



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held at The Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 1ST DECEMBER 2025 at 7.00 PM.**

FC/271 PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Lyle

Councillors: Addis; Childs; Cowell; Gill (7:01); Ginger; Harris; Hepworth; Maxwell-Muller; Owen; Parry; Scott-Bell; Tapley; Taylor; and Waite.

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Helen Jones, Senior Administrative Assistant

FC/272 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Mayor, Councillor Lyle, welcomed everyone to the Full Council meeting and made some health and safety announcements.

FC/273 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The Mayor notified those present that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcasting is permitted during public session of Council Meetings. The act of recording and broadcasting must not interfere with the meeting.

FC/274 MEETING PROTOCOL

The Mayor reminded Members of the vital importance of mutual respect, professionalism, and full adherence to the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, and Meeting Protocol.

Councillors and officers have distinct yet complementary roles and work collaboratively in the best interests of the community. Councillors are responsible for setting policy and representing the public, while officers provide impartial advice and are tasked with implementing Council decisions.

During meetings, Members must conduct themselves with decorum, follow the established rules of debate, and respect the authority of the Chair. Disruptive

behaviour, undue pressure on officers, or prioritising personal interests above Council objectives undermines good governance and is contrary to the standards of conduct expected in Council proceedings.

Maintaining integrity, accountability, and a respectful environment is essential to ensuring effective and transparent decision-making.

FC/275 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

FC/276 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Personal Interests

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Waite	21	The item relates directly to them.
Owen	26	Knows the Chair of Ludlow Town Walls Trust. Is not and never have been, or been invited to be, a member, friend or trustee of either the Ludlow Town Walls Trust or St Laurence's PCC.
Cowell	26	Is a member of the choir at St Laurence's Church. Not a member of St Laurence's PCC.
Parry	26	Knows the Chair of Ludlow Town Walls Trust.
Hepworth	26	Knows the Chair of Ludlow Town Walls Trust. Is not a member of the Town Walls Trust or St Laurence's PCC.
Maxwell-Muller	26	Knows the Chair of Ludlow Town Walls Trust.
Childs	26	Knows the Chair of Ludlow Town Walls Trust.
Addis	19	Knows staff at the rugby club.
Lyle	10	Knows staff at SGFP.
	18a	Knows staff related to Piano Festival.
	19	Knows staff at the rugby club.
	26	Knows staff at the rugby club.

FC/277 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were two members of the public in attendance.

A member of the public referred to the Information Commissioner's recent decision on a Freedom of Information request concerning expenditure on the St

Lawrence's churchyard wall. They noted that council expenditure since 2013 included around £140,000 on legal advice, £25,000 on scaffolding hire, and £11,000 on storage. They also questioned the past handling of Council reserves, suggesting that holding funds in a low-interest account may have led to a loss of potential income. They asked what action the Council planned to take.

A member of the public noted that they had submitted Freedom of Information requests regarding the Council's recent responses to the Information Commissioner. They raised concerns about councillors' access to the town wall condition report and to legal advice regarding the collapsed section of churchyard wall.

FC/278 LUDLOW POLICE UPDATE

PS Bell provided an update on policing in Ludlow, noting that the local team has recently expanded to three PCs and two PCSOs, with some officers dedicated to the town centre, focusing on retail crime, public reassurance, and visibility. Additional officers cover the wider Ludlow area. Weekly police surgeries are held at various locations across Ludlow and surrounding villages, and enforcement activity has included the execution of warrants, seizure of controlled substances and vehicles, and monitoring of road safety and anti-social driving. PS Bell highlighted community engagement through ride-alongs, social media updates, and charitable activities, and noted that a local stone-throwing issue has been resolved through the youth justice system. Residents were encouraged to report crimes or anti-social behaviour, and overall visibility and patrolling in Ludlow has significantly increased, with positive feedback from the public.

Councillor Addis asked about policing outside the town centre, particularly in the housing estates where young people congregate. PS Bell explained that, although two PCs are dedicated to the town centre, they also patrol the wider area, supported by himself and PCSOs who cover all locations. The team responds proactively to any reported activity or intelligence outside the town centre.

FC/279 LUDLOW'S UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Councillor Parry (Ludlow South) confirmed that Bridgnorth, not Ludlow, will be one of the first town councils that the Task & Finish Group will be focusing on regarding devolution of services.

