

# Minutes of the Annual Community Meeting for Atcham held on Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 7pm in the Memorial Hall

## Present:

APC Cllrs Laura Dixon (Chair), Stephen Cook, Glen Perks, Cathy Ritchie, Rob Trow. SC Cllr Susan Coleman.

Representatives of Brunning & Price, National Trust, St Eata's Church, Salop Leisure, West Mercia Police, plus 14 members of the public.

Minutes taken by the Parish Clerk, Alison Utting.

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed all present.
2. **Parish Council:** Cllr Dixon gave the report for 2025-26 (separate document).
3. **Shropshire Council:** Cllr Susan Coleman has attended all bar one APC meetings throughout the last 12 months. She is always willing to be contacted on local issues. Key matters affecting Atcham at the moment: She is still pushing for the lining works and signage to be completed on Emstrey Bank. There should be news soon about the 'connect on demand' bus service. There is a new CEO at Shropshire Council and several senior roles have seen changes of personnel.
4. **Other reports:**
  - a) West Mercia Police – PC Rich Walters gave a report on behalf of our local policing team who were unavailable. Atcham shares two PCs and 2 PCSOs with an area covering 30 parishes. Our local PCSO tries to visit as often as possible. Truecam is being used for traffic speed enforcement in 30mph and 40mph zones, with tickets and fines being issued. There have been a few instances of rural theft in the area recently and also some cannabis farms discovered. Rumours of car break-ins at Attingham Park are unfounded. Residents are encouraged to report any suspicious/illegal incidents via 101 or the website, or 999 if a crime is in progress. Don't forget that sometimes small pieces of information are pieced together to solve a wider problem.
  - b) Memorial Hall - Sue Rothwell reported that the addition of two new trustees has brought the committee up to nine members, meeting quarterly. The AGM will be held in October and all are welcome. Shropshire Council carried out a

comprehensive inspection of the building in January, which was passed with flying colours. There are regular bookings in the diary (dance, bowls, NHS) as well as occasional community events. Overall occupancy, however, is quite low. WiFi has been installed, as well as a screen in the meeting room and some new LED lighting in the corridor and a key safe for ease of access. The old school playground is now available for use for large events or when Memorial Hall bookings coincide with bowling. The ageing condition of the hall continues to be a problem, with expensive repairs needed to some of the structure. Lottery funding and other grants are being investigated.

- c) St Eata's Church – Gill Burton (accompanied beautifully by the church bells!) reported that the Rector, Andrew Knight, has recently been made a Canon. Regular congregations of 25-30 meet for 11am service every Sunday; all welcome. There are also regular coffee mornings on the first Friday of the month. The church is usually full for major celebrations. A fundraising campaign is underway to pay for restoration of the top part of the tower. Keep a look out for upcoming events.
- d) Salop Leisure – Mark Bebb reported that a planning application should be published very soon for significant changes to the Salop Leisure/Love2Stay Emstrey site. As sales of touring caravans are falling, the plan is to convert part of the site into a retirement village – a gated community with on-site facilities, consisting of 180+ modular one-storey units. The development would grow over a period of about five years, with the planning permission covering the finished development. The caravan storage facility is to remain. It is proposed to create a new mini-roundabout on the B4380 to improve safe access. The development would be brownfield, within the existing footprint of the site. The plans should be published by Shropshire Council shortly.
- e) Brunning & Price (Mytton & Mermaid) – Representatives shared detailed plans for the new application that will be submitted soon for an additional car park. The significant differences from the previous application are: i) A reduced number of bays (62, from 94), based on traffic management surveys. ii) Parking area is closer to the road. iii) A raised embankment of 1.5-1.8m on the river side of the site, concealing the car park from view, with additional planting to aid screening. Solutions for Old Bridge lighting are still being worked out; main lighting on the car park would be solar/battery powered and no brighter than absolutely necessary. Surface of the car park would be a permeable layer, with grid and gravel top. It was emphasised that the plan is being put forward because there is a genuine need to solve the parking problems for both the

business and local residents, and there is simply no other option available. It is hoped that the new plan will overcome objections raised last time.

- f) National Trust – Nick Harris introduced himself as the new General Manager of Attingham Park, in role for 12 months while Mark Agnew is managing the relaunch of the Ironbridge Gorge sites. He shared some interesting statistics on visitor numbers as follows: 2025-26 = 610,000 visitors, up from 591,000 in 2024-25. 93% of visitors are from within a 30-minute radius. Attingham was scored the highest by visitors across the National Trust last Christmas. Finds from the archaeology dig carried out last year on land near Viroconium will be put on display soon at Attingham. The property will feature on BBC's 'Secrets of the National Trust' next Friday. Woodland planting is planned across next few years.

NT has been working with the Severn Rivers Partnership on improving flood management, developing plans (in conjunction with farmers) to hold water on land. Re: the Outdoor Hub – Negotiations are still ongoing regarding access to the site. There are also conditions to be agreed with Shropshire Council before work can begin. It is hoped that the Hub will alleviate pressure on the main site, but improvements to the parking facilities at the house are also being planned, to maximise use of available space. The booking system used at Christmas worked well, but Nick is aware of continuing impact on the village from queues and shortage of parking spaces and will do his best to mitigate that impact.

5. Any other matters of community concern:

*Who owns the Old Bridge?* We believe it is owned by Shropshire Council and is listed with Historic England.

*Is anything being done about the flotsam still building up on the stanchions of the bridges?* This will be raised as an agenda item at the next meeting. Invitation to be sent to Severn Trent, who are currently spending £500m on river/flood improvements. (There has been water testing carried out from church grounds, with permission). Nick Harris to share details of local contact for River Severn Partnership. Riparian land ownership rules apply to the river, the landowner on each side being responsible for the river up to the midway point.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm. Thanks were expressed to the team who supplied refreshments.

Signed:

Date: