Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 30th May 2025 at 16:00hrs in the Council Chamber at Shefford House, 15 High Street, Shefford SG17 5DD.

Present: Cllrs Fred Wilson, Paul Mackin, Elsa Tattersfield, Den Fensome, Lisa Hayes, Nicola King, Danny Cummings Christine Culleton and Mark Greenwood.

14 members of the public.

Town Clerk: T Medley and C Quinlan (Admin Assistant)

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Steve Nash, F Fitch

   Cllr Fred Wilson emailed a letter to all Cllrs earlier in the day resigning from the position of Deputy Mayor but remaining on the TC as a Cllr.

   Cllr Mackin reported that he had received a letter from Cllr ken Pollard earlier in the day stepping down from his position of Mayor and from his position as Cllr as of 12 noon. Cllr Mackin reported that Cllr Pollard has had a few difficult months, and it is affecting his home life. Clerk thanked Ken for his time on the TC.

   Both Cllr King and Cllr Cummings spoke to Cllrs regarding positivity and teamwork within the TC and how Cllrs should embrace change.

2. **Town Mayor**
   Cllr Nicola King was received as Mayor, proposed by Cllr Culleton, seconded by Cllr Hayes, 8 Cllrs agreed, 1 abstained from voting. The Acceptance of Office form from the Mayor will be signed and returned to the Town Clerk.

3. **Deputy Mayor**
   Cllr Christine Culleton was received as Deputy Mayor, proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Fensome, 8 Cllrs agreed, 1 abstained from voting. The Acceptance of Office form from the Deputy Mayor will be signed and returned to the Town Clerk.

4. **Minutes**
   The minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 24th May 2024 were approved and signed, proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed.

   The minutes from the Meeting of the Town Council held on 25th April 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair, proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed.

5. **MP Alaistair Strathern**
   AS attended to provide an update on Old Bridge Way. He started by thanking the Cllrs for all of the work they do for the town. Old Bridge Way is currently without an owner; it comes under the Crown Estate. The company who used to be responsible for the road went into liquidation and no one has taken legal responsibility.AS is of the view that there are three options:

1. Cllrs continue to put pressure on CBC to recognise as a Local Authority that even though they do not technically own it they have a moral responsibility.
2. We work with local Businesses and look at ways of funding the road maintenance via a campaign? The Crown does not have legal responsibility or money to maintain it, but they will not object to works carried out by another party.
3. We should challenge the longer-term issue regarding adopted roads. There is a national issue which is growing, more roads on newer developments are privately owned and maintained by maintenance companies, meaning residents are paying both a maintenance charge and Council tax. Hopefully changes will be made for new developments and then applied retrospectively for existing areas.
4. Cllr Mackin commented that the businesses in this area have been paying business tax for years to CBC so it would be fair for CBC to take responsibility.
5. AS would like to work alongside the TC in forming a campaign for the works to Old Bridge Way, he welcomed emails from Cllrs with ideas, and it was agreed AS will meet with Cllrs again soon to plan what action to take.
6. AS is also work hard to help with the pressures on school, Drs surgeries and Local Planning to protect the flood plain.

6. To received updates from the Ward Cllrs

No update

7. To adjourn the meeting for members of the public to address Cllrs

- A resident welcomed Cllr King and Culleton as Mayor/ Deputy Mayor and hoped that this would be the start of the Cllrs working together again as a team.
- A resident raised concerns over the knee rail on the Herons Lee area, it is constantly being vandalised, and the costs are increasing. Cllr Mackin confirmed Riparian rights and responsibility for the knee rail. The residents asked if it was essential or whether it could be removed. CQ will share details of the Rights of way officer at CBC who would be able to offer advice.

8. Structure of the Council

The Head of Special Projects will continue to assist Town Council staff where necessary by focusing on various projects undertaken by the Council.

It was resolved that there will be three main Standing Committees: Planning and Highways; Services and Environment; and Finance and Strategy. There will be a Joint Burial Board Committee comprising of four Councillors from Shefford Town Council and two Councillors from Campton and Chicksands Parish Council; to comply with the current legislation, this Committee will report to the Finance and Strategy Committee. There will be a Staffing Committee that will report to the Finance and Strategy Committee. There will also be a Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green Trust Committee, which will report directly to the Full Council.

