

CHESWARDINE

PARISH COUNCIL

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

Attendance

Chairman:	Cllr N Stallard
Councillors:	Cllr S Lewis, Cllr B Maskell, Cllr N Partridge, Cllr M Pound, Cllr A Thomson
Also Present:	None
Apologies:	Cllr J Hislop, Cllr N Bentley
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 20th October 2026

Meeting started at 7:00 p.m.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr J Hislop and Cllr N Bentley.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations

- Cllr Thomson declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 11, authorisation of payments, as a payee on the schedule of payments.
- No other interests were declared.
- No dispensations were requested or granted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th September 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.

The Clerk raised that the Safer Neighbourhood Team newsletter for October 2026 was shared with members on 7th October 2026.

5. Public Participation

No members of the public were 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 981-982.

As Cllr Bentley was not in attendance, the Chair asked that any questions on the report be emailed to Cllr Bentley directly.

The Clerk advised that any questions for Cllr Bentley in his role as Shropshire Councillor should be sent to his Shropshire Council email address.

7. Playing Field, Playground and Car Park

Cllr Thomson reported that the oak tree plaque, which had gone missing, had been found thrown into the hedge at the bottom of the playing field. Cllr Thomson has the plaque, and stated that it will need a more secure way of displaying it.

Cllr Thomson set out two options. The stake could be set in concrete to make it permanent, although it may still be vulnerable to being kicked. Alternatively, the stake could be removed and the plaque fixed to the fence or to one of the trees.

Cllr Thomson noted that the plaque had been made by Venables and that the screws fixing it to the stake are covered by plugs, which the odd jobs contractor would be able to remove. Cllr Thomson offered to provide photographs and measurements of the plaque.

The Clerk added that care would be needed if the plaque was fixed to a tree, as some nails, such as copper nails, can harm trees, although nails are commonly used to attach TPO markers.

The Clerk will ask the odd jobs contractor to remove the stake and fix the plaque securely to a tree or the fence, and will look into a suitable fixing that will not harm the tree.

Cllr Thomson reported that, while searching for the plaque, he had found empty vodka bottles in the bins around the field, which may indicate teenage drinking.

Cllr Pound reported that, in response to the Council's social media post about the swing replacement, a resident had commented that the play area was unsafe. As he knows the resident, Cllr Pound offered to suggest that they email the Clerk to request a copy of the latest inspection report.

The Clerk commented that good news posts often attract comments about work that has not yet been done. Members agreed that residents with concerns should continue to be encouraged to contact the Clerk.

Cllr Pound asked if photographs of the new swings could be obtained for social media. The Clerk shared photographs of the completed works with members, which included the replacement flat seat and cradle seat swings and replacement parts on the climbing frame and one of the ramps. The Clerk will publish a website and Facebook post to announce that the swings are now in use.

Cllr Thomson reported that, while walking through the playing field with Cllr Hislop, they had discussed the Guide hut, which is no longer used as the Guide leader has retired. Cllr Partridge reported that he had heard that a group wishes to turn the hut into a youth club.

The Clerk advised that his understanding is that the hut forms part of the Parish Hall and is under its ownership, and that the Council has never been involved in its lease to the Guides.

Cllr Pound commented that the hut sits on Council land and that there must be an agreement in place for its use as Guide premises. The Clerk advised that any change of use would be likely to require permission from the Parish Hall, as owner of the building, and from the Council, for use of and access across its land.

The matter may be brought to a future meeting should a decision by the Council be required.

8. Chair's Report

Members received the Chair's report from Cllr Hislop on the SALC Chairs Network meeting held on 30th September 2026, which is included in the appendix to these minutes on page 980.

The Chair reported that he had been due to attend a devolution meeting at Stoke upon Tern, but the caretaker did not attend to open the hall, and the meeting will be rearranged.

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The Chair reminded all members, himself included, of the importance of regularly checking council emails between meetings.

He noted that this was not directed at any individual member but was a reminder of members' shared responsibilities. From time to time the Clerk will seek assistance with assurance, audit and governance activities, and timely responses help ensure that these processes run smoothly and avoid placing unnecessary pressure on the Clerk.

If a member is unable to assist with a request, they should let the Clerk or the Chair know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Regularly checking emails is also important for any urgent matters or meetings that may need to be arranged at short notice. By keeping on top of council correspondence, members can better support the Clerk and maintain effective governance for the benefit of the community.

9. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received by members, which detailed updates on actions since the last meeting, including:

- Since the last meeting, the Clerk has prepared for this meeting and carried out the quarter two budget reviews, finance checks and VAT reclaim, which lead into forecasting and budget preparation. The budget will be considered in December and January.
- The Clerk attended the SLCC National Conference on 13th October 2026, which is why the agenda was issued a day early.
- Vacancy. The notice period following the resignation of Cllr I Jacobson has concluded and the Council is able to co-opt. The Clerk is speaking to two potential candidates and will promote the vacancy again. Co-option will be included on the November agenda, and candidate information will be shared with members before the meeting.
- Play area. The Kompan swing replacement works are complete, and the play area has reopened.
- The Clerk will be on annual leave from 21st October 2026, returning on Monday 2nd November 2026. The Chair and Vice Chair will be able to contact the Clerk should an emergency arise.
- Planning decision. 26/03005/FUL, Castlewood, Lawn Lane, Cheswardine, proposed extensions and alteration works, was granted permission on 7th October 2026.
- Correspondence. An email was received on 14th October 2026 from a resident regarding speeding signage. The resident had contacted the Clerk previously, and the Clerk replied on 19th October 2026 setting out the Council's position following the September meeting.

Cllr Pound asked if an out of office message would be set on the Clerk's email during his leave. The Clerk confirmed that one is set for every period of annual leave.

The Chair asked if the SLCC conference had been beneficial. The Clerk reported that it had been a good day and that speaking with other clerks was valuable. Points of note included:

- A session with the Monitoring Officer for Wiltshire, who described his role. The Clerk noted that clerks have varied experiences of how monitoring officers deal with member conduct.
- An address from the SLCC President, with a key message on professionalism, which the Clerk considers important within councils.
- The AGAR will move to a digital platform from next year and will become obligatory in 2029. The Clerk intends to start using it straight away so that the Council can become familiar with it before it becomes the only method.
- The Clerk spoke with Unity Trust Bank. The debit card associated with the Council's account, which has been awaited for two years, is now not expected until 2028. Unity Trust offers a charge card, which many

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councils use, and which would avoid payments being made on the Clerk's card and then reimbursed, including top-ups for the bus service phone. The Clerk will bring information on this to a future meeting.

- The Clerk also spoke with a representative from Kompan.

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

a) To consider the following planning applications.

Reference	26/03555/FUL
Address	Proposed Agricultural Lagoon South Of Chipnall Cheswardine Shropshire
Proposal	Engineering works to form an earth banks slurry lagoon on agricultural land.
Deadline for Comments	31 st October 2026
26/03555/FUL Engineering works to form an earth banks slurry lagoon on agricultural land. Proposed Agricultural Lagoon South Of Chipnall Cheswardine Shropshire	

RESOLVED: that the following comment is submitted to the local planning authority.

- *Cheswardine Parish Council supports this application.*

b) 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 October 2026 correctly states the invoices presented and that **£1,149.74** is approved to be paid. **£552.94** has been paid under 6.6 and **£708.25** has been paid under 6.9 iii. (as detailed on page 978)

12. External Audit

The Chair thanked the Clerk for the information provided, which he had found helpful.

The Clerk explained that the external audit relates to the year ended 31st March 2026, and that the Council has since discussed and acted on the matters raised. The external auditor raised two matters:

- The playing field charity. The Clerk advised that this is straightforward to deal with from a financial point of view, as no money will be shown through the charity's declaration because all costs for the playing field are borne by the Parish Council and not by the charity.
- The level of general reserves. The Clerk advised that this was addressed when the Council established earmarked reserves totalling £15,000, reducing the general fund.

The Clerk reported that the external auditor's report was received in mid-September and, together with the notice of conclusion of audit, was published on the Council's website and noticeboard before the end of September as required. As there is no set period for publication, the noticeboard copies will be removed when the noticeboard is next updated.

RESOLVED: that the External Auditor Report and Certificate for 2025-26 be received and approved, and that the conclusion of the external audit be noted.

13. Budget Review

The Clerk explained that the report uses 50% as a benchmark at the half-year point, except for administration, where most expenditure falls in the first half of the year. All other budget lines are tracking against the budget.

Cllr Pound commented that the percentage of budget used column was not clearly labelled as year to date. The Clerk explained that this column follows the year-to-date total and variance columns. The Clerk agreed to add a year-to-date label to improve the report.

RESOLVED: that expenditure against the budget for the 2nd quarter of the Council year 2026-27 be approved.