FC/280 SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD PARTNERSHIP

Dr. Daphne Du Cros introduced the Shropshire Good Food Partnership and explained how it forms part of the UK-wide Sustainable Food Places network, working across farming, communities, public health and local authorities to strengthen local food resilience. She outlined the vulnerabilities of the national

food system - shaped by a chronic “polycrisis” of rising living costs, climate change, biodiversity loss and geopolitical instability, alongside acute shocks such as flooding, supply-chain disruption and contamination - and emphasised that food is a powerful, place-based lever for systems change. Using the Partnership’s focus on relocalisation, regeneration, reconnection and resilience, she described how food partnerships can help councils develop coherent local food strategies, drawing on models like “Food Ladders” to support crisis response, build community capacity and enable self-organised action. Dr. Du Cros highlighted the need for local food resilience planning in Shropshire, noting gaps in existing emergency planning, and proposed working with Ludlow and neighbouring parishes - subject to upcoming Climate Lottery funding - to map the local food system and consider a practical, community-led food resilience strategy.

FC/281 RESOLVED DL/SH (11:0:4)

To approve, in principle, that councillors attend an initial blueprinting and scoping session on the local food system in January 2026 (date to be confirmed) - covering assets, gaps, pathways and bottlenecks to food access.

That more information is needed before the council makes any decision regarding the community food resilience lab initiative.

FC/282 MINUTES

RESOLVED KC/DL (unanimous)

That the open and closed session minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

FC/283 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the Items to Action be noted.

FC/284 BUDGET TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE

RESOLVED GG/MT (unanimous)

That the recommendations from the Budget Task & Finish Group, as listed in the notes from their meeting on 20th November 2025, are given further consideration by Policy & Finance Committee before coming back to Full Council in January 2026.

Councillor Alex Wagner arrived at 7.50pm.

FC/285 RESOLVED DL/IMM (13:1:1)

That, subject to the removal of the reference to a survey, the budget consultation statement be approved for release.

FC/286 RESOLVED MT/IMM (unanimous)

That all councillors provide their feedback on the draft survey to the Town Clerk within a 14-day period, so that the Clerk can redraft the survey for approval at Full Council in January 2026.

FC/287 SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL FINANCIAL CRISIS / DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES

Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council, outlined Shropshire Council's devolution proposals against the backdrop of severe financial and capacity pressures, noting that many services once delivered by full teams are now managed by one or two officers, making current service levels unsustainable. He emphasised that the Council will inevitably become smaller and able to provide only statutory and preventative services in the coming years, meaning non-statutory services - such as grounds maintenance, libraries, and street scene - will deteriorate without new models of delivery. To address this, the Council is piloting arrangements from April 2026 where town and parish councils can choose to take on services, with varying levels of funding, control, and responsibility.

Councillors expressed significant concerns, including the need for clear financial information before considering transfers, the unfairness of expecting Ludlow residents to fund services used by wider surrounding parishes, the risk that local precepts could become unaffordable for residents already under financial strain, and questions over why the County cannot improve services in-house instead of devolving them. Councillor Wagner acknowledged these pressures, confirmed that detailed costings will only be available once pilot schemes mature, and stressed that participation is optional but shaped by unavoidable long-term reductions in Shropshire Council's capacity and resources.

Councillor Alex Wagner left the meeting at 8.47pm.

FC/288 COMMUNICATIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP

RESOLVED DL/IMM (unanimous)

That the improved Community Engagement Strategy, superseding the existing strategy from point 4 onwards, be adopted.

FC/289 RESOLVED DL/PA (unanimous)

That the strapline 'Looking After Ludlow's Future' be approved, and that the Task & Finish group be tasked with developing an ambitious action plan to support this aspiration, with the plan to be submitted to Full Council for approval.

FC/290 RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the Task & Finish group refocuses on the original remit to review council's communications policies and protocols to create a user-friendly suite of policies that strengthen the council's engagement with the community.

FC/291 RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the Communications Task & Finish group reports back to Full Council in April 2026.

FC/292 PROJECTS

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the projects updates, be noted.

FC/293 RESOLVED DL/PA (unanimous)

That the CCTV project remains a priority.

FC/294 RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the Guildhall heating upgrade and repair of the kitchen window remains a priority project.

FC/295 RESOLVED DL/AT (unanimous)

That the priority projects be reconsidered at the January 2026 council meeting.

FC/296 COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

RESOLVED DL/ISB (unanimous)

That the date of the Staffing Committee meeting be changed from 17th December 2025 to 10th December 2025.

FC/297 EXTENSION OF MEETING

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That an extension of the meeting until 9.30pm be approved.

FC/298 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED DL/TG (unanimous)

That the committee and Task & Finish Group membership be noted, with the addition of Councillor Lyle onto the Residential Rental Task & Finish Group, and the Efficiency Review Task & Finish Group.

FC/299 PROJECT SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED VP/JH (13:0:2)

That a £750 grant to Ludlow Piano Festival be approved.