It was resolved to appoint members to each of these committees as follows: -

Planning and Highways Committee
The Chair and Deputy Chair will be elected at the June committee meeting.

- Cllrs Fred Wilson, Paul Mackin, Lisa Hayes, Steve Nash and Christine Culleton.

Services and Environment Committee
The Chair and Deputy Chair will be elected at the June committee meeting.

- Cllrs Fred Wilson, Paul Mackin, Mark Greenwood, Christine Culleton, Danny Cummings, Den Fensome and Elsa Tattersfield.

Finance and Strategy Committee

- Chair of the Committee, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Head of Special Projects, and Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Planning and Highways Committee and the Services and Environment Committee.

Joint Burial Board Committee

- Cllrs Nicola King, Christine Culleton, Paul Mackin and Den Fensome, and two Members from Campton and Chicksands Parish Council.

Staffing Committee

- The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Greenwood, Cllr Cummings. The meetings will be held as required.

Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green Trust Committee

- Cllrs Danny Cummings, Paul Mackin, Elsa Tattersfield, and David Ager and Karen Easton from the Shefford Greenspace Conservation Group.

In addition, there will be a Youth Involvement Team, who by the nature of the youth activities and safeguarding policies, will not hold public meetings, but will report to the Full Council at their monthly meetings.

Youth Involvement Team

- Cllrs Nicola King and Steve Nash.

9. Representatives on Outside Bodies
It was resolved to appoint the following representatives on outside bodies (including Council and non-Council members): -

Shefford Town Memorial Association: Cllr Culleton
Police Liaison and Crime Statistics: Cllrs Paul Mackin.
Wander bus: No representative.
Shefford Newsline: Tony Dawson and Sally Ellisdon-Page.
Robert Lucas Trust: Cllr Paul Mackin
Shefford Emergency Response Team: Cllrs Paul Mackin, Den Fensome, Danny Cummings, Steve Nash and Mark Greenwood.
Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils: Cllrs Paul Mackin and Den Fensome.
Shefford Community Hall: Cllr Elsa Tattersfield.

10. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee
Election to take place at the first meeting.

11. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Service and Environment Committee

Election to take place at the first meeting.

12. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance and Strategy Committee

Election to take place at the first meeting.

13. To elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee

Election to take place at the first meeting.

14. Election of Head of Special Projects

It was resolved for Cllr Paul Mackin to be elected as the Head of Special Projects.

15. To agree meeting dates and times

Cllr Culleton proposed that Council meet at the following times:
Planning and Highways- second Wednesday of the month at 8pm
Service and Environment- second Wednesday of the month at 7pm
Finance and Strategy- Third Wednesday of the month at 7pm
Full Council- First Wednesday of the month at 7pm
Staffing Committee, meet as required.

Seconded by Hayes, all agreed. Clerk will amend the Standing orders to be adopted at the next Full Council.

16. Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Delegated Powers

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Standing Orders (no change since they were last adopted in May 2023) and Financial Regulations (amended as per Legal Topic 87) for the Council were distributed to Councillors for review, and they were adopted. Proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Hayes, all agreed subject to the inclusion of the new meeting dates and times.

Delegated Powers

It was resolved to continue to execute S101 of the Local Government Act 1972 permitting the Council to delegate the power of decision making to two members of the Council. This will allow payments to be approved and decisions to be made outside of a Full Council meeting, including those made at Standing Committees. It was resolved for the Town Clerk and the Mayor of the Council to be delegated these powers, in consultation with the Chairs of the Standing Committees, if applicable.

17. Asset Register

Following distribution of the register to Councillors, it was resolved to approve the asset register. Proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed.

18. Direct Debits and Regular Contractual Payments

Following distribution of the list of current direct debits and regular contractual payments paid from the Council's current and cemetery account with the Unity Trust

Bank to Councillors, it was resolved to approve the direct debits/regular contractual payments. Proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed.

19. Bank Signatories

It was resolved for the Council's bank mandates to have the following signatories: -

- Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green Trust bank account held at the National Westminster Bank; any two signatories from mandate.
- Current, Savings and Cemetery accounts held at Unity Trust Bank; any three signatories.
- Lloyd's payments card (debited monthly to the Unity Trust current account) - the Clerk up to a monthly limit for all transactions totalling £750, and a single transaction limit of £500 in accordance with the Delegated Powers stated in the Financial Regulations.

