

CHESWARDINE

PARISH COUNCIL

www.cheswardineparishcouncil.org.uk - clerk@cheswardineparishcouncil.org.uk

Attendance

Chairman:	Cllr J Hislop
Councillors:	Cllr N Stallard, Cllr S Lewis, Cllr B Maskell, Cllr N Partridge, Cllr A Thomson
Also Present:	Cllr Bentley, attending in his capacity as both a member of the Parish Council and as the Unitary Authority Ward Councillor.
Apologies:	Cllr M Pound
Not in attendance:	None
Clerk:	Mr Wayne Salisbury
Other:	None
Public:	None

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Cheswardine Parish Council held at the Parish Hall on Tuesday 15th September 2026

Meeting started at 7:00 p.m.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr M Pound.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations

- Cllr Lewis declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 11, authorisation of payments, as a payee on the schedule of payments.
- Cllr Bentley declared an interest relating to his role as a Unitary Councillor for Shropshire Council and an interest in Item 10a – Planning.
- No dispensations were requested or granted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Policing Matters

To receive a report from the local PCSO and neighbourhood policing team.

Representatives from the police were not in attendance.

5. Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance.

6. Shropshire Unitary Councillor's report

Cllr Bentley shared a report with members ahead of the meeting, which is included in the appendix to these minutes on pages 969-971.

Cllr Bentley shared the following specific updates.

- Shropshire Council remains under a high level of scrutiny.
- Cllr Bentley was involved last week in a CQC audit and inspection of adult social care provision.
- Nothing specific to Cheswardine has arisen recently. The matters set out in the report are public knowledge.
- The report includes a question and answer section responding to questions raised by Cllr Stallard. Cllr Bentley noted that these questions are relevant to parishes across the county.
- Shropshire Council had sought to borrow up to £121 million in the current financial year and is currently on target to require approximately £90 million, which shows that the savings measures are working.

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- Shropshire Council will be reliant on Exceptional Financial Support for a number of years, and all towns and parishes should be prepared for further council tax rises.

Cllr Stallard thanked Cllr Bentley for his answers to his questions but expressed disappointment with the response provided by Cllr Wagner, which he considered short and vague.

Cllr Bentley explained that, for clarity, he had shared his answers with Cllr Wagner as the councillor responsible for this area and had asked if he could add anything further.

Cllr Stallard raised concern about the statement that Shropshire Council would pay 50% in perpetuity for services passed to town and parish councils, as he considered that this would increase costs for parishes. Cllr Bentley clarified that the contribution would be 50% of the value of the relevant contract. Cllr Stallard expressed concern that the contribution may reduce over time.

Cllr Bentley noted that where a service is not statutory, Shropshire Council may not continue to support it as it cannot afford to. Cllr Stallard noted that the process has now moved to an expression of interest stage.

Cllr Bentley stated that there was nothing of substance in the parish that the Parish Council could take on. He considered it reasonable for the Parish Council to spend its money on keeping facilities in the village up to date, such as the speed indicator device on this agenda or upgraded signage. He added that parish councils may not exist in the future.

The Chair thanked Cllr Bentley for his report.

7. Playing Field, Playground and Car Park

The Chair reported that she had emailed Cllr Pound following the July meeting to ask if he was still able to complete the lottery grant application, as she felt the Council needed to know if the application is successful before setting the budget for next year. A response was received from Cllr Pound just before the bank holiday weekend advising that he would look at it. The Chair will email Cllr Pound to establish if the bid has now been submitted.

Cllr Bentley, who completed the previous bid, confirmed that he will complete the bid if Cllr Pound has not done so. The Chair will copy Cllr Bentley into the email. Cllr Bentley noted that, while no specific deadline had been set, two months had passed since the July meeting.

Members discussed the scope of the bid. Cllr Lewis recalled that it included junior play equipment, and Cllr Bentley recalled that it also included relocating a swing and the installation of pathways, with the combined quotations exceeding £20,000. Cllr Thomson reviewed previous minutes during the meeting, but the earlier decision was not located.

The Clerk will locate the previous decision and share it with the Chair to forward to Cllr Pound.

The Clerk reported that the Kompan quotation for the replacement swings was accepted following the July meeting and that installation dates are awaited. The Clerk had noticed that day that both swing sets had been taken out of use, although it was not known by whom or when, and no reports had been received from members of the public. The Chair suggested that Kompan may have done this following receipt of the order.

The Clerk will contact Kompan to confirm if they took the swings out of use and to obtain an approximate installation date of the new swings and will publish a social media post explaining why the swings are out of use and what is planned.

The Chair reported that the wildflower garden has been difficult this year due to the weather. Seed suitable for shady areas has been purchased and will be sown this week now that there has been some rain. The Chair raised

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concern about how successful the area will be in the longer term, as summers are getting hotter and the ground is sandy and dry.

8. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the oak tree plaque was installed in August by the odd job's contractor, Ali Tapley, and thanked him for his work.

The Chair thanked Cllr Bentley for cleaning and painting the milestone.

The Chair reported that she had attended two online meetings, the Chairs Network meeting in July and the Local Transport Plan workshop. At the workshop, four key areas were identified. The plan aims to ensure that transport across Shropshire is active and meets the needs of the working and retired populations and of rural areas. The workshop will inform a local plan which will then go out for consultation. The Chair is unable to attend the next session on 6th October 2026, and Cllr Stallard will attend.

Cllr Bentley reported that he is continuing to chase regarding the A41 speed camera. He noted that the Highways Engineer, has been helpful and that Tanya Miles, Chief Executive of Shropshire Council, is touring the county, and that he will highlight relevant points during her visit.

The Chair queried if the highways contact could help in seeking a reduced speed limit. Cllr Bentley advised that enforcement of speed limits is a matter for the police.

The Chair reported that the SALC AGM will take place on 3rd November 2026 at Shrewsbury Town Football Club. The Chair will attend. The AGM is a full day and is open to other members, who should notify the Clerk if they wish to attend. Cllr Thomson, who has attended previously, advised that it is valuable for networking with other councils and councillors, and usually includes presentations from external bodies and the presentation of awards.

The Chair reported that, during August while the Clerk was on leave, she received correspondence from a resident of Queens Croft concerned about cars parked close to the fence in the private car park behind his property, which he considered a fire hazard. The Clerk looked into the matter on his return, and it is believed to be private land. Cllr Lewis agreed that the land is private. The Chair visited the site, observed one car and saw no signage suggesting public use. The Chair responded to the resident, suggesting that he may wish to speak with his neighbours about the parking.

9. Clerk's Report

- a) The Clerk's report was received by members, which detailed updates on actions since the last meeting, including:
 - The Clerk was on annual leave from 3rd to 23rd August 2026.
 - Following the July meeting, the tree plaque was ordered and installed, and the Kompan quotation was accepted. The Clerk will chase Kompan for installation dates.
 - The Clerk replied to the organiser of the pigeon flying competition request, setting out the Council's resolution. No response has been received. An item to consider forming a working group on hire terms for the playing field will be included on the October agenda.
 - The Clerk received one query from the external auditor in August, to which he responded. The conclusion is awaited and must be published by the end of September. The completed external audit and conclusion will be presented to the Council at its October meeting.
 - A vacancy on the Council arose following the resignation of Cllr I Jacobson. The statutory notice of vacancy was published on 25th August 2026 and the period for electors to request an election ended on 15th September 2026. Confirmation is expected on 16th September 2026 as to if an election has been called. If no election is called, the vacancy will be advertised and co-option will be placed on the November agenda, allowing time to promote the vacancy. One email has been received from a person interested in the vacancy.

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- Planning decision. 26/01198/FUL, Ellerton Mews, Ellerton, Newport, conversion of existing barn to 1No dwelling with associated landscape works, was granted permission on 14th September 2026.
- Correspondence. An email was received regarding the Mayor of Market Drayton attending an event in the parish. The Clerk sought further information, but none was received. The Clerk noted that it is protocol for a chair or mayor to seek permission before attending an event outside their own parish.
- The Clerk will be on annual leave from 22nd to 31st October 2026 following the October meeting.

b) To receive correspondence entered into the meeting.

