of road from Upper Longwood to Neves Castle
14166370	Potholes past smithy towards Brick House Farm
14166272	Pothole loose stones outside Brick House Farm

- Also reported the following flooding issues on FixMyStreet and again no action taken to date.

FixMyStreet Reference	Location
14150384	B4380 opposite Ranslett House
14166373	Main high street from field next to Old Post Office down past Eaton House
14166361	Outside Black Barn

- Councillor Bain:

- Had reported the following flooding issue on FixMyStreet in October 2024 but no update received to date.

FixMyStreet Reference	Location
14157753	Flooding on Garmston Lane at the west end of the village. Drains inadequate for volume of water

**ACTION:** Clerk to escalate pothole and flooding issues to relevant department at Shropshire Council.

- Councillor Thorn:

- The working party had met again earlier in the month and continues to work on producing an action plan in relation to addressing some of the parishioner concerns identified by the Parish Survey. The action plan will be approved and adopted at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

## 86.24 Current financial matters

### a) Payments

Payee	Description	Amount
Miss L Harris	Clerk's net salary December	£ 284.50
HMRC	PAYE on Clerk's salary December	£ 71.20
Miss L Harris	Clerk's net salary January	£ 284.50
HMRC	PAYE on Clerk's salary January	£ 71.20
Miss L Harris	Clerk's expenses December/January	£ 45.00
Leighton Village Hall	Venue hire – 19/11/24	£ 30.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£ 786.40</b>

**It was proposed** by Councillor Thorn and seconded by Councillor Jones and

**resolved (without opposition)**

that the above accounts be approved for payment.

**b) Bank reconciliation to 14 January 2025**

The bank was reconciled at £14,242.73, being the online banking balance on the date the agenda was prepared. The bank reconciliation was agreed and signed accordingly.

**c) Budget and Precept 2025/26**

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

**It was proposed** by Councillor Vernon and seconded by Councillor Dawes and

**Resolved (without opposition)**

that the precept for 2025/26 be set at £10,863.

**ACTION:** Clerk to apply to Shropshire Council for a precept of £10,863 by the 31 January deadline.

**It was proposed** by Councillor Bain and seconded by Councillor Dawes and

**Resolved (without opposition)**

that a donation of £100 be made to support the production of Under the Wrekin in this financial year and that this will increase to £200 in 2025/26 to allow for additional space in the publication to be made available for information articles by Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council as required.

**ACTION:** Clerk to pay the £100 donation to Under the Wrekin for this financial year.

**It was proposed** by Councillor Thorn and seconded by Councillor Bain and

**Resolved (without opposition)**

that Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council will cover the cost of the consumables for the defibrillator sited at Eaton Constantine Village Hall for the financial year 2025/26.

**ACTION:** Clerk to advise Eaton Constantine Village Hall Committee of the decision.

**87.24 Planning**

**1. Decisions to note**

**a. Ref: 24/02723/FUL**

Address: 8 Lower Longwood Eaton Constantine Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6RB

Description: Demolition of outbuildings and replacement with single storey side extension

Validated: 21 Oct 2024

Status: Granted

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

**b. Ref: 24/03997/FUL**

Address: Fernley Eaton Constantine Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6RJ

Description: Erection of extensions

Validated: 17 Oct 2024

Status: Granted

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

**c. Ref: 24/03708/FUL**

Address: The Manor House Leighton Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6RN

Description: Proposed extension to previously approved swimming pool building

Validated: 30 Oct 2024

Status: Pending Consideration

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

**2. Planning applications for consideration**

**a. Ref: 24/04439/FUL**

Address: 4 Eaton Constantine Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6RF

Description: Exterior wall insulation to front elevation (retrospective)

Validated: 02 Dec 2024

Status: Pending Consideration

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

[Councillor Thorn temporarily left the meeting]

**b. Ref: 24/04850/DIS**

Address: The Manor House Leighton Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6RN

Description: Discharge of conditions 3 (Tree Protection Plan), 5 (Bat and Bird Boxes) and 6 (External Lighting) on planning permission 24/03708/FUL

Validated: 02 Jan 2025

Status: Pending Consideration

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

[Councillor Thorn rejoined the meeting]

**c. Ref: 24/04859/DIS**

Address: Eye Barn Eaton Constantine Shrewsbury Shropshire SY5 6SQ

Description: Discharge of Conditions 4 (Bat and Bird boxes) and Condition 6 (External lighting) for planning application number 23/03634/FUL

Validated: 02 Jan 2024

Status: Pending Consideration

Application can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Portal, or by clicking [here](#)

No comments were made or objections raised.

