

Upton Magna Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 12th of January, 2026 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall

26/001 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE and APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Councillors Gareth Thomas, Jeana Bennion, David Carter, Michael Dawson, Ann Fowler, Bob Newton.

Apologies: Councillor Andy Pillow, Shropshire Councillor Brendan Mallon.

Locum Parish Clerk: Karen Smith-Wells

Attending: None

26/002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None.

26/003 PUBLIC SESSION – None.

26/004 MINUTES – It was proposed (DC), seconded (AF) and resolved that the Chair should sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th of December, 2025, as a true and correct record of that meeting.

26/005 REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR MALLON (SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL) – report received and viewed by Councillors.

26/006 REPORTS:

- a) **West Mercia Police** – Councillor Carter confirmed that the police had carried out speed checks in the village, whilst parked in a marked police car. No speeding issues had been observed. **ACTION:** Clerk to check that requested Parish policing priorities have been sent to the police, as these include speed and traffic concerns, together with poaching. Councillor Bennion confirmed she has advised the police of meeting dates up to and including May.
- b) **SALC** – Nothing to report.
- c) **Footpaths** – Councillor Newton reported that a tree has fallen across one bridleway and some posts are down on one path. Councillors discussed the problem of discarded used dog waste bags by the kissing gate (and hanging in trees) on the footpath that begins by the Haughmond shop. **ACTION:** Clerk to advise the Sundorne Castle Estate and ask if a trail cam can be installed to catch offenders.
- d) **Village Hall** – Councillor Fowler reported that the Christmas party was well-attended and a success. It was also noted that the recharge for Parish Council meeting use is £15 for 1.5 hours and £20 for 2 hours.

26/007 PROGRESS REPORTS:

- a) **Street Light Glare** – Councillor Carter advised that the timing problem continues and that the electrical company have apologised. They will reinstate the original lamp until the new one can be fixed, at no cost to the Parish Council. **ACTION:** Councillor Carter to continue to liaise with the electrical company until the light is working correctly.
- b) **Traffic and Parking Issues** – Councillor Thomas reported that the school Head has confirmed that she and the Governors are in talks with the Diocese and Shropshire Council, concerning the provision of a school car park. **ACTION:** Clerk to write to the Head expressing its concern over the parking and

child safety issues, together with its support for a solution, and also to extend an invitation to her to attend a Parish Council meeting for further discussions. Councillor Thomas advised that he had received a further rebuff from Shropshire Councillor Wagner, concerning funding for speed surveys in the village. It was suggested that the Parish Council carry out its own survey, using equipment loaned by the police. **ACTION:** Clerk to investigate further.

- c) **Shropshire Council Energy Scheme** – No further progress.
- d) **Village Assets and Grant Funding (“Beyond the Precept”)** – Councillors agreed that village signage is currently disjointed and needs to be more cohesive. It was also agreed that some road markings require repainting. **ACTION:** All Councillors to research available grants for Parish improvements, given that Shropshire Council will not provide funding.
- e) **War Memorial** – Councillor Carter confirmed that the planned visit to Haughmond Quarry will take place on January the 13th. He also confirmed he will send photographs of the chosen stone to the other Councillors, and suggested that planning permission should be sought as soon as possible thereafter. Councillor Bennion reminded everyone that the Millennium plaque, already in situ in the graveyard wall, should not be obscured, and this was agreed. Councillors Carter, Dawson and Fowler formed a sub-group to decide upon the most appropriate location for the memorial and to go forward with the project.
- f) **Asset Register** – Councillor Bennion confirmed she had carried out an Asset Register review and produced an improved version of it. She was thanked for her work in achieving this and it was proposed (DC), seconded (MD) and resolved that it be accepted. **ACTION:** Clerk to upload it to the website. The Clerk confirmed that the laptop was purchased in November 2023 and the printer in 2016. Despite its age, the printer is currently working well. Councillor Bennion advised that the remainder of the Smartwater kits are now out of date and that she had emailed PCO Birch to ask if more were available. It was agreed to include Smartwater on the next agenda.

26/008 FINANCE:

- a) **Draft Budget 2026/27** – Councillors discussed the draft budget prepared by the Clerk. Following agreed amendments, it was proposed (MD), seconded (DC) and resolved that the budget be adopted for 2026/27.
- b) **Precept** – Following acceptance of the budget, Councillors discussed the precept requirement for the forthcoming financial year. It was agreed that the finances require careful management, and it was proposed (MD), seconded (DC) and resolved that the precept bid be £8335.00. **ACTION:** Parish Clerk to submit the requirement to Shropshire Council before the deadline of 31st January.
- c) **Authorisation of payments and bank reconciliation** - It was proposed (MD), seconded (DC) and resolved that the following December payments be approved:

AMOUNT	PAYMENT DETAILS
£47.00	ICO annual fee
£11.99	Hugofox – website
£326.00	Previous Clerk’s salary and expenses
£75.00	HMRC – PAYE
£6.00	Unity Bank charges
£15.00	Memorial hall hire

It was proposed (MD), seconded (DC) and resolved that the following January payments be approved:

AMOUNT	PAYMENT DETAILS
£11.99	Hugofox – website
£317.40	Clerk's salary and expenses
£71.40	HMRC – PAYE
£6.00	Unity Bank charges
£15.00	Memorial hall hire
£198.23	Streetlight electricity

No income was received in December or January.