The Clerk presented an email from a resident regarding bleed kits, together with his response advising that the correspondence would be brought to the attention of members at this meeting.

The Clerk advised that no decision could be made under this item, but that the matter could return as an item at a future meeting or be considered as part of budget setting. The Clerk noted that bleed kits are commonly housed in defibrillator cabinets and can still be registered as available at those locations.

Cllr Bentley supported a further discussion, informed by costs. Cllr Stallard stated that he had looked at the kits online and thought it a good idea but was unsure about placing bleed kits in every defibrillator cabinet.

The Clerk noted that the parish has six defibrillators and that members could decide to provide kits at some locations only, which could keep the outlay low. Cllr Stallard raised concern about how locations would be chosen and the risk of criticism if a kit was not available where it was needed.

Cllr Thomson considered that cost and the longevity of the kits would drive the decision and suggested that the item be brought to the November meeting.

It was agreed that bleed kits will be included on the November agenda for further discussion.

10. Planning (Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Sched 1, para 8)

a) To consider a response to the planning inspectorate for the following appeal.

Reference	25/04108/FUL / Appeal/Planning Inspectorate ref: 6014549
Address	The Grange, Marsh Lane, Cheswardine, Market Drayton.
Proposal	Siting of a glamping pod
Deadline for Comments	25 th September 2026
25/04108/FUL Siting of a glamping pod The Grange Marsh Lane Cheswardine Market Drayton Shropshire TF9 2SA	

The Clerk explained that this is an appeal to the Secretary of State and that any response would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The application had been refused on four grounds. The Clerk displayed the decision notice and location plan for members.

The Chair noted that the site overlooks agricultural land. Cllr Thomson noted that access is through the main residence, with one gate for the whole property and no separate access and asked whether the converted stables are a residential or holiday let. The Chair advised that the stables are already let as a residential let.

Cllr Thomson noted that a plan to support biodiversity had not been provided and that the structure did not appear to be a glamping pod, looking more like a property that could be lived in for a long period. The Chair agreed that it looked more like a static lodge.

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Cllr Lewis noted that the proposal looked different to shepherd's hut type structures. Cllr Maskell stated that he did not see any issues.

Cllr Thomson stated that he would defer to the planning officer's expertise on the grounds for refusal.

Cllr Stallard did not support the appeal, noting that the planning officer's objections were relevant and that biodiversity had not been properly addressed in the application.

The Clerk explained that, unlike the planning portal, the Planning Inspectorate website provides a free text box for comments rather than a choice of support, object or neutral.

Members discussed the difference between making no submission and submitting a comment of "no comment".

The Clerk explained that the Council submits responses on planning applications so that residents can see that the Council has considered them.

A proposal that the Council makes no comment and submits nothing to the Planning Inspectorate was not carried.

RESOLVED: that the Council submits a response of "Cheswardine Parish Council has no comments to make on this application" to the Planning Inspectorate.

b) To note any comments submitted to the local planning authority.

Reference	26/03005/FUL
Address	Castlewood Lawn Lane Cheswardine Market Drayton Shropshire TF9 2RN
Proposal	Proposed extensions and alteration works to include new windows and external insulation under render finish.
Deadline for Comments	13th September 2026
26/03005/FUL Proposed extensions and alteration works to include new windows and external insulation under render finish. Castlewood Lawn Lane Cheswardine Market Drayton Shropshire TF9 2RN	

Members noted that the following comment was submitted to the local planning authority ahead of the deadline of 13th September 2026:

- Cheswardine Parish Council supports this application.

c) To consider any planning applications which have been received since the publication of this agenda.

No further planning applications had been received since publication of the agenda.

11. Authorisation of payments

RESOLVED: the schedule of payments for September 2026 correctly states the invoices presented and that **£1,076.04** is approved to be paid. **£2,115.36** has been paid under 6.6 and **£701.48** has been paid under 6.9 iii. (as detailed on page 968)

The Clerk raised that top-ups for the mobile phone used for the bus service provide limited value and suggested that the phone could be moved onto the same type of contract as the Clerk's council phone, at £6 per month, which he believed would be cheaper. Cllr Thomson estimated the current cost at around £5 per month. Cllr Lewis noted that she had added £10 when the credit ran out.