It was noted that there may be some overlap of the signatories from the previous Council year as new signatories are set up.

Cllrs on agreed for the mandate 2025/26 Cllr Mackin, Wilson, Hayes, Greenwood and Clerk.

20. Council Policies

The following policies were shared and discussed with Cllrs prior to the meeting:

Equality and Diversity - Proposed by Greenwood seconded by Cllr Culleton, all agreed.
Anti-bullying - Proposed by Cllr Hayes seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed,
Grievance Proposed - Cllr Hayes seconded by Cllr Culleton, all agreed,
Dignity at Work - Proposed by Cllr Greenwood seconded by Cllr Culleton, all agreed,
Handling Complaints - Proposed Cllr Hayes seconded by Cllr Greenwood, all agreed,
Lone working – Proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Culleton, all agreed.

It was resolved that the policies be adopted.

21. To receive the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on 5th May 2025 for approval for publication on the Council's website.

Catesby Estates Presentation

A presentation was given by Katie Yates and Dawn Adams, which included: vehicular and pedestrian access via Stanford Road; the development location in relation to floodplains; the current planned 100 houses; restoration/making safe of the Old Mill; the mobile pylons' potential relocation; concerns regarding the visibility splay; ongoing discussions with Highways; the oversubscribed services in the town (e.g. schools, medical centre); S106 agreements and allocations; connections to neighbouring estates; access via the Shefford Leys bridge; affordable housing compliance; adoptable road standards; the Sluice/Weir access to be kept clear; and the balancing pond and play area.

Plans for Consideration

CB/25/01156/FULL
27 Hitchin Road, Shefford, SG17 5JA
Proposal: Erection of a two-storey side and single storey front and rear extensions

It was resolved to support this application.

CB/25/01383/FULL
Land to the read of 120 and 120A Ampthill Road, Shefford, SG17 5BH.
Proposal: Erection of two self-build family dwellings and associated shared access

It was resolved to comment on this application regarding: sprinklers being installed in the assisted living unit; the location of the development in relation to the floodplain; and the access for emergency vehicles.

Old Bridge Way
The matter of Old Bridge Way was discussed by the Committee, and members are due to have a meeting with the Member of Parliament, Alistair Strathern, regarding this issue.

Notice of Appeal Decision
The appeal decision from the Planning Inspectorate regarding planning appeal decision for planning application CB/24/01061/FULL (6 Bridge View, Shefford, SG17 5FT) was received and noted by the Committee.

Long-Term Planning of the Town
The previous Town Plan (2011) was discussed by the Committee, including the suggestion of a circular High Street.

Minutes proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Wilson, all agreed.

22. To receive the minutes of the Finance and Strategy Committee meeting held on 21st May 2025 for approval for publication on the Council's website, including the approval of three recommendations.

To review Locum Clerk Employment and Admin assistant to cover the Town Clerk's absence:
Cllr Pollard has been in contact with BATPC regarding advertising for a locum clerk and an appropriate article for the position. Cllr Hayes commented that as chair of the Staffing Committee the appointment of a new Locum Clerk and any advertisement would need to be agreed with the Staffing Committee. TM confirmed that approval should be sought from the Staffing Committee prior to agreeing an advertisement, the staffing committee would need to agree the terms of employment.

On-going Study:
CQ's AAT qualification has now expired, the course was not completed due to her covering the Clerk's absence and additional workload. CQ requested additional time to complete the course, it can be extended by 6mths at a cost of £95. Cllr Hayes proposed extending it by 12mths, seconded by Cllr Wilson, all agreed.

Sally has completed her ILCA and as previously agreed by the TC she will now start her CILCA. FF will start her CILCA on her return, Clerk suggested FF would need scheduled study time.

To review information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund:
This is a Grant that the TC have previously submitted an application to for projects in the Town, both TM and CQ confirmed that they do not have the time available to prepare and submit the application. Cllr Pollard will look at it. It was resolved at full council that TM will decline the offer this year.

To review progress made by Rialtas and the End of Year audit:
CQ has scanned and sent all of the invoices to Rialtas, Rialtas have now input all of the invoices to the system and have scheduled an End of Year close down which should be completed this week. Cllr Wilson thanked Cllr Greenwood and CQ for all of their work on this.

