

DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley

MINUTES

of the

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Held at Diddlebury Village Hall on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at
7.15pm**

057/24: Present and apologies for absence

Present: Cllr. D Hedgley, Chairman, Cllr. A Watson, Cllr. C Martyn, Cllr. R Povall, Cllr. S Povall, Cllr. A Rattu, Cllr. T Pardoe, Cllr. R Morgan

Apologies were received and accepted from: Cllr. T. O'Boyle

In attendance: The Clerk, Shropshire Cllr. C Motley and one member of the public.

058/24: Confirmation of Notice Convening the Annual Parish Meeting

In accordance with statute. The Notice convening the Annual Parish Meeting has been duly published on the parish notice boards and on the parish council's website.

059/24: Annual reports of the Parish Council and other groups/committees for the year 2023 - 2024. These reports were not read out at the meeting. Copies will be available at the meeting and on the Parish Council's website. Questions were invited at the meeting.

- (a) Chairman of the Parish Council
- (b) Cllr. Cecilia Motley, Shropshire Council
- (c) Westhope Village Hall
- (d) Diddlebury Flood Action Group
- (e) Cllr. C. Martyn, DPC's website manager
- (f) Louise Powell Almshouses
- (g) Diddlebury Village Hall.

059/24/1 - Chairman's Report

There has been no change in the council personnel but there will be an election in May 2025 for the whole of the council. Details of this will be advertised as they become available

Sara Thompson has now stood down from managing the web site and we must thank her for her excellent work. She has been replaced by Councillor Martyn.

Main issues arising

Place Plan Critical

1. Broadband Provision. We continue to press for acceptable broadband reception throughout the parish liaising with and investigating Government funding as it is promoted. Our influence on this is limited with the providers and SC calling the shots. SWS has now merged

with Voneus with a promised better service. We do however appear to have lost our local links.

Place Plan Priority.

2. Public transport-encouragement of improved local public transport.

Place Plan Key

3. Measures to control the speed limit through Diddlebury and other road safety measures.

DPC is continuing to work with other Corvedale Parish Councils to influence SC Highways and the police on measures to make the B4368 in particular safer for both pedestrians and motorists. This included a Highways Study of the B4368 and a combined meeting with police and highways followed by a wish list report to Highways. Funding however is very limited.

. We also continue to raise pothole concerns with highways.

Non place plan issues

4. Provision of a communal playground area. This followed the Place Plan questionnaire in July and was proposed as part of the Place Plan submission but was referred back to us for self funding by the Place Plan Officer. To keep costs low and to site it practically it was agreed with Corvedale School and the DVH committee to convert the access to the existing play area in the school so that access could be obtained when the school was not in session and to provide an all weather surface. The school's parent association also agreed to provide a further piece of equipment. The work should hopefully be completed by July and funded from our Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund. This is the fund's main priority this year.

6.Crime. We are aware of concerns over crime in the parish and continue to work closely with the police to combat this. We complete and update a Community Police Charter every 3 months with community theft, speeding and scams being our 3 priority areas at present.

Flood control measures. We manage and financially support these through the work of the Flood Action Group led by Cllr Martyn.

7.Environmental Maintenances Officer (EMO). A decision was taken last year not to employ an EMO but to tender for individual jobs as they arose. This year has again seen voluntary work being undertaken by Councillor's and members of the public which has saved the parish a lot of money and we would like to encourage the expansion of this.

Diddlebury Parish Council Precept 2024-25

Following the council meeting on the 24th January, the precept for the next financial year was set at £7,500. This is an increase of £840 on last year's but still over £1,100 less than the previous 2 years. This will result in an increase of approximately £3.00 per household. The council made a conscious decision to try and keep the precept low, but had to absorb wage rises for the clerk/financial officer of approximately £260.00 and other inflation increases in running costs. We have reduced costs regarding Asset Management by work being under taken by councillors and local people volunteering their help. We are always happy to accept such volunteering with painting, light repairs and cleaning of assets. We continue to financially support the infrastructure of village halls, local charities and work such as the Flood Action Group where possible. The money from our Neighbourhood Fund, derived from the Community Infrastructure Levy on new houses and received from

Shropshire Council, has this year been earmarked to open up the play area in the school grounds to children and families, as requested by parishioners in our Place Plan survey. The new playground area will be open even when the school is not in session and will provide an all-weather play surface. We have also earmarked £300.00 for an Information Board to sit alongside the War Memorial in St Peter's grounds, detailing the history of the names inscribed on it.

A full copy of the precept budget can be found on DPC's website. Financial Reports are detailed in each meeting's Minutes, which are also on our website.

Responses to Consultations.

Household Recycling and Green Bin Questionnaire.

Police Community Charter

Community Governance review

Public Meetings/ External Meetings attended by the Chairman.