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Cllr Thomson noted that the cost of top-ups had been included in his bus report for last year's budget, with a budget forecast of £60 for mobile phone expenses and suggested that the matter be considered at budget setting. Cllr Bentley considered that the bus service as a whole needs a review before budget setting, and the Chair agreed.

The Clerk confirmed that this would be included in the November agenda.

12. Speed Indicator Device

The Chair introduced the item, noting the discussion at the June meeting and the information provided by the Clerk on the devices available. The Chair asked members to consider if to purchase at least one device and, if so, which, noting that further devices could be considered in future if it proved successful.

Cllr Stallard questioned the benefit of a device, suggesting that its effect may last about three months, and noted that such devices cannot stop vehicles travelling at 60mph on roads that are not suited to that speed.

Cllr Bentley explained that he had brought the matter forward to respond proactively to long-standing concerns about speeding. He considered it unlikely that the speed limit would be changed, as the police enforce speed limits and would cite factors such as the lack of street lighting and the rural setting. He preferred the first device in the information provided but noted that the units are quite large. He noted that £3,000 had been budgeted and that he would favour a single unit that could be moved between locations, acknowledging Cllr Stallard's point that the effect drops off.

Cllr Bentley reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner had funded speed monitoring in Childs Ercall, and that parish councillors there have undertaken Community Speed Watch training. He advised that this is proving successful and that other options are available to the Council.

Cllr Stallard doubted that volunteers would be found. The Clerk advised that Community Speed Watch operates successfully at two of his other councils, but only at designated locations assessed by the police, and that a road with a 60mph limit and no pavements would not be approved. The Chair noted that a recent newsletter set out the Community Speed Watch criteria, including 30 or 40mph limits and pavements, which the parish does not meet.

Cllr Thomson noted that speeding has been raised by residents over a number of years. He raised concern that street furniture in the parish is regularly damaged by large wagons and tractors and that a device would be at risk of being hit. Cllr Stallard agreed that such items do not last long in the parish.

Cllr Bentley identified a possible location on the corner on the approach into Soudley, which he had discussed on a preliminary basis with Highways. Members viewed the location on a map. Cllr Thomson noted that the hedge has grown and that the warning signs on the bend are covered. Cllr Thomson also noted that traffic tends to slow through Soudley due to parked vans and cars.

Cllr Thomson noted that evidence of speeding remains anecdotal and that the Council does not have data on actual speeds. Cllr Bentley explained that, to justify a change to a speed limit, the police require monitoring data showing that the 85th percentile speed exceeds the limit by 10% plus 2mph. He gave an example where monitoring had recorded an 85th percentile speed of 34mph in a 30mph limit, which did not meet the threshold of 35mph.

Cllr Bentley noted that the purpose of a device would be to respond to residents' concerns but questioned if spending approximately £2,500 could be justified. He reported that other signage and presenting the village attractively, can sometimes be more effective than a vehicle activated sign, and suggested that the Council could consider spending money on alternatives such as signage.

The Clerk advised that the display and solar panel attach with jubilee clips, so installation or removal takes approximately one hour, and the units are relatively mobile despite being classed as permanent fixtures. The Clerk noted that the radar requires a completely clear view, as hedges can cause false readings.

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Cllr Bentley advised that the direction of travel from Cheswardine into Soudley had been raised as the greatest concern. A post would need to be installed on the corner, which he believed to be Shropshire Council land, and the cost would likely fall to the Parish Council. Cllr Thomson questioned if the corner is Shropshire Council land, and Cllr Maskell stated that he believed the land belongs to the adjacent property.

RESOLVED: that the Council does not purchase a speed indicator device.

The Clerk advised that the matter could not return in the same format but could be brought back in an alternative format, such as highway signage.