To review inputting of invoices for the current financial year
Cllr Greenwood has contacted Rialtas for a quote for inputting of invoices for the current financial year, month by month. The quote has been received for £330 per month, Cllr Mackin proposed the TC instruct Rialtas to carry out the work, seconded by Cllr Wilson, all agreed. Cllr Greenwood will confirm with Rialtas. CQ will upload the invoices and send them to Rialtas monthly.

To review and discuss a play area repair.
Four new gym bike bearings and fixings are required at Bellcote at a cost of £225.00 plus vat. The seesaw at STMA has one bolt missing and one bolt has been sheared off. For it to be fixed Billy would need to remove the top and buffer mechanism from site to try and drill out the bolt. If it doesn't drill out successfully it will need a new buffer

Cllr Mackin proposed repairs are carried out, seconded by Cllr Wilson, all agreed. TM will arrange the repair.

To review the signatories on the bank mandate for the Unity Trust Bank account:
Cllr Mackin is chasing Unity bank regarding the changes to thew mandate, he will check if the account allows the Chair to be on the mandate?

To review and discuss policies to be adopted at Full Council:
TM and CQ have been working through the policies, TM thanked CQ for all of the time she has spent on this. The policies have now all been emailed to all Cllrs and any requests for amendments have been requested, by Monday 26th at the latest, to ensure TM and CQ have time to make the changes. The polices need to be adopted, by majority if not all Cllrs are supportive of the policies.

Minutes proposed by Cllr Greenwood, seconded by Cllr Hayes, all agreed.

23. To receive the minutes of the Services and Environment Committee meeting held on 14th May 2025 for approval for publication on the Council's website.

Asset of Community Value

The application to register 6 Northbridge Street as an Asset of Community Value was reviewed by the Committee, including the current sale of the building to new owners. The application may require further details from KP and TM; CQ to circulate to all Councillors for review and comments.

Drovers Spinney Fencing

The damaged caused to the fencing at the Riverview entrance of Drovers Spinney was reviewed by the Committee.

It was resolved for CQ to obtain a quotation for replacement fencing.

Annual Town Meeting

The plans for the Annual Town Meeting were reviewed by the Committee, including the Annual Town Awards.

Himalayan Balsam

The annual Himalayan Balsam works were reviewed by the Committee.

It was resolved for TM to obtain a quotation for the annual works from Maydencroft Ltd.

TM has obtained a quote for £5,580 inclusive of vat, Cllr Mackin proposed the Council agree for the works, seconded by Cllr Cummings, all agreed, TM will make arrangements.

Newsline email

A request for a separate Newsline email was reviewed by the Committee.

It was resolved for CQ to create a newsline@sheffordtowncouncil.gov.uk email and for access to be given to Tony Dawson.

Northbridge Street trough

The deterioration of the trough in Northbridge Street was reviewed by the Committee.

It was resolved for KP to contact a local artisan for their advice in preserving the lettering on the trough.

Summer Fun Day

The plans for the Summer Fun Day on July 5th were reviewed by the Committee, including: the performance running order; the Eat Feast food festival; the costume characters; the siting of tenting; the set-up and take-down of marques, etc.

It was resolved for KP to lead the organisation of the event and to delegate tasks to other Councillors. Cllr King will now take a lead on this alongside Cllr Greenwood and Cllr Culleton, a meeting to be agreed.

It was resolved for CQ to send MG the details of the previous 2024 risk assessment.

Minutes proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Cummings, all agreed.

24. To receive a report on Crime – for information purposes only.

Offence	**Number**
Shoplifting	15
Sexual	3
Public fear alarm or distress	3
Other theft	3
Harassment	2
Assault with injury	2
Malicious communication	1
Theft from a motor vehicle	1
Assault without injury	1
Blackmail	1
Theft or unauth taking of a vehicle	1
Total	33

25. To receive and approve a full list of payments for May 2025
List attached, proposed by Cllr Hayes seconded by Cllr, Culleton all agreed. List is attached.

26. To agree a Planning team and meeting for the Fun Day
Cllr King, Greenwood and Culleton will arrange a meeting and circulate the date.

27. To discuss and agree a funding request from Home Farm Trust
Cllr Mackin proposed a donation of £500 towards the purchase of a defibrillator, seconded by Cllr Cummings, all agreed. Cllr Wilson commented that the defibrillator being situated outside would also be available for residents.

Meeting closed 17.15hrs