



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held at The Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2025** at **7.00 PM**.

FC/222 PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Cowell

Councillors: Addis; Gill; Ginger; Hepworth; Maxwell-Muller; Owen; Parry; Scott-Bell; Tapley; Taylor

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

FC/223 ABSENT

Councillors Childs, Harris, Lyle and Waite were absent.

FC/224 HEALTH & SAFETY

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

FC/225 RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The Deputy 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/226 MEETING PROTOCOL

The Deputy 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/227 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Childs, Harris, Lyle and Waite.

FC/228 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

Conflicts of Interest

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Addis	24	Knows two of the contractors, is a business contact of Grange Heating.

Personal Interests

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
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	13 26	Is a member of the History Group. Is a member of the choir at St Laurence's Church. Not a member of St Laurence's PCC.
Parry	13 26	Knows the staff at Pentabus Theatre. 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.

FC/229 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were three members of the public in attendance.

A resident of Ludford expressed concern that in total over £100,000 of public funds have been spent on legal and professional fees in recent years, largely in

relation to the Council's dispute over responsibility for the collapsed wall near St Laurence's Church. It was noted that legal advice in 2015 appeared to confirm the Council's ownership and responsibility for the wall. The speaker questioned the ongoing legal expenditure and urged the Council to consider ending legal proceedings, instead proposing collaboration with the PCC and Shropshire Council to progress necessary repairs. The speaker also highlighted that continued dispute may deter potential external funding from bodies such as Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund, which prefer to support unified community projects.

A resident of Ludlow expressed concerns about the ongoing disrepair of the collapsed section of churchyard wall and the Council's handling of the matter. The resident highlighted safety risks from falling masonry, delayed access to engineering reports, and the Council's recent resolution denying liability. They stated the situation has caused significant distress and indicated potential legal action if the issue remains unresolved.

A resident and business owner of Ludlow expressed concern that Ludlow is in decline compared to other towns, citing reduced footfall, a struggling high street, and a general lack of vibrancy. They called on the Council to take more visible action to promote the town and support local businesses. Suggestions included engaging with landlords on rent levels, improving the town's appearance with flower boxes, and reviewing parking charges to encourage more visitors. The speaker emphasised the need for practical, collective efforts to revitalise the town and restore its appeal.

FC/230 LUDLOW POLICE UPDATE

A written update was provided to councillors via email prior to the meeting.

FC/231 LUDLOW'S UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Councillor Parry (Ludlow South) confirmed that the Devolution debate had gone to Shropshire Council last week and was accepted.

FC/232 MINUTES

RESOLVED KC/GG (unanimous)

That the open and closed session minutes of the Council meetings held on 3rd September 2025, 8th September 2025 and 24th September 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

FC/233 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED TG/GG (unanimous)

That the Items to Action be noted.

FC/234 SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES

RESOLVED KC/IMM (unanimous)

That the Town Clerk be authorised to sign and return the Memorandum of Understanding with Shropshire Council.

FC/235 RESOLVED KC/GG (unanimous)

To inform Shropshire Council that subject to adequate funding from Shropshire Council, Ludlow Town Council are interested in discussing the following local services in Ludlow:

- Litter picking and street cleaning
- Grounds maintenance and verge cutting
- Public waste bin management
- Graffiti and fly-posting removal
- Highway weed control
- Support for public events
- Maintenance of street furniture
- Community clean-up support
- Shropshire Council owned play areas in Ludlow (subject to confirmation from Shropshire Council that they have the legal ability to transfer the play areas to Ludlow Town Council)

FC/236 RESOLVED GG/IMM (unanimous)

To inform Shropshire Council that Ludlow Town Council does not at present consider itself able to support the following services, but is nonetheless concerned about the provision of the following services:

- Ludlow Library
- Teme Leisure
- Youth Services
- Support for Ludlow Museum

FC/237 RESOLVED KC/PA (unanimous)

That Ludlow Town Council shares its response to the government Town and Parish Neighborhood Governance consultation with Shropshire Council.

