

Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

1

Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting, Monday 27th April 2026,
held in Aston on Clun Village Hall, 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs. J Bowers, B Day, J Campion, T Record; and Cllr L Johnson from item 11.

Absent: Cllr Hartas, Unitary Cllr Dickin; Cllr Johnson from items 1 - 10.

Clerk: Mrs M Gwilliam.

Acting Chair: Cllr Bowers.

1. Apologies for Absence: Cllr Hartas, Unitary Cllr J Dickin.

2. Declarations of i) Disclosable Pecuniary and ii) Personal Interests, and written requests for dispensations: None.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meetings 30th March 2026: The minutes were approved as an accurate record, and the Chair was authorised to sign them. **Resolved.**

4. Public Participation: None.

5. Unitary Councillor Report: None.

6. Planning: None.

7. Neighbourhood Governance: Council discussed the motion 'Ensuring an Influential Role for Parish/Town Councils in Neighbourhood Governance' (**full text at end of minutes**) which included sending a copy - if resolved - to the MP. This was proposed by Cllr Campion, seconded by Cllr Day, and unanimously **resolved**. Clerk to write including the full text of the resolution to the MP.

8. Clerk Report: Referring to the item on Broome Industrial Estate in the previous meeting's minutes, the Clerk informed Council that Shropshire Council Environment Protection had later confirmed that as they did not find any potential hazards, and the condition of the estate did not give rise to any concerns, Shropshire Council therefore would not be taking any action.

9. Correspondence: Including various bulletins, newsletters, and information sheets.

Temporary parish road closures: School Bank, Hopesay Rd Aston, 29th – 30th April, Openreach.

10. Policies: Councillors had studied Council's various GDPR and Data Protection policies beforehand. Council **reviewed** the latest Data Audit report carried out by the Clerk. Council also **reviewed** its Data Management & Audit Policy, and its Data Protection and Retention Policy. Council then **reviewed** the GDPR Privacy notices (short/detailed) & Council's GDPR, & Subject Access Policies. All reviews were agreed. **Resolved.**

Council **reviewed** its Website Accessibility Statement, and the recent Website Accessibility check (Website MOT) carried out by Vision ICT. It was agreed to address issues raised by this document later in the year, at the October meeting. **Resolved.**

Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

2

11. Aston Green: Council had been looking at measures to reduce dog mess left by irresponsible owners at Aston Green, including a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). Breaching a PSPO is a criminal offence, punishable by a fixed penalty notice.

The Clerk had been investigating how to proceed. Shropshire Council already has a county wide PSPO in place which Hopesay Parish Council could use. It had been suggested that Hopesay therefore did not need to obtain a PSPO for Aston Green. There was still an issue with how to enforce the PSPO. It was believed that to issue fixed penalty notices, persons had to be registered with Shropshire Council, but this needed further investigation. Council agreed in principle that all councillors could be registered with Shropshire Council to this end.

A Member of the Public, Mr Alan Pottinger of Dinchope, had last year offered to pay for a new fruit tree to replace one that had died, in Aston Green Orchard. Mr Pottinger had since donated the cost of the replacement tree. He commented that "I use the orchard for exercising my dog and wanted to show my appreciation that I have access to such a wonderful place". Council expressed its gratitude and **resolved** to thank Mr Alan Pottinger for his generous donation for a replacement fruit tree at Aston Green orchard (proposed Cllr Record, seconded Cllr Day).

The Clerk reported that the Croquet Group had mentioned the pitch at Aston Green needed heavy rolling and had offered to carry out the work at no cost to Council. Unfortunately, when the Clerk checked this was ok with Council's insurance, she was told only if the volunteers had their own suitable insurance and had been trained to operate the heavy equipment they intended to use. The Insurance Company recommended using qualified and properly insured contractors instead of volunteers as heavy equipment would be involved. Council would look at the cost involved in heavy rolling a wider area of Aston Green and a councillor undertook to contact a known local contractor.

Standing item: No reports of anti-social behaviour at Aston Green / Village Hall car park, had been received.

