

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2026**  
**AT BASCHURCH VILLAGE HALL**

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**Present:** Councillors A Woodthorpe (Chairman)  
R Thomas  
N Hancocks  
Mrs W Lowdon  
R Jones  
J H Lloyd  
M Feline  
F Purell  
Mrs G Tomlins  
S Hey  
Mrs A Howls Clerk.  
Cllr R Jones Shropshire Council  
  
Three members of the public

The Parish Council Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

29/2026 Apologies – Cllrs Mrs P Budgen, Mrs C Weller & N Bardsley

30/2026 **DECLARATION OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST IN A MATTER TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING AND WHICH IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE S**  
**Hey REGISTER OF INTERESTS.** [Members are reminded that they are required to leave the meeting during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer]

There were no declarations made.

31/2026 **COMMUNITY REPORT & PUBLIC QUESTION TIME-**

There were no reports

32/2026 **REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL**

Cllr Jones gave the following report:

**Shropshire Council Budget and Financial Strategy 2026/27**

Shropshire Council has approved its budget for 2026/27 alongside a five-year financial plan to 2030/31. This follows the declaration of a financial emergency in September 2025, reflecting sustained pressure on council finances from rising demand, inflation and reduced government funding, particularly affecting rural authorities.

The main drivers of the financial challenge are increasing demand and complexity in adult social care, children's social care, SEND provision and home-to-school transport. Independent benchmarking shows Shropshire's costs are broadly in line with similar councils, meaning the issue is the scale of need rather than inefficiency.

To balance the budget in 2026/27, the Council agreed an 8.99% increase in council tax. This brings the Shropshire Council element of Band D council tax to £1,969.09, excluding parish, police and fire service precepts. The increase follows special government permission and is intended to reduce borrowing and longer-term costs.

Even with this increase, the Council cannot balance its budget without government assistance. Shropshire has been granted £121 million of Exceptional Financial Support, which allows borrowing to fund day-to-day services. This is acknowledged as a temporary and unsustainable measure, designed to prevent immediate failure while longer-term solutions are developed.

The budget is a “reset” rather than a return to normal. Spending assumptions are extremely tight and the Council is clear that significant change is unavoidable in future years. Public consultation has shown strong support for protecting local services such as libraries, leisure facilities and community provision, particularly in rural areas.

A major emphasis is now on transformation. The Council is developing a Financial Sustainability Strategy focused on changing how services are delivered, reducing demand through earlier intervention and prevention, making greater use of technology, increasing income where possible, and working more closely with partners. From 2027/28, zero-based budgeting will be introduced to reassess spending from first principles.

Alongside this, the capital programme is being refocused on statutory services, highways, schools and SEND provision. Some regeneration and leisure schemes have been paused or put under review, and an accelerated review of council-owned land and buildings is underway, with asset sales expected to play a larger role in future financial planning.

### **North West Relief Road**

At the full Council meeting on Thursday, councillors voted to officially cancel the North West Relief Road. The cancellation will not be welcome news for many residents in Ruyton and Baschurch who are rightly concerned about the ongoing pressure on communities and infrastructure from through-traffic, and the challenges of connectivity to key sites around Shrewsbury which is often dependent on inadequate and overcapacity country lanes. I have and will continue to make the case for upgrades and improvements along the existing A5, in particular at Shotatton junction.

Cancellation of the scheme allows the Council to move forward with the process of negotiating with the government over the costs incurred, and to begin thoroughly scrutinising the decision-making and governance of the scheme which has cost taxpayers £32m since 2018. It also releases £41m of capital grant funds from the Department for Transport for spending on road and infrastructure projects around Shropshire which were previously allocated to the NWRR.

### **Potholes and Road Maintenance**

Shropshire has experienced a very wet start to 2026, with prolonged periods of rain through January and much of February. This type of persistent winter weather is in line with expectations linked to climate change, which is bringing wetter winters and more frequent rainfall. One of the most visible impacts has been on the county's roads, where saturated ground, water penetration and repeated freeze-thaw conditions have accelerated wear and tear, leading to a significant increase in potholes.

January saw 2,113 new potholes reported, compared to just 1,216 in January last year – a 77% increase. Shropshire Council has responded by creating 3 new pothole repair teams which are working throughout the county at pace to repair our roads. In the medium term, Council has received an increase in funding for highways and is moving to improve our highways maintenance and management program. We expect to have 140 roads around Shropshire resurfaced or applied surface dressing – double the number in the previous year.

33/2026 MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

Cllr M Feline proposed and Cllr R Thomas seconded that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 This was confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34/2026 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2026 NOT ITEMISED ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

35/2026 PLANNING

None had been received.

**Planning Permission Granted**

Any planning applications received since 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 or any other planning Issues.

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36/2026 HIGHWAYS AND STREET LIGHTING

- a) Temporary Road Closure-. Junction south of Stanwardine Hall to Laurel Villa Junction Weston Lullingfields between Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March to Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026 for drainage repairs by Shropshire Council.

37/2026 CEMETERY

Cllr J H Lloyd was still looking into gaining quotes from firms to undertake the tarmac being laid along the driveway to the rear car park of the Cemetery.

38/2026 BADGERS WAY PLAY /WHEATLANDS PLAY AREA

The Clerk stated she was still meeting with playground designers at the Badgers Way Playground to look for a new playground at some future date all depending on cost. Repairs to the gate and fence at the Badgers Way Play area had now been completed.

39/2026 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Clerk stated the date for the meeting was Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at Baschurch Village Hall.

40/2026 ANY COUNCILLORS REPORTS

There were no new reports at this time.

41/2026 FINANCES

- (a) BACS Payments for Approval – The following payments totalling £11,526.58 (which includes VAT) were to be paid over the month of February. These were proposed by Cllr M Feline and seconded by Cllr J H Lloyd and agreed by all.

BACSI89	P Birch Contracting Ltd (General Maintenance)	1320.50
BACSI89	P. Birch Contracting Ltd (Cemetery)	347.86
BACSI90	A Howls Salary-March	1584.40
BACSI91	Inland Revenue -March	660.55
BACSI92	PG Skips	55.24
BACSI93	R Parry Playground Inspections	96.00
BACSI94	Weston Village Hall - N Hood Meeting	26.25
BACSI95	Baschurch V Hall -Meeting 5/3/2026	50.00
BACSI96	R Parry- Playground Repairs	348.00
BACSI97	Baschurch Playground Trust – Donation	4048.80
BACSI98	Artemis Ins Co – Badgers Way Playground	1007.70
BACSI99	Oswestry Rural PCouncil -Water Testing	320.00
BACSI20	A Pellegram Ltd (N H Group Consultant)	1661.28

*Resolved:* Payment of the BACS were approved.

- b) Other items of expenditure for consideration -

There was none.

42/2026 CORRESPONDENCE

Church Fete

An e mail had been received from All Saints Church, Baschurch requesting permission to hold their Annual Village fete on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2026 from 12 noon and cleared away by 6.00pm. *Resolved:* Cllrs were in full agreement.

All other correspondence had been dealt with under their items

43/2026 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

There were no items of other business and the meeting closed at 8.50pm. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at Baschurch Village Hall.

Signed.....

Dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026