14. Accounting Audit

This item was deferred to the November meeting as the member audit had not yet been completed.

15. Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED: that the bank reconciliation up to 30th September 2026 (2nd quarter of the Council year 2026-27) be verified and accepted. (as detailed on page 979)

16. Alleyway Clearance

In response to a question on how this item had come about, the Clerk explained that a resident reported the condition of the alleyway to Cllr Hislop, who raised it with the Clerk and asked if the work could be carried out under delegation. The Clerk felt that it needed to come to full Council, as the land is not the Council's.

The Clerk reported that the odd jobs contractor visited the site and took photographs, which showed the alleyway to be less overgrown than had been described. Two quotations were obtained: Option 1, removal of nettles, brambles and weeds, at £100, and Option 2, the same work plus cutting back the hedge and lower tree branches, at £200.

The Chair stated that the alleyway is not the Council's responsibility and should not be on the agenda and questioned why the residents could not do the work themselves. He considered that £200 would be better spent elsewhere, such as on the play area.

Cllr Maskell offered to clear the alleyway himself as a volunteer.

Cllr Thomson read an email received from the Rights of Way Manager at Shropshire Council dated 22nd January 2024, which confirmed that the lane, known locally as Hell Lane, is legally recorded as a restricted byway, allowing the public to use it on foot, on horseback and with non-mechanically propelled vehicles. Shropshire Council is responsible for ensuring that the surface is suitable for those users but has no duty to improve it, while growth from adjoining boundaries and the maintenance of any furniture on the route, such as gates, is the landowner's responsibility. The lane is not registered with the Land Registry and, under common law, there is a presumption that the adjacent landowners are responsible. The email confirmed that the Parish Council has powers under sections 43 and 50 of the Highways Act 1980 to undertake maintenance of a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

Members recalled previous occasions on which the Council had been asked to carry out work on land it does not own.

The Chair noted that Shropshire Council has stepped back from the maintenance of small parcels of land around the parish, which are becoming overgrown, and that this will continue to arise. He noted that, under devolution, Shropshire Council would contribute 50% of its budget for such work, and that the Council is currently using its own precept for work that should be Shropshire Council's responsibility.

Cllr Pound stated that the Council should get the work done.

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RESOLVED: that the quotation for Option 1, removal of nettles, brambles and weeds from the alleyway between Westfields and the playing field, at a cost of £100, be accepted.

The Chair asked that it be recorded that this is a one-off and not routine business. The Clerk advised that the item was to consider the quotation and that the resolution carried without any such condition. Should the matter return to the Council in future, it would be a new decision for the Council at that time. It was noted that any social media communication about the work could describe it as a one-off.

The Chair stated that he would not like the matter to become routine, as costs would increase over time, and noted that the work benefits relatively few residents in a parish of over 1,000 people.

17. Playing Field Hire Terms Working Group

a) To consider the formation of a playing field hire terms working group and its terms of reference.

Cllr Pound proposed that the terms of reference require at least one member of the working group to be a Parish Council representative to the Parish Hall board of management. The Clerk amended the terms of reference accordingly.

RESOLVED: that a Playing Field Hire Terms Working Group be formed and its terms of reference, as amended, be accepted.

b) To consider membership of the playing field hire terms working group.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Stallard, Cllr Partridge and Cllr Pound be appointed to the Playing Field Hire Terms Working Group.

Meeting concluded at 8:05 p.m.

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

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Schedule of Payments - As resolved under Item 11.

Cheswardine Parish Council Schedule of Payments

20th October 2026

	Date of Debit or Cheque Raised	Recipient	Purpose	£	£	Payment Method	Power of expenditure	Scribe
1	21/10/2026	Cllr A Thomson	EE - Bus Service Phone Top Up	25.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
2	21/10/2026	AJT Carpentry	Odd Jobs - Litter Bins Sep/Oct	100.00		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
3	21/10/2026	PG SKIPS	Rubbish Removal - Skip Emptied 11/09/26	36.11		BT - Unity Trust	Litter Act 1983 ss.5	Yes
4	21/10/2026	Shires Accountants	Payroll Service Sep 26 - April 27	160.80		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
5	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	RBL Poppy Shop - Remembrance Wreath	27.50		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 137	Yes
6	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Mileage (21st July - 38 miles x 0.55 / 23rd July - 38 miles x 0.55)	20.90		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
7	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Mileage Share (13th Oct SLCC Conference - miles x 0.55)	23.19	155.59	BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
8	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Clerk Homeworking Expenses (01/04/26 to 30/06/26)	78.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
9	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Giff Gaff - Phone Monthly Payment - October	6.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
10	21/10/2026	W Salisbury (Clerk)	Clerk Salary - October	511.15		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
11	21/10/2026	HMRC	Tax & Contributions on Clerks salary - September Month 7	127.80	161.09	BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
12	21/10/2026	HMRC	Employer NIC - Month 7	33.29		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 112	Yes
			Total	1149.74				