12. Finance: Shropshire Council Joint Energy Agreement - Hopesay Parish Council was part of the agreement. Recent price checks indicated it was still the best way to provide energy for Council's single light at the Arbor Tree. The 2026 2027 annual charge would be £93.97 plus VAT (last year it had been £89.65p + VAT). The Clerk/RFO did not recommend exiting the scheme. If at any point Council decided to exit the agreement, it should be aware that 3 months written notice was required. Council **resolved** to continue in Shropshire Council's Joint Energy Agreement for 2026 – 2027.

2025 26 Year End Bank reconciliation: Circulated. There were no unexplained variances, the variances being caused by Unity Trust Bank not carrying out the March meeting BACS transfers until April. Council **accepted** and the Chair signed the reconciliation.

2025 2026 Year End Budget Monitoring Report: Circulated. The report showed the final year end 2025 2026 Budget as at 31st March (adjusted after the virements approved at 30th March meeting). The report showed each budget's annual net spend and underspend, and overall net spend, and underspend. Council **accepted** the Report.

Virements: Council **resolved** to vire £50 (equivalent to last year's unspent Arbor Tree budget) from its General Fund to the Arbor Tree Earmarked Reserve (proposed Cllr Johnson, seconded Cllr Bowers). Council **resolved** to vire £50 (equivalent to last year's unspent Parish Maintenance budget) from its General Fund to the Parish Maintenance Earmarked Reserve (proposed Cllr Day, seconded Cllr Record). Council **resolved** to vire £500 (equivalent to some of last year's Aston Green budget underspend) from its General Fund to the Aston Green Earmarked Reserve (proposed Cllr Campion, seconded Cllr Johnson).

Reserves: The current state of Earmarked Reserves for April had been circulated. The RFO presented Earmarked Reserves as they had stood at the very end of the financial year 2025 2026 (31st March), showing the return of unspent CIL funds into the CIL NF earmarked reserve.

2026 2027 Budget revision: The budget had been £22,927; but now that the play equipment project at Aston Green was not going ahead, the £4,000 play equipment budget was not needed (freeing up

Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

3

£2,794 CIL NF). The revised budget was £18,927, only £1,836 (£1,500 CIL NF, £336 other reserves) more than the Precept. Council **resolved** to approve the revised 2026 2027 budget of £18,927 (proposed Cllr Day, seconded Cllr Bowers).

2026 2027 Precept received from Shropshire Council: The Precept of £17,091 had been received into Council's bank account on 23rd April 2026.

INVOICES TO PAY:

Voucher	Name	for	Budget (from)	£amount	Method
1, 2	Staff costs	April 2026 Salary, tax, NIC, homeworking costs	Salary, tax, admin	766.22	SO, BACS
3	Ditton Services	Grass cutting, April instalment	292.33 Aston Green 58.47 VAT	350.80	SO
4	T P Jones & Co	Payroll services Jan - Mar	Office admin £48.75 VAT £9.75	58.50	BACS
5	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service fee 30/4/26	admin	7.00	fee
Total				£1,271.76p	

Council **resolved** to accept the Finance Report and authorise all payments as listed (proposed Cllr Bowers, seconded Cllr Johnson).

13 Annual Return (AGAR): The RFO informed Council that the intention was to declare and certify itself exempt from external audit next month, as it met the criteria. The RFO hoped that the internal audit would be completed in time for the May meeting (the June meeting if not).

The RFO presented the AGAR forms, with the Certificate of Exemption and Section 2 Accounting Statements partially completed. Assuming the Internal Audit Report is satisfactory, Council would go through the required steps, complete and sign the various sections of the AGAR, including the Annual Governance Statement Assertions, and publish the various required documentation, emailing the Exemption Certificate to the External Auditor. The dates for the Public's right to inspect the accounts would likely be Wednesday 3rd June to Tuesday 14th July but this would be confirmed at the May meeting.

14. Risk Register Rolling Review: Council reviewed Risk 10 (GDPR non-compliance). Because Council had thoroughly reviewed all GDPR related policies and statements earlier in the meeting, it **resolved** that current controls were adequate.

