

Clungunford Annual Parish Meeting
Thursday, 15th May, 2025, commencing at 7.00pm in
Clungunford Village Hall.

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cllr J Roberts, Cllr M Jones, Cllr K Arbery, Cllr C Tinker, Cllr A Gledhill, Cllr R Rees, Cllr M Bason

Mr & Mrs Hickleton, (members of the public); Mr Sam Walmsley (recently elected County Councillor for Clun Division)

Apologies: Cllr M Tucker.

1. Chairman's report.

The Chairman thanked his fellow councillors for their service and attendance to business over the course of the last year. All bar one had been returned as councillors in the recent elections and with the co-option of Ms. McHaffee to the council, Clungunford PC has once again its full complement of members. Mr Warmesley was welcomed to his first meeting at Clungunford; compliments were paid to his predecessor Nigel Hartin for his many years of service.

There are several notable achievements of the CPC from the past year:

- The Clungunford website has been updated and is now much more easily accessible – all for a reasonable cost. The site is now being well used – big thanks to Angie Spencer-Timms for all the work that she put into it.
- We are currently pushing for the installation of Super-fast broadband, as offered by Openreach. There appears to be reasonable take up from within our parish, but it seems to be slower in Hopesay, the other parish sharing the Little Brampton exchange. We hope that it will be able to go ahead later this year.
- We have had to respond to several issues of flooding across the parish, the severity of which seems to be greater than in previous years. This is inevitably going to be a recurring issue.
- Several (minor) planning issues have been dealt with.
- The council has functioned for another year without having a dedicated clerk, those duties having been carried out by the Chairman, Cllr Roberts. The search for a clerk is continuing and it is hoped that one can be appointed for less than the rate of £30-40 per hour, the amount frequently requested by potential applicants. If we had to pay such a sum, most of our precept could be taken up just with the clerk's salary, leaving nothing for other uses. This raises the question

of whether or not some PCs should consider merging, to save paying out so much money in salaries.

2. Minutes of 2024 APM.

The minutes from the 2024 meeting had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. They were accepted as a true and correct record and were duly approved.

The only matter arising that was not included in today's agenda, was the continuing failure by Shropshire CC to install the speed indicator which they had given to the village (to be shared with Clunbury) some years ago. The monitor is still in storage in the Village Hall.

3. Financial Statement for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Copies of the Financial Report prepared by the Chairman were circulated. He pointed out that there was a small surplus from last year to be brought forward to this current FY. There is just over £12,000 in the bank account of the PC.

Cllr Arbery proposed that the report be accepted, seconded by Cllr Tinker.

4. County Councillor's report.

Mr Walmsley was welcomed to the village and the meeting, being his first visit to Clungunford since his election in the recent local elections. He reminded the meeting of significant changes that have taken place at County level. The Conservatives, who had held a majority in the CC for more than 10 years, lost heavily; the Lib-Dems are now the largest party with 42 out of 78 seats. Heather Kydd, a Lib-Dem councillor of many years standing, has been elected as leader of the council and the new Cabinet has recently been finalised. One of the main objectives of the new administration will be to strengthen links between the CC and PCs, so that CC policy will be aimed at enabling PCs to achieve their own goals more easily. Improved communications between the different levels will be an essential prerequisite.

As many people are already aware, there are significant challenges to the CC budget. The budget for the year was approved in February and this has to be adhered to. Approx. £50mill savings have to be found. The Council would have been bankrupt if they hadn't been able to obtain a loan from central government, but this was not interest free and so is a further drain on resources.

While Sam was campaigning, a frequent complaint that he heard from members of the public was the state of Shropshire's roads and the number of potholes that are either not fixed or are poorly repaired. The new SCC intends to bring back road maintenance "in house" which they will do on the expiry of the current contract with Kier.

The new council does not consider the proposed NW relief road (around Shrewsbury) to be good value for money but have not yet reached a decision about its future. Cancelling the project altogether would require a repayment to central government of £39mill, which the council currently does not have. A decision is also still to be taken about where the offices of the CC will be located. They will not be returning to Shire Hall, due to structural issues with that building.

The financial reserves of the CC have been drawn down significantly over recent years and

the council is still close to bankruptcy. 80% of expenditure is on social care and as this is a statutory obligation, savings will have to be made in other sectors of the budget.

5. Clungunford Charities Report.

Christine Tinker reported that the number of grants made from the two charities was fewer than in the previous year. 2 grants were made from the Education fund (open to parish residents aged 25yrs or below.) and 3 grants were made from the Clungunford village fund. Both funds have healthy bank balances and a campaign to encourage more applications is about to get underway.

6. Resolutions.

There were no resolutions.

7. Questions, comments or concerns from members of the public.

There were none.

The meeting closed at approx. 7.35pm.

Minutes taken by R. Rees