FC/238 RESOLVED MT/KC (unanimous)

That a Task & Finish Group is not formed at this point, but the council contacts Shropshire Council / Claire Braddock to open discussions.

FC/239 BUDGET TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE

Councillor Taylor gave an update as the Chair of the Budget Task & Finish Group. The group has met three times to date. The group has drafted terms of reference and a preliminary budget, highlighting key considerations such as inflation, interest rate assumptions, and identified risks and opportunities for the coming financial year. The draft budget aims to support the Council's ongoing services, projects, and devolved responsibilities from Shropshire Council.

FC/240 RESOLVED GG/IMM (10:0:1)

To approve the scope and objectives of this year's budget-setting process as the following:

- To support existing services
- To support council projects
- To support Ludlow during devolution of services from Shropshire Council

To approve the budget setting premise of:

- Inflation: 3.6%
- Interest Rate: 4%

To approve the reorganisation of budget lines as identified in the T&F notes.

To approve the release of a consultation in December that discusses the range of options open to the council with as much information as is available.

FC/241 CORE GRANTS**RESOLVED GG/TG (unanimous)**

That a grant of £1,000.00 to South Shropshire Youth Forum in 2026/27 be approved.

FC/242 RESOLVED GG/TG (unanimous)

That a grant of £1,050.00 to Ludlow Town Concert Band in 2026/27 be approved.

FC/243 RESOLVED GG/VP (9:0:2)

That the original application from Ludlow Town FC was retrospective and therefore refused because it was outside of council's criteria. The council offered the opportunity for an amended application but were unable to accept the submitted application for a wholly different project.

FC/244 RESOLVED KC/IMM (unanimous)

That the grant of £5,000.00 to Ludlow Visitor Information Centre in 2026/27 be approved.

FC/245 RESOLVED TG/GG (8:0:3)

That a grant of £1,000.00 to Pentabus Theatre in 2026/27 be approved.

Councillor Ginger left the meeting at 7.53pm

FC/246 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM POLICING PRIORITIES

RESOLVED KC/MT (unanimous)

That the agreed priorities for October 2025 to March 2026 are:

1. Drugs
2. Antisocial behaviour including driving
3. Commercial and domestic theft

FC/247 That a comment be added stating that Ludlow Town Council values visible policing across the whole community, not just in the Town Centre.

FC/248 SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL PARKING CHARGES CONSULTATION

RESOLVED ISB/PA (unanimous)

To object to the proposed increases in parking charges because of the severe detrimental impact upon Ludlow, which is a small market town with a population of less than 11,000.

Ludlow's current parking bandings are disproportionately high for the size of the town.

No other Shropshire town except the county town of Shrewsbury, with a population of over 76,000, has band 2 parking charges. There is no justification for charging band 2 parking charges in a town with a population of less than 11,000.

That the charges for:

- on street parking charges should be reduced from band 2 to band 3.
- Castle Steet car park charges should be reduced from band 3 to band 4.
- On street (blue zone) charges should be reduced from band 4 to band 5.

To report these concerns to the press and public that the Council is actively opposing the new charges.

Cllr Gill left the meeting at 8.09pm
Cllr Gill rejoined the meeting at 8.11pm

FC/249 PROJECT UPDATES

RESOLVED KC/MT (9:0:1)

That project updates will be received at each Full Council meeting.

FC/250 RESOLVED MT/VP (unanimous)

That a follow up letter be sent to Shropshire Council asking for progress on the Market Square parking issue.

FC/251 RESOLVED TG/AT (unanimous)

That the updates provided on the project list be noted.

Cllr Hepworth left the meeting at 8.31pm.
Cllr Hepworth rejoined the meeting at 8.34pm.

FC/252 EFFICIENCY REVIEW

RESOLVED TG/KC (9:0:1)

That the Council approve the recommendation from the Staffing Committee to review the duties and objectives of the Council; its management structure; the adequacy of staffing levels, capabilities, skill sets, and experience; the effectiveness of the processes by which the Council undertakes its work (including possible alternative methods); and the ways in which technology could be used to enhance efficiency - all with a view to ensuring that the residents of Ludlow receive the best possible value for the money they contribute via the Precept, and to make recommendations accordingly.

