



North Shropshire Area Committee

Minutes of the North Shropshire Area Committee 7.00 pm on 24th March 2025 in Wem Town Council Meeting Room.

Present:

Committee Members

Geraldine Tomlins
Paul Goulbourne (Chair)
Graham Hutchinson
Peta Smith
Bob Cole
Julie Catterall
Merv Roberts
Claire Crackett
Kathryn Holland
Huw Edwards (Vice Chair)
Rachel Gascoigne

Baschurch PC
Ellesmere TC
Ellesmere TC
Moreton Say PC
Norton-in-Hales PC
Prees
Shawbury PC
Stanton PC
Welshampton & Lyneal PC
Wem Rural PC
Wem TC

Also Present

Ray Wickson
Chris Mellings
Lin Foley
Amanda Roberts

Chairman, SALC
SALC Chief Officer
Crane Quality Counselling
NS Area Committee Secretary

Apologies Received

Marius Coulon
Patricia Budgen
John Tumelty
Andrew Thompson
Janet Gargiulio
Frank Beech
Gary Groves
Jad Bienek
Lynn Bearman
Andy Hall

Adderley PC
Baschurch PC
Cheswardine PC
Cheswardine PC
Ellesmere Rural PC
Hordley PC
Market Drayton TC
Myddle, Broughton & Harmer Hill PC
Stoke on Tern PC
Whitchurch TC

Speaker

1. Crane Quality Counselling – Lin Foley

Lin, a founder member of CQC outlined the background to the organisation including recent developments.

CQC was founded in 2014 with 4 unpaid individuals and six counsellors. During Covid, Shropshire Council provided funding for bereavement counselling. Half way through the 3-year grant Shropshire Council discussed qualifying to work with children and their work expanded from there. This led into aftercare groups. The grant ended 2 years ago.

Alongside bereavement work CQC still works with relationships, family breakdowns, step parenting etc. Shropshire Council recognised the value of their work and gave two year funding for more child-based work, this time involving working with schools and going in to work with pupils. This funding ends in March this year.

CQC is based in the Roy Fletcher Centre in Shrewsbury, providing appointments every day, including some late evening appointments. The bulk of the work is in North Shropshire and Shrewsbury. Counselling is carried out in person, over the phone and online. A mental health assessment is used by Counsellors at the start of the process.

Although CQC can't advertise in GP surgeries, many GPs are aware of them and whilst they don't formally refer clients, they often pass information about the service onto them. CQC guarantee to see clients within 7 days of the initial contact.

Counsellors are all fully qualified and fully qualified, with four years' training and 100 hours in a placement. They undertake 1.5 hours supervision every month.

Funding is always a challenge, particularly as Shropshire Council cuts grants to organisations. They have a charity shop (in Cheshire) and for the last three years, have organised a musical charity concert at which schools perform. They are constantly looking for any financial support including grants from Parish Council in the North Shropshire area.

In response to questions from the Committee:

- The service is totally confidential and no information goes back to GPs or schools.
- Referrals are through GPs or self-referral
- Information can be found at www.cranecounselling.co.uk
- Some of the work is with both primary and secondary pupils who are struggling at school. This includes disruptive pupils and non-attenders.
- There is no guaranteed funding and staff have reduced their number of paid days – any fund raising activities would be welcomed.

Committee Business

1. Apologies

As listed above.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025 were noted.

3. SALC Reports -

a. Chris Mellings, SALC Chief Officer

Report Circulated in advance and sent out with minutes.

CM also noted the following:

- SALC AGM – 29th October
- Local Nature Strategy Conference – 14th November (Ellesmere Town Hall).

Ray Wickson (SALC County Chair)

Ray's report covered the following:

- West Midlands CALC met to discuss the future relationship between County Associations and NALC. T&PCs are to be asked if they believe they are getting value for money. Salc was represented by RW and CM.
- In May there will be a summit of all CALCs regarding the future of the system.
- Devolution (information provided by CM prior to the meeting and sent out with minutes).
- Thanks to those who have attended the informal meeting of Chairmen.

4. Finance and Banking

The secretary provided a verbal update:

- Balance: £2191.39
- Commitments: £195.59
- Available funds: £1995.80

5. Matters Raised by Parish Councils

None.

6. Suggestions for Future Speakers/Topics

- Police & Crime Commissioner – invited to the June meeting
- Freedom Fibre – invited to the June meeting
- Care Leavers Presentation – to be invited to the September meeting
- Helen Morgan – to be invited to the September meeting

7. Date of next meeting

23rd June 2025 at 7pm, Wem Town Council Meeting Room

The meeting closed at 20.06