It was proposed (MD), seconded (DC) and resolved that the bank reconciliation for the third quarter, prepared by the Clerk, be accepted.

- d) **Unity Bank Access** – It was confirmed that access to the bank account had finally been removed for previous Councillors. In addition, the previous Clerk's access had also been removed. It was agreed that the new Parish Clerk (subject to the Parish Clerk's position being filled – see minute 26/012 below) be approved for access to the account so that she may upload payments for subsequent authorisation by Councillors.

26/009 PLANNING:

- a) **25/01638/FUL Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** - Shropshire Councillor Mallon had sent word that he is waiting to hear from Shropshire Council Planning, what stage the application is at. It was noted that a revised Noise Impact Assessment had been issued on the 16th of December 2025, and that it can be viewed on Shropshire Council's Planning Register.
- b) **Other planning applications** – no new applications had been received since the last meeting.

26/010 REVIEW OF POLICIES:

- a) **Financial Regulations** – Councillors Carter and Dawson confirmed they had finished the revision of these regulations and they were thanked for their hard work in achieving this. It was proposed (JB), seconded (AF) that they be adopted. **ACTION:** Clerk to upload to the website.
- b) **Communications Policy** – It was agreed that Parish Council incoming or outgoing documents should be issued and received in universally recognised formats (Word, Excel, .pdf etc.). It was proposed (DC), seconded (MD) and resolved that the Communication Policy be adjusted. **ACTION:** Clerk to upload to the website once approved at the next meeting.

26/011 PARISH COUNCIL OWNED IT EQUIPMENT – This was discussed earlier in the meeting (see minute 26/007(F) above).

26/012 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER - Mrs. Smith-Wells was interviewed on the 8th of January. It was proposed (AF), seconded (JB), and resolved that Mrs. Smith-Wells be offered the permanent position, commencing on the 1st of February. Mrs. Smith-Wells accepted.

26/013 GENERAL PARISH & HIGHWAY MATTERS:

Please note: Most highway and general repair matters are best reported using fixmystreet.com as this will usually get the quickest results.

- a) **Road closure** – Shropshire Council had notified the Parish Council that the unnamed road between Upton Magna and Withington will be closed to traffic between 09.30 and 17.30, on the 25th of February.

26/014 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a) *NB: Councillor Bennion declared a personal interest in this item and refrained from taking part in discussions.* An email had been received from Mr. Bennion, concerning two subjects: i) the recent police speed check in the village – Mr. Bennion felt that his comments had been mis-recorded and he wished to point out that, when he had spoken at the November meeting, he welcomed the Parish Council's efforts to arrange the speed check but thought that it would have been better not to have posted the impending police presence on WhatsApp beforehand; ii) the RBL silhouettes – Mr. Bennion wished to express his disappointment with the Parish Council's decision to remove the silhouettes from the grass triangle, and his frustration that his email to the previous Clerk concerning this, had not been passed on to Councillors. Given the level of his disappointment at their removal, he advised the Parish Council that he would no longer give his free time etc., to maintain the grass triangle, despite having done it for many years. The Parish Council agreed that there had been a number of breakdowns in Parish Council/parishioner communication in October and November and it was sorry for this. However, it reiterated that the RBL silhouettes have not been removed permanently. Rather they have been put into storage for some of the year, and, as stated in the November minutes, will be displayed again from mid-October to the end of the year. (It was also restated that at the time of discussion in 2025, representations against the silhouettes remaining on the green permanently had been received, as well as those for, and a democratic decision made). In the meantime, a permanent, weatherproof war memorial is currently being planned (see minute 26/007(e) above). **ACTION:** Clerk to respond to Mr. Bennion on both of these subjects, and to thank him for maintaining the grass triangle for as long as he has.
- b) A website message had been received from Mr. Sims regarding his comments made at the November Parish Council meeting, concerning the removal of the RBL silhouettes from the grass triangle. He felt that the minutes did not reflect the points made. Councillors emphasised that they listen to and consider every point that is made by members of the public that attend. **ACTION:** Clerk to respond to Mr. Sims.

26/015 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA – BESS; Comms Policy; Financial Regulations; Smartwater; village assets.

The meeting closed at 21.27.

Date of next meeting: 12th February, 2026 at 7.30pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

K.M Smith-Wells – Acting Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to Upton Magna Parish Council
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