FC/253 RESOLVED MT/ISB (9:0:1)

That Cllrs Addis, Gill, Hepworth, Owen and Scott-Bell are appointed to the Efficiency Review Task & Finish Group.

FC/254 RESOLVED MT/JH (unanimous)

That the Efficiency Review Task & Finish Group draft full terms of reference for approval, consider the timetable of action, assess the offer from LCC and report back to Full Council.

FC/255 PROJECT SUPPORT GRANTS

RESOLVED KC/MT (unanimous)

That a £750 grant to Ludlow Assembly Rooms be approved.

FC/256 RESOLVED TG/AT (unanimous)

That clarification be sought from Hope House Hospice of specific instances in which the grant funding would benefit individuals from Ludlow postcodes.

FC/257 WHEELER ROAD PLAY AREA COVENANT

RESOLVED TG/IMM (9:0:1)

That a formal request be sent to the covenant holder to allow the temporary use of the Recreation Area by Ludlow Rugby Club adults' team on two evenings per week.

FC/258 RESOLVED MT/IMM (9:0:1)

That once the Christmas Lights installation is completed, the grass cutting at Wheeler Road recreation area becomes the top priority for the Direct Labour Force.

FC/259 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED KC/MT (unanimous)

That Cllr Parry be added to the membership of the Comms Strategy Task & Finish Group, Cllr Gill be added to the Churchyard Walls Task & Finish Group, and Cllrs Taylor and Maxwell-Muller be added to the membership of the Town Planters Working Group.

FC/260 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED KC/MT (9:0:1)

That the recommendations from Policy and Finance Committee on 1st September 2025 and 13th October 2025 be approved:

AGED DEBTORS

That invoice number 1139 for 30p owed by Craven Arms Memorials be written

off.

POLICY REVIEW

Information and Data Protection Policy

That the Information and Data Protection Policy, as amended to state that the policy will be reviewed “annually” instead of “periodically”, be adopted.

Data Transparency Policy

That Data Transparency Policy be amended in include the publication of the quarterly income and expenditure reports and the earmarked reserves on the Council’s website.

That the Data Transparency Policy, as amended, be adopted.

Data Breach Policy

That the Data Breach Policy, as amended to state that it replaces the Data Breach Policy adopted on the 17th June 2019, be adopted.

Freedom of Information Policy

That the Freedom of Information Policy, as amended to state that the policy will be reviewed annually, be adopted.

RESIDENTIAL RENTAL

That a residential rent remains at £500.00 per month to be increased annually by inflation from January 2026.

POLICY REVIEW

Recruitment and Selection Policy

That the Recruitment and Selection Policy, be adopted.

Sexual Harassment Policy and Action Plan

That the Sexual Harassment Policy and Action Plan, be adopted.

Hedgerow Policy

That Hedgerow Policy, be adopted.

FC/261 RESOLVED VP/ISB (unanimous)

That the recommendations from Representational Committee on 9th September

2025 be approved:

CORONATION AVENUE

To recommend to Full Council that Shropshire Council are given a list of critical roads in Ludlow, which should not be closed, but if works are required they are open with 2-way traffic lights especially during the busiest times of year which are summer, Christmas and the festivals:

- Sheet Road
- Henley Road
- Dinham Bridge
- Temeside
- Bromfield Road
- Coronation Avenue
- Galdeford
- Overton Road

FC/262 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED TG/IMM (9:0:1)

That the minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2025 be received.

FC/263 RESOLVED TG/IMM (9:0:1)

That the minutes of the Representational Committee meeting held on 19th August 2025 and 9th September 2025 be received.

FC/264 RESOLVED TG/IMM (9:0:1)

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 22nd August 2025 and 18th September 2025 be received.

FC/265 RESOLVED TG/IMM (9:0:1)

That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 1st September 2025 be received.

FC/266 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED KC/PA (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 9.08pm.

Town Mayor

Date

Closed session minutes will be issued for this meeting.