SC Highways Study B4368

Emergency Planning Sessions x 4

Planning applications.

15 planning applications have been received this year as opposed to 17 last year.

All bar one were supported as compared to two not supported last year.

Within the 15 applications two were related to tree work against one last year.

There were two enforcement enquiries from DPC year against none last year.

A number of site visits were undertaken by councillors.

Sample of other topics arising and activities undertaken.

.Electric Charging points, Collapsed river wall in Bouldon,

Parking issues at Bache Mill and the The Moors. Post Office delivery problems.

Attendance at Remembrance Day ceremony. Coronation Signage

Over the last year the parish council has yet again continued to work closely with the Flood Action Group and the village hall committees of Diddlebury and Westhope. At present the Parish Plan Steering Group is on hold. As Chair I would like to thank my colleagues for the work they put in within a voluntary role, the hard work of our Parish Clerk Jean as well as Councillor Motley for her continued unstinting support.

D. Hedgley - Chair DPC

059/24/2 - Shropshire Cllr. C Motley's 2023 – 2024 Report to Corvedale Parishes

Comprising the parishes of Abdon & Heath, Acton Scott (Parish Meeting), Clee St Margaret, Culmington, Diddlebury, Eaton under Heywood/Hope Bowdler, Munslow, Rushbury, Stanton Lacy, Stoke St Milborough

Finance

Throughout the financial year Shropshire Council has been struggling with an historic debt of £50m, due to the huge increase in demand post-Covid for Children and Adult Social care, together with high costs of providing housing for homeless people and demand for school transport for SEND children. Shropshire is not alone in this; over the last year and into 2024 we have seen a large number of local authorities effectively declare themselves bankrupt because they could not cope with post-Covid demand and the impact of inflation and ever-rising costs on service delivery. Birmingham and Nottingham were the most high profile of these. Such bankruptcy declarations are requested under a Section 114 notice which then means the Government send in a team to go through finances and balance the books, often

through draconian measures such as selling off capital assets and closing all non statutory services such as libraries and leisure centres.

Shropshire Council was determined to avoid this and set stringent savings targets, particularly in Social Care, which were not only realised but actually exceeded. The Directorate succeeded in reorganising services and using new technology to support people in their homes by concentrating on increasing domiciliary care services and a prevention programme to help keep our elderly population well and out of hospital. By the end of the 23/24 financial year we had achieved massive savings of £22m. No resting on our laurels though as we are faced with another financial mountain to climb in the 2024/5 financial year, and I will be reporting on our progress as we tackle this huge new challenge

Local Government Boundary Review

This was finally completed and has left some electoral divisions somewhat changed, especially around Shrewsbury which has seen a large increase in population since 2009. In order to make sense of changes to divisions we've had to alter some of the parish boundaries. This has required detailed work from our legal team to get the changes incorporated (and some polling districts redrawn) in time for the forthcoming General Election.

The Corvedale was one of the divisions to be enlarged by the inclusion of Cardington parish. The LGBCE were insistent that each division should have around 3,500 residents and despite its extensive geography Corvedale fell short of this. The introduction of Cardington has rebalanced the numbers and we look forward to welcoming the residents of Cardington parish in 2025 after the Local Government elections in May 2025..

There are some minor changes to parish boundaries within the divisions which have been asked for by the parishes. These will be dealt with by the Council's internal Community Governance Review committee after the 2025 Election.

Flooding

We have endured the wettest winter on record. Many villages in the Corvedale have suffered from overflowing watercourses, and the speed of runoff from the hills and fields which can continue for days after the rain has stopped. We have endured clogged drains, lanes scoured out by fast running water, bridges undermined and flooding in areas which are normally unaffected. Our highways team are doing their best but can be plagued by pothole repairs being washed away in the next downpour. Parish councils with a lengthsman have done a sterling job digging out clogged ditches and clearing grids, drains etc. Although FixMyStreet works reasonably well, the rural parishes still seem to be low on the list when it comes to road repairs, due to the inaccessibility of some of the rural roads. If we could expand the lengthsman scheme and set up mutually supportive communication with our highways depots I feel the scheme would work much better for the rural areas.

I will be working on this in the coming year.

Adult Social Care/Public Health

I have held this portfolio since 2022. It is complex and wide-ranging and involves close working with health partners through the NHS Integrated Care Board and the Shropshire & Telford Acute Trust covering Shropshire & Telford Hospitals.

Caring for vulnerable adults is one of the Council's most important statutory duties, whether those with learning disabilities or mental health issues between the ages of 18 – 65 or our 65+ residents. We have a duty of care to ensure people are safe and properly looked after, either in their own homes, with domiciliary care support or in residential care or nursing homes. We work closely alongside partners from health, the voluntary and private sectors to deliver the most appropriate support to ensure people can remain in the heart of their communities for as long as possible.