FC/300 RESOLVED GG/AT (13:0:2)

That, with regret, the application for £1,000 from Hope House Hospice be declined because it does not meet the Project Support Grant criteria.

FC/301 WHEELER ROAD RECREATION AREA

RESOLVED DL/PA (unanimous)

That the positive conditional response received from the covenant holder, and the fact that the matter is being considered by the Services Committee, be noted.

FC/302 MAYOR'S SUNDAY

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That the Mayor's Sunday service will take place on Sunday 28th June 2026.

FC/303 COUNCILLOR DISPENSATION

RESOLVED DL/SH (7:4:4)

To grant a dispensation for the duration of the existing council term for Councillor Waite to participate and vote on all matters relating to the devolution of powers, and / or delivery of Shropshire Council services by Ludlow Town Council.

FC/304 SCAFFOLDING

RESOLVED DL/IMM (13:0:2)

That the recommendations in the report be costed and considered by the Policy & Finance Committee in January 2026.

FC/305 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED RO/IMM (14:0:1)

That, subject to an amendment to the wording of a recommendation from the Climate Action Task & Finish Group on 30th October 2025, changing it to a recommendation from the Town Planters Task & Finish Group, the following recommendations from the Policy & Finance Committee on 24th November 2025 be approved:

PF/150 b) Recommendations

RECOMMENDED RO/KC (Unanimous)

That the recommendations of the Climate Action Task and Finish Group meeting held on the 13th November 2025 be approved:-

Changes/actions relating to the CAP.

To consider the following statement to be forwarded to prospective contractors when obtaining quotes:

It is important to Ludlow Town Council that prospective contractors consider the following aspects of their work to be efficient and less harmful to the environment.

- Conserve natural resources through careful planning, and efficient use of resources, water and raw materials.
- Minimisation of waste through source reduction, reuse and recycling.
- Handling and disposal of waste through safe and environmentally sustainable methods.

We would like contractors to have an aspirational 'zero to landfill' policy to ensure as much waste as possible is diverted from landfill. With the ultimate goal of achieving Zero Waste to Landfill through prevention, reduction, reuse and recycling.

PF/152 b) Recommendations

RECOMMENDED RO/MT (7:0:1)

That the recommendation of the Planting Task and Finish Group meeting held on the 30th October 2025 be approved:-

- a) Purchase of a plastic planter in black to trial on Bromfield slip road at a cost of £399 + £72 delivery (from Amberol – self watering planter PRM-0P)
- b) Removal of 29 boxes from various locations in Ludlow (as detailed: 19 Old Street, 4 Corve Street, 2 Broad Street, 2 Bromfield slip road, two Mill Street).
This is to remove boxes which are in poor condition, are not being

maintained or that there are simply too many planters in a single location.
Local residents will be notified of the changes.

- c) All plants that can be saved will be used in other LTC locations.
- d) Planters that can be salvaged will be repaired for use elsewhere and also made more 'sustainable' with liners etc.
- e) Purchase tags to number/identify remaining planters £31.64 (including delivery and tax)
- f) Agree with the suggestion of a single business sponsorship category that will be within the £20-£30 per annum cost bracket – no income for LTC, simply to cover costs of a plaque etc.
- g) Approve that cordaline plants are removed from planters and offered to local residents free of charge.
- h) To approve the purchase of a box ball shrub
- i) To approve the purchase of 6 lavender plants, 6 hebe plants, weed suppressing matting and bark for the Old Street flower beds – work to be undertaken over winter.

PF/156 INTERNAL AUDIT

a) Internal Auditor's Observations Recommendations

RECOMMENDED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the Internal Auditor's observations and proposed actions be approved.

PF/157 b) Internal Auditor's Letter and Summary of Tests

RECOMMENDED RO/MT (Unanimous)

That the Internal Auditor's cover letter and summary of test, be noted.

FC/306 MEETING EXTENSION

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That an extension of the meeting until 9.45pm be approved.

Councillor Taylor left the meeting at 9.27pm.

FC/307 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED KC/PA (unanimous)

That the minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 3rd September 2025 and 15th October 2025 be received.

FC/308 RESOLVED SH/GG (unanimous)

That the minutes of the Representational Committee meeting held on 7th October 2025 and 4th November 2025 be received.

FC/309 RESOLVED ISB/IMM (13:0:1)

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 10th October 2025 be received.

FC/310 RESOLVED RO/KC (13:0:1)

That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 13th October 2025 be received.

Councillor Taylor returned to the meeting at 9.29pm.

FC/311 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED DL/KC (unanimous)

That that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 9.44pm.

Town Mayor

Date

Closed session minutes will be issued for this meeting.