15. Dot Gov Website: Council's migration to a dot gov domain had been slow, frustrating and stressful. The Clerk stated that it had only been after repeated requests, and expressing concerns and disappointment to Vision ICT, that Council finally got its .gov website live and up and running, secure, (https as opposed to http) and the website accessibility check carried out and the accessibility statement updated, in order to comply with Assertion 10 of the AGAR. This should all have been completed well before Year End. Council had commissioned the migration in late February to be carried out in early March; and there had been no indication at that time of any problems or delays. None of this was Council's fault. Vision ICT had experienced a major site wide problem affecting all its clients, but as well it was probable that they had been snowed under by many clients asking for last minute accessibility checks. Therefore, it would be prudent to review

Minutes of Hopesay Parish Council

and update all accessibility and website related issues in mid term, well before the end of the financial year to avoid future year end bottlenecks.

16. Shropshire Council Environmental Maintenance Grant: Council discussed how to apply for the 2026 2027 grant. The deadline for applications was 31st May. Council **resolved** to delegate drafting the application to 3 councillors (Cllr Hartas, Cllr Campion and Cllr Johnson) so that a completed draft application could be brought to Council for approval at the May meeting (proposed Cllr Bowers, seconded Cllr Record).

17. Meetings Attended: None not already reported on.

18. Reports of Parishioners Issues, Future Agenda Items: A resident had reported that Right of Way footpaths were blocked by electric fencing on the high fields at Tadymor Farm. She had negotiated the fencing carefully and successfully however as these paths were Rights of Ways, there should be gates or other openings for walkers to use in temporary electric fences.

19. Next Meetings: Tuesday 26th May (Annual Parish Council meeting), Monday 22nd June.

The Chair closed the Meeting at 8.30pm.

Chair Signed:

Date:

NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE ITEM

Hopesay Parish Council meeting 27th April 2026, Agenda Item 7.

Resolution: Ensuring an Influential Role for Parish/Town Councils in Neighbourhood Governance

Proposed by: Councillor J Campion, Seconded by: Councillor B Day.

This Council notes:

1. That the Government's English Devolution and Community Empowerment (EDCE) Bill introduces a new duty on all local authorities to establish "effective neighbourhood governance" structures, with further detail to be set out in forthcoming regulations.
2. That the Government has stated it wants all local authorities to have a way of working with neighbourhoods "so they are not relying on town and parish councils to do it," indicating that parish and town councils may not automatically be recognised as the primary neighbourhood governance mechanism.
3. That the Secretary of State will have powers to define neighbourhood areas and set criteria for neighbourhood governance arrangements, but these definitions and criteria have not yet been published, creating uncertainty about the future role of parish and town councils within the new framework. [nalc.gov.uk]
4. That parish and town councils are the most local and democratically accountable tier of government, with established relationships in communities and a strong track record of facilitating local engagement and service delivery.

This Council believes:

1. That parish and town councils should play a central and influential role in any new system of neighbourhood governance, reflecting their democratic mandate and deep local knowledge.
2. That any new neighbourhood governance structures should complement, not duplicate or marginalise, existing parish and town councils.
3. That clear guidance from Government is essential to avoid confusion, overlap, and the dilution of local democratic accountability.
4. That parish and town councils are offered the opportunity to join any neighbourhood governance structures created in their area.;

Hopesay Parish Council has **resolved** to:

1. Call on the local Member of Parliament to press the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to:

- Ensure that parish and town councils are formally recognised as key partners within the emerging neighbourhood governance framework;
- Guarantee that the forthcoming regulations and guidance clearly set out how parish and town councils will be integrated into neighbourhood governance structures;
- Provide assurance that new neighbourhood governance arrangements will not duplicate functions or undermine the democratic legitimacy of parish and town councils.

2. Write to the MP enclosing this motion and requesting active lobbying on behalf of parish and town councils during the development of regulations under the EDCE Bill.

3. Engage with the principal authority to express the Council's expectation that parish and town councils be meaningfully involved in shaping local responses to the neighbourhood governance duty.

4. Publicly communicate this Council's position to residents, reaffirming Council's commitment to maintaining strong, local, democratic representation.