Providing care for both adults and children is by far the most expensive service provided by the Council, absorbing 77% of the Council's overall budget. Shropshire is a very rural county and care delivery costs are higher in rural areas than in the towns. Costs are rising every year as our population grows and our residents develop increasingly complex health

needs. We have also taken action in the past year to inject extra funding into the domiciliary care market, which is working very well.

2024/25 will be even more challenging financially than last year for social care. We know that most people are much happier living in their own homes than in a care home. We are devising a variety of technologies to help people stay safe and well in their homes. These include technology in the home which checks on the elderly and vulnerable to ensure they have eaten, taken their medication etc. The virtual ward scheme is growing; this enables sick people to be cared for remotely through constant oversight via computer link and physical interventions by a doctor or nurse when required.

On the Public Health side we have been working closely with our Health partners through the Health & Wellbeing Board, which I co-chair with the CEO of the Integrated Care Board. The HWB Board has done great work in highlighting issues of access to healthcare, encouraging the social prescribing programme and supporting community based health hubs which are being rolled out throughout the county to help people access support without having to travel long distances. Other public health campaigns include stopping child vaping, working to reduce suicide levels particularly amongst the rural community, and developing a healthier weight strategy. We're also working on formulating a rural healthcare programme. This is one of my particular interests and I am pleased to see that it is being picked up by the Health Service. Public Health also funds the Health and Wellbeing Bus which visits the farmers' markets regularly and offers free health checks and health advice. This has proved to be a great asset and popular with the farmers.

Finally: looking ahead, there is obviously a General Election looming this year, followed by Local Government Elections in May 2025. Shropshire Council will spend the year ahead defying the Section 114 notice by continuing to innovate, cut costs and serve our population as best we can in difficult circumstances.

Cecilia Motley

Shropshire Councillor, Corvedale Division

Portfolio Holder, Adult Social Care & Public Health

059/24/3- Diddlebury Village Hall report by Cllr. S Povall

Cllr. Povall reported that all is going well with the Diddlebury Village Hall. It is hosting lots of meetings and activities and is clearly a community asset.

059/24/4 – Westhope Village Hall Report

Mrs K Worthington reported that the Westhope Village Hall committee continue to work hard on both promoting village hall activities and on renovating the hall, which is now 100 years old. A Centenary celebration event is planned for June. The building has undergone extensive renovations, both inside and externally. Fund raising activities are held every month plus the hall hosts yoga, skittles, whilst, bingo, rummage sales, family functions such as funeral teas, plus harvest festival and Christmas events.

059/24/5 - Report by Cllr. T O'Boyle on the Louise Powell Almshouses Charity

1. Repairs regarding damp and mold have been successfully completed, still leaving finances in a healthy condition
2. All finances have been submitted to auditor and will be available on the website
- 3 The formation of one Board of Trustees for administration of the following:-
 - The Hosyer-Foxe Charity
 - Massey Almshouse Charity
 - Sir Job Charlton Hospital Charity
 - Louisa Powell Charity

With effect from 1 June 2024

There will be 12 members on the committee although each charity will meet separately. The first meeting will be 17 July 2024.

4 The charity is grateful for the DPC donation, which will be kept separately to assist with personal matters such as transport to hospital

The charity is exceptionally well managed

Cllr. T O'Boyle

15 May 2024

059/24/6 – Diddlebury Flood Action Group Report 2024– Cllr. C Martyn

We are members of the Shropshire Flood Action Group Forum which, under the auspices of the National Flood Forum is a grouping of all the existing Flood Action Groups in the County. The Group is chaired by Bob Haddon who has done such great work in the Telford area. It is anticipated that the Group will carry more clout than the individual members in getting action from the various Agencies involved in Flood Prevention.

The FAG was started by a number of local residents who were motivated to take action by the numerous flood events which occurred in the village during 2012.

We received encouragement and financial assistance from the DPC and this is still ongoing.

They also kindly now send us all Planning Applications for comment.

We were introduced to the concept of Slow the Flow by the use of NFM techniques and were very pleased to discover that the Corvedale was in the forefront of all this under the Shropshire Slow the Flow Steering Group .

The **Flood Response Plan** is kept up to date as new data emerges and the presence of a level gauge above Bouldon make it possible to rationalize this Plan for the settlements in the Pye Brook valley.

We are currently trying to find suitable places to store items such as sand bags (or Flood Sax) in each settlement and also to recruit an individual in each settlement who would be the designated “go to” person in the event of flooding plus other volunteers who could help with the supply of say equipment such as 4x4 transport, First Aid etc.

We have Multi Agency Meetings on a six monthly basis.

Diddlebury Flood Action Group

New page produced