Cllr Partridge suggested looking at other options such as signage, which would be cheaper. The Chair suggested that the Council consider asking for the hedges around the existing signs to be cut back so that they are visible and noted that the owner of the hedging would need to be identified.

The Chair stated that she felt strongly that the Council needs to do something to help reduce speeding.

Cllr Bentley considered the discussion positive, noting that it was the first time in his experience that the Council had reached this stage. He offered to approach the police to seek advice on the options available, which the Chair supported.

13. Police & Crime Commissioners Town & Parish Council Survey

RESOLVED: that the Council's response to the Police & Crime Commissioner's Town & Parish Council Survey, as completed by members during the meeting, be approved and submitted.

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

A resolution was not moved as there were no members of the press or public in attendance.

15. Clerks' Appraisal

The Chair explained that this year a formal appraisal process was not undertaken due to the time involved, which the Clerk was content with. The Personnel Committee met with the Clerk, attended by the Chair and Cllr Thomson, as Cllr Stallard was unable to attend. Cllr Thomson agreed to remain as chair of the Personnel Committee.

Cllr Thomson presented the committee's summary of a discussion with the Clerk on the performance of both the Council and the Clerk over the past year, which the committee considered to have been very good and very successful. Cllr Thomson noted that the Clerk's hours had previously been adjusted to address overtime and that overtime is no longer required.

Cllr Thomson reported that the Clerk considers the level of councillor training within the Council to be lower than it should be, with some councillors not having undertaken basic training. Most courses are delivered online by SALC, which may not currently be the best provider, and based on the Clerk's experience, ChALC may be a better option. As a first step, the committee suggested that the Council adopts a training policy, which it does not currently have, to support training for current and future councillors. This will be considered at a future meeting.

Cllr Thomson reported that the committee recommends engaging a payroll provider to administer the Clerk's payroll, which is considered under item 16, as this would save time and cost.

Cllr Thomson reported that the Clerk's contract currently stipulates the NEST pension scheme. Provision was made in the budget set in December and January for the Local Government Pension Scheme, which is more favourable to the Clerk, and a change to the contract would be required should the Clerk wish to take up that option.

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Cllr Thomson reported that he and the Chair expressed thanks to the Clerk for his support to them in their roles as chairs and to the Council.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Personnel Committee following the Clerk's appraisal be accepted.

16. Clerks' Payroll

The Clerk explained that Cheswardine Parish Council is the only one of his councils where he processes his own payroll, using HMRC basic tools. His other two councils use Shires Accountants as payroll agent. Engaging Shires Accountants would bring all his payroll into one provider using the same formats and would allow the necessary pension administration to be carried out should he opt into the pension scheme. The Clerk noted that it would also provide oversight, as payroll would be processed by someone other than himself, which would be reflected in the Council's risk assessment review.

The Clerk advised that budget is available in the current year for the remaining months and that a dedicated budget line for payroll provision can be included in the 2027/28 budget.

RESOLVED: that Shires Accountants be engaged to process the Clerk's payroll, at an approximate cost of £200 per year.

17. Pay Scales - Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2026

The Clerk explained that the Local Government Services pay agreement is typically confirmed between August and November each year. The 2026 pay agreement applies retrospectively from 1st April 2026.

Members noted that the Clerk is employed at SCP 23 and that the hourly rate has been revised from £17.85 to £18.44, an increase of £0.59 per hour, effective from 1st April 2026.

Members further noted the gross back payment of £102.22 for the 173.25 hours worked between 1st April and 31st August 2026. The revised rate and back payment have been applied to the payslip presented at this meeting.

18. Clerks SLCC Membership

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks be continued from 1st September 2026, with the annual membership fee of £316.00 shared between the three employing councils based on precept values, and Cheswardine Parish Council's contribution of £53.72 be approved.

19. SLCC National Conference

The Chair noted that the Clerk had found the conference helpful in the past. The Clerk advised that he proposes to attend for one day only, which reduces the cost.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk attends the SLCC National Conference on Tuesday 13th October 2026 for one day, with the delegate fee and mileage shared between the three employing councils based on precept values, and Cheswardine Parish Council's estimated share of £74.05 (delegate fee £51.00 and mileage £23.05) be approved.