**88.24 Highway matters**

Already covered at 85.24.

## 89.24 Place Plan priorities

*[Background - Place Plans are documents owned and managed by Shropshire Council which identify the current and forecast infrastructure needs in communities across the county. Infrastructure includes utilities such as electricity, gas, and water, as well as other provision such as roads, schools, open spaces, flood defences, broadband, health facilities, and leisure facilities. The plans are "live" documents which can be updated as required in order to reflect changing infrastructure needs in Shropshire. Town and parish councils are able to nominate projects for inclusion on an ongoing basis. Once a nomination is received, the Place Plan Team will consult with internal and external partners to ensure that there are no reasons why the project shouldn't be included and will make the required changes to the Place Plan. The identification of infrastructure allows Shropshire Council and other partner organisations to identify appropriate sources of funding to support delivery, which could include Shropshire Council's own capital investment programme; external funding sources, such as government grants; and the appropriate use of developer contributions, including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. Importantly, the Place Plans assign a priority status to the identified projects: Priority A; Priority B; and Neighbourhood. Where a project or identified need is categorised as either Priority A or Priority B, there is an acknowledgement that these schemes may be able to benefit from CIL funding allocated by Shropshire Council. Where an infrastructure need is identified as a Neighbourhood priority level, there is a general acknowledgment CIL Neighbourhood Funds, administered by the relevant Parish and Town Councils, will be a priority source of funding. There are currently 18 Place Plans. Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council falls under Shrewsbury and surrounding area [Shrewsbury and surrounding area | Shropshire Council](#)]*

After a full discussion the following was agreed in relation to Place Plan Priorities:

- There are no Priority A projects within the Parish.
- It is highly unusual for a rural parish, where housing development is limited, to have any Priority B projects. However, although outside the Parish, there is the possibility that the redevelopment of Ironbridge Power Station with its impact on neighbouring parishes, might justify the following Priority B project: Traffic calming measures in Leighton on the B4380 required due to increased vehicular usage (including HGVs) as a result of the extensive nearby development. Agreed works to be paid for by the developer Harworth under a Section 106 planning agreement and now awaiting installation by Shropshire Council.
- Neighbourhood projects:
  - White lining on Eaton Constantine main street to prevent accidents and risk to life.
  - White lining at the unsafe Morrells Wood Farm junction.
  - Resurfacing of the layby by the river meanders
  - Traffic calming measures for Garmston

**ACTION:** Clerk to register Place Plan Priorities with Shropshire Council for consideration. Clerk to contact neighbouring parish councils to determine interest in joining together to commission a road markings contractor to carry out white lining work.

## 90.24 Correspondence

Nothing beyond what already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## 91.24 Future agenda items

- Approve and adopt the Parish Council Action Plan in response to the Parish Survey.



- To consider responding to the Government Consultation regarding the future of Local Planning Committees in England.

**92.24 Date of next meetings**

Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 7.00pm - Leighton Village Hall

Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 7.00pm – Eaton Constantine Village Hall

*Leighton & Eaton Constantine Parish Council resolves that by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item 93.24 and 94.24 of business on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts*

**93.24 Appointment of internal auditor**

An internal auditor was appointed for 2024/25.

[The Clerk left the meeting]

**94.24 Clerk's hours**

An increase in the Clerk's paid hours from 5 to 6 hours per week was agreed.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and the meeting closed at 8.59pm.

Signed by Chairman: .....

Date: 18 March 2025