Payments made as resolved under the approved payments list 5.5b								Scribe
13	08/10/2026	BT	Parish Hall Broadband - 1st to 31st August	53.94		DD - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 133	Yes
14	29/09/2026	Shropshire Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance Contract - September	499.00		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
			Total	552.94				

Payments made under Financial Regulations 5.5a to avoid late payment								
	Date of						Scribe	
15	16/09/2026	SLCC	Clerks Membership Fee 26-27	53.72		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
16	16/09/2026	SLCC	Clerks Conference Attendance Oct 26	54.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
17	23/09/2026	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit Fees 25-26	252.00		BT - Unity Trust	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
18	23/09/2026	Kompan	Playground Annual Inspection August 2026	341.53		BT - Unity Trust	Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 & 10	Yes
	30/09/2026	Unity Trust Bank	Bank Charges (No invoice - as shown on statement)	7.00		Bank Charge	LGA 1972 S 111	Yes
			Total	708.25				

Invoices checked and verified at the meeting held on 20th October 2026

Cllr A Thomson 20/10/26

Cllr - Proposer - Sign & Date

Cllr N Partridge 20/10/26

Cllr - Secorder - Sign & Date

DEPOSITS RECEIVED		
Sep	2026	
Date	Total	From
30/09/2026	£290.26	Unity Trust Bank - Interest
Total	£290.26	

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Bank Reconciliation - As resolved under Item 15.

7 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Cheswardine Parish Council

Prepared by: W Salisbury - Clerk / RFO Date: 7th Oct 2026
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: W Salisbury - Clerk / RFO Date: 7th Oct 2026
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

A	Bank Reconciliation at 30/09/2026		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026		42,861.36
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/09/2026		28,083.64
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/09/2026		70,945.00
			13,489.23
	Cash in Hand 30/09/2026 (per Cash Book)		57,455.77
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 15/09/2026	0.00	
	Unity Trust Instant Access 3687 30/09/2026	56,030.33	
	Unity Trust Current 3674 30/09/2026	1,512.88	
			57,543.21
	Less unrepresented payments		87.44
			57,455.77
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		57,455.77
	A = B Checks out OK		

SALC Chairs network meeting 30/9/2026

25 participants and the meeting was recorded.

1. Chris Mellings was thanked for his work on sharing our thoughts to Shropshire Council's concerning the delegation and planning documents.
2. 'Land grad' There is a company which was only registered in August of this year called Kingdom Century Ltd, which is taking control of private land. After 64 days they can claim it is theirs and it requires legal action to get it back. It is extremely important that all private land is correctly registered to the owners through the land registry. 7 acres of woodland near Oswestry and some land near Offers Dike are now being dealt with by Shropshire Council as it is not seen as a police matter. Whether it is procession or purchase is currently unclear.
3. It was asked if the Open Countryside Planning rule still exists. The answer was yes but with the new planning rules coming into force the Council planners will take charge of this too.
4. It was stated that out of £81 million SIL money over 50% had not been spent. Chris Mellings was going to investigate this further.

Cllr Jill Hislop

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

Cllr Neil Bentley Unitary Councillor Report | Cheswardine Division

Oct 2026

OVERVIEW

September has flown by, and autumn is clearly beginning to show. I would encourage parish councils to carry out a winter audit of things like grit bins and street lights. Please let me know if anything needs attention.

I spent a good part of September dealing with planning issues. I have emailed all clerks with an update on the Planning Delegation of Authority rules, which come into effect on 31 October 2026. I have copied that update at the end of this report, and more detailed information about the changes will be circulated to clerks shortly.

The council has undergone a three-week inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) of our adult social care provision. I was interviewed by the CQC team in my role as scrutiny vice-chair. It will be several weeks before we receive the full report, but I want to recognise the hard work council officers put in over the summer to prepare for the inspection. There has been a significant positive change in the council's culture, and I am confident this will be recognised in the report's findings.