Meeting concluded at 8:48 p.m.

Chairman..... Date.....

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Schedule of Payments - As resolved under Item 11.

Cheswardine Parish Council Schedule of Payments

15th September 2026

	Date of Debit or Cheque Raised	Recipient	Purpose	£	£	Payment Method	Power of expenditure	Scribe
1	16/09/2026	Cllr S Lewis	EE - Bus Service Phone Top Up	10.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
2	16/09/2026	PG SKIPS	Rubbish Removal - Skip Emptied 14/08/26	36.11		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
3	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	HP INK - Printing	28.99		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
4	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	The Grass People - Wildflower Seed for Playing Field Garden	157.00		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
5	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Mileage (21st July - 38 miles x 0.55 / 23rd July - 38 miles x 0.55)	41.80	239.79	BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
6	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Giff Gaff - Phone Monthly Payment - August	6.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
7	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Giff Gaff - Phone Monthly Payment - September	6.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
8	16/09/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Clerk Salary - September (updated pay scale & adjustment)	593.27		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
9	16/09/2026	HMRC	Tax & Contributions on Clerks salary - September Month 6	148.20	196.87	BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
10	16/09/2026	HMRC	Employer NIC - Month 6	48.67		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
			Total	1076.04				

	Payments made as resolved under the approved payments list 5.5b							Scribe
11	07/08/2026	BT	Parish Hall Broadband - 1st to 31st July	53.94		DD - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 133	Yes
12	07/09/2026	BT	Parish Hall Broadband - 1st to 31st August	53.94		DD - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 133	Yes
13	25/08/2026	Shropshire Council	Streetlighting - Joint Energy Agreement - 2nd Quarter	276.08		BT - Unity Trust	Highways Act 1980 s301	Yes
14	25/08/2026	North Salop Wheelers	Journey Subsidies - July	12.00		BT - Unity Trust	LG Rating Act 1997 s26-29	Yes
15	25/08/2026	AJT Carpentry	Odd Jobs - Litter Bins July/Aug - Tree Plaque Install	186.22		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
16	25/08/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Clerk Salary - August	495.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
17	25/08/2026	HMRC	Tax & Contributions on Clerks salary - August Month 5	123.80	154.07	BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
18	25/08/2026	HMRC	Employer NIC - Month 5	30.27		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
19	03/08/2026	PG SKIPS	Rubbish Removal - Skip Emptied 17/07/26	36.11		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
20	25/08/2026	Shropshire Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance Contract - July	499.00		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
21	02/09/2026	Shropshire Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance Contract - August	349.00		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
			Total	2115.36				

	Payments made under Financial Regulations 5.5a to avoid late payment							
	Date of							Scribe
22	28/07/2026	Camtek Cheshire Ltd	Parish Hall CCTV Service	456.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 133	Yes
23	03/08/2026	AJT Carpentry	Odd Jobs - Litter Bins June / July	75.00		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
24	23/07/2026	Anglia Sign Casting Ltd	Playing Field Tree Plaque (resolved at July meeting)	156.48		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
	31/07/2026	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges (No invoice - as shown on statement)	7.00		Bank Charge	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
	31/08/2026	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges (No invoice - as shown on statement)	7.00		Bank Charge	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
			Total	701.48				

Invoices checked and verified at the meeting held on 15th September 2026

Cllr A Thomson 15-09-26

Cllr - Proposer - Sign & Date

Cllr N Bentley 15-09-26

Cllr - Seconder - Sign & Date

DEPOSITS RECEIVED		
July / Aug	2026	
Date	Total	From
06/07/2026	£214.62	HMRC - VAT Reclaim
Total	£214.62	

Report from Shropshire Council Unitary Councillor (September)- As received under Item 6.

Cllr Neil Bentley Unitary Councillor Report | Cheswardine Division

Sept 2026

OVERVIEW

I hope you've all had a great summer and managed to get some quality time in the sunshine. This summer hasn't been a typical summer at the council as everybody continues to work at rapid pace to address the challenges outlined in the Best Value Notice as well as our continued effort to restructure the council to ensure financial stability and making a council fit for the future. I feel its worth sharing a note from CEO Tanya Miles from her latest whole staff update: *"Alongside delivering more than 800 services to our residents every day, we are managing significant financial challenges, operating under increased external scrutiny and driving one of the biggest transformation programmes this organisation has ever undertaken. At the same time, the needs of our communities do not pause, and neither do the expectations placed upon us. That is a significant responsibility for all of us to carry. It can feel relentless and, at times, overwhelming."*

It was great to meet Cathy at The Chatterbox in Market Drayton to have a look around this new facility to support children with mental health and social challenges. Cathy already supports children at both Cheswardine & Hinstock Primary Schools and I wish her all the best of luck with this new venture.

On the 18th August the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) published its External Assurance Review of Shropshire Council. It's an important report because it provides an independent assessment of both how the Council reached its current financial position and the significant work now underway to put Shropshire Council on a more sustainable footing.

There has understandably been a lot of political debate about the Council's finances over recent months. This review provides some important context about the financial decisions and management practices overseen by the previous administration and the scale of the challenge inherited by the Liberal Democrats in May 2025.

Among its findings, CIPFA states: "The financial pressures facing Shropshire Council are due to significant increases in net expenditure and a lack of adequate financial management in the past, as well as the legacy impact of freezes in council tax between 2010 and 2016."

It also found: "[The] review, conducted in April 2025, established that budgets lacked realism and the council's reserves were steadily eroded to pay for the consequent continued overspends." And: "Past savings targets were ambitious, but they were not backed up by any realistic delivery plans and thus regularly fell significantly short."

The report also highlights the consequences of the 2024/25 workforce restructure, which removed 217 posts: "The heavy reliance on voluntary redundancies led to a loss of experience and capability in business-critical areas of the council..." These are significant findings and help explain why the financial challenges facing the Council cannot simply be resolved overnight.

However, this report shouldn't just be about looking backwards. CIPFA also recognises the important changes that have been made since the change of administration and sets out recommendations for continuing that improvement. Work is already underway to strengthen financial management, governance and leadership, rebuild capacity and establish a much more realistic understanding of the Council's financial position.

Cllr Neil Bentley – Liberal Democrat Councillor Cheswardine Division
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c/o Members Secretariat, Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury. SY3 8HQ

Updated: 31/08/26

CHESWARDINE

PARISH COUNCIL

Report from Shropshire Council Unitary Councillor (September) - As received under Item 6. (Cont.)

There is still a considerable amount of work to do and some extremely difficult decisions ahead as we prepare the budget for 2027/28. Being clear about what we inherited doesn't remove our responsibility for dealing with it and that is exactly what we are doing.

For me, the important thing is that residents are given an honest picture: how we got here, where we are now, and the work being undertaken to secure the future of the Council and the services people rely upon. I would encourage anyone interested to read the independent report for themselves:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shropshire-council-external-assurance-review-2026-27?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Summary of my meetings during August:

06/08/2026 – The Chatterbox | Market Drayton - Discuss children's mental health.

06/08/2026 – Licensing Training | Guildhall

07/08/2026 – All About Youth Community Day | Monkmoor

10/08/2026 – HOSC One-to-One Meeting | Guildhall

10/08/2026 – All About You Trustee Meeting | Monkmoor

18/08/2026 – Northern Planning Committee | Guildhall

19/08/2026 – Joint Sutton Upon Tern & Stoke Upon Tern Meeting | Stoke upon Tern Parish Hall

CASEWORK

Casework	Issue Raised / Portfolio	Actions
Ollerton Business Park, Childs Ercall	PLANNING: Various planning applications have been passed yet conditions not met (esp highways)	- NB Has been in contact with council legal team. - Email sent to Emma Green for updates - none received. - Legal team still processing the planning notice appeal refusal for change of condition.
23/03138/FUL Mixed 28 Residential Dwellings Childs Ercall	PLANNING: This has gone to 'recommendations/committee'	(23/03/26) I have emailed Andrew Huntley (new case officer) to ask for an update - awaiting response. (31/08/26) Still waiting.
25/03608/FUL Chicken Egg Production Caynton	PLANNING: This is still at 'recommendations/committee'	(31/08/26) Updated residents with changes to the NPPF which will have an effect on the decision process.
26/01212/FUL 25 dwellings Childs Ercall	Proposal of 25 dwellings just off Eaton Road	- Listened to the views of many residents at the CEPC. - NB: written a formal letter of objection to the case officer and completed a 'call-in' form.
Dodecote Drive Childs Ercall	HIGHWAYS: ongoing	Highways have instructed a technician to visit the road and to address current potholes.
Eaton Road Childs Ercall	HIGHWAYS: ongoing	(10/06/26) Road assessment map shared with CEPC, awaiting work.

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PARISH COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

Here are questions posed by parish councillors across the division and updates/answers at present.

Question	Answer / Outcomes
Has Shropshire Council undertaken any formal assessment of the likely impact on parish precepts where services or assets are devolved to parish and town councils, and if so, would it be possible to share this?	I am not aware of a county-wide formal assessment as any devolved services will be on a case-by-case basis and of various sizes and commitments across the county. In most instances, I would anticipate the impact to be an increase in the precept of the PC/TC but once again, that decision is for the local members to decide depending on their own financial position and the level of commitment they wish to make.
Beyond Street Scene services, is there a list of services and assets currently being considered for transfer or devolution to parish and town councils?	I am still chasing a 'minimum service list' to really make this clear but as with the MOU exercise, it really is up to the individual PC/TC which additional services they might want to take on. For example, Shrewsbury TC has completely taken over all streetscene services including road sweeping and have invested in a number of pieces of equipment and staff. My understanding is that some TC/PC's are having active conversations to take control of services such as libraries and youth centres. As for Cheswardine, I am not aware of any major asset or service that could be taken over by the PC. It maybe worth considering the implication of taking over street furniture cleaning and possibly grit bin maintenance as an example.
Where funding is transferred alongside services, is there any guarantee or protection for that funding in future years, or would this be subject to annual review?	I believe this would just fall as part of a natural contractual review. I would expect this only to affect those considerable contracts such as Shrewsbury's roadsweeping for example.
Whilst I appreciate your comments regarding the use of the term "double taxation", are there any specific measures being considered to mitigate the financial impact on residents where parish councils choose to take on services that were previously delivered by Shropshire Council?	This is a bit of a grey area and I will seek additional clarification. I would not expect Shropshire Council to refuse a request from a PC/TC solely based on a potential double taxation as that decision is for the local members to discuss and vote. There are many instances where services could be executed by a TC/PC that would require no additional precept increase but would still contribute to a financial saving for Shropshire Council. For example, Cheswardine PC has already set a nominal budget for 'signage'. If all of that figure was unlikely to be used within this financial year, members may consider using unspent monies on replacing any damaged highways signs. I will just reiterate that despite the term 'cuts to services', Shropshire Council will still deliver all of its statutory obligations - this is a legal requirement. The cuts we face will be to the 'additional' services that, yes, residents enjoy but are not specifically required. Our appeal to PC/TC will be to help us maintain the standards (and improve) that we all have come accustomed for the benefit of all residents.
Are there any further plans for Shropshire Council to use accommodation at the Four Alls to house homeless people? If so, could this be extended to any other groups such as Asylum Seekers?	(31/07/26) Response from Head of Housing: I can confirm that Shropshire Council no longer uses the Four All Pub in regard to the housing of homeless households. This is in part because we now have a number of in house temporary accommodation schemes. I acknowledge the concerns raised regarding possible use of the property and understand that residents may wish to understand any changes affecting properties in their area. However, responsibility for the accommodation of asylum seekers rests with the Home Office rather than with local authorities. The Home Office is the decision maker in relation to property use and is the

	data owner for information in relation to this. The Council is therefore unable to confirm or disclose information about a particular address. If constituents have any enquiries regarding accommodation they believe is being or may be used for asylum dispersal this needs referring through to the Home Office - the email for Home Office FOI requests is: foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk
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