Thank you to the organisers of the Cheswardine annual Fruit & Veg Show, who kindly invited me to be the auctioneer at The Red Lion on 5 September. Just over £1,400 was raised for Severn Hospice. It was also lovely to support Cheswardine Youth Club at their coffee and cake fundraiser for Macmillan on 24 September. A big well done to all the young people involved and, of course, to their wonderful leaders.

Full Council met on 24 September, and you can find the [full agenda here](#). At the meeting, the council approved the new senior management structure and appointments. Some very experienced leaders will soon be joining us to help shape the council's future. We have not yet appointed a permanent Section 151 officer, but our interim officer, Duncan Whitfield, has agreed to stay in post for a further 12 months. This is very much welcomed by the administration.

FINANCE UPDATE:

A year ago, we were discussing whether Shropshire Council could remain financially viable. Today, we are discussing how quickly we can reduce our dependence on Government support. Here are a few current updates for residents:

- Our projected requirement for Exceptional Financial Support has reduced from £121 million to £90 million.
- General Fund reserves are forecast to reach £15 million by March 2027, an important step in rebuilding the Council's financial resilience.
- The Quarter 1 position forecasts a £2.291 million underspend against the General Fund budget.
- £5.238 million of savings are forecast to be delivered, nearly 105% of this year's £5 million target.

This is particularly significant because, for too long, savings were identified on paper but not delivered in practice. More realistic budgeting, stronger monitoring and greater accountability are now helping us identify financial issues earlier and take action.

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

Summary of my (public) meetings during September

02/09/2026 — Pre-meeting ahead of CQC Inspection | Teams
 02/09/2026 — Shropshire Youth Partnership Board Founding Trustees Meeting | Zoom
 08/09/2026 — CQC Interview | Guildhall
 21/09/2026 — Liberal Democrat Group Meeting | Teams
 22/09/2026 — Northern Planning Committee | Guildhall
 22/09/2026 — AAY Trust Board | Shrewsbury
 24/09/2026 — Full Council | Guildhall
 24/09/2026 — Telford & Wrekin Lib Dem Executive Meeting | Google Meet

CASEWORK

Casework	Issue Raised / Portfolio	Actions
Speeding in Soudley	HIGHWAYS/POLICE	NB to liaise with highways engineers and police for recommendations.
Benbows Close Childs Ercall	PLANNING	(24/09/26) NB emailed senior planning officer for clarification regarding delegated authority for 'Technical Applications'.
Lottery Grant Cheswardine	Playground	(19/09/26) NB emailed Kompan for updated quotes
A41 Cluvert Shakeford	HIGHWAYS	(02/09/26) NB raised internal enquiry - awaiting response.
A41 Speed Camera Update	HIGHWAYS	Update from Simon D'Vali: Plans currently being reviewed by the Police.
Highways Mirror Little Soudley	HIGHWAYS	Update received from highways engineers suggesting that funding of this additional asset would ideally be sought from the parish council as this is a paid service. The current cost is £1,300 and would need DfT approval.

PARISH COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

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

Question	Answer / Outcomes
Is Child's Ercall Hall registered on the Market Drayton Place Plan?	(24/09/26) NB raised an internal enquiry for clarification.
Could parish council's register designated vehicles to be given authority at recycling centres?	I have raised this idea with the portfolio holder for discussion and investigation.

PLANNING: Delegation of Authority Update

From 31st October 2026, a new national Scheme of Delegation will apply. One significant consequence is that the existing arrangements which allow local members to request that planning applications are "called in" to committee will no longer be available - this also applies to all historical applications where I have requested call-in but hasn't yet made it to committee.

The changes will also affect the role of Parish and Town Councils. At present, where a Parish Council takes a view contrary to the planning officer's recommendation, there is a mechanism through which the application can be considered for referral to committee. Under the new system, certain smaller applications will have to be determined by officers, while other applications will only be referred to committee where they raise a **significant local economic, social or environmental issue, or a significant planning matter**, and the designated senior planning officer and Planning Committee Chair member agree that referral is appropriate.

If they do not agree then the senior planning officer has the power to decide which applications are referred for committee consideration, otherwise a decision will be made under delegated authority.

This does not mean that the views of Parish Councils or local members cease to matter, but the mechanism by which those views can lead to committee consideration is changing.

I will keep you updated as the new Shropshire arrangements become clearer. The council will be circulating further detailed information about these changes shortly.

The next (and final) Northern Planning Committee under the current scheme is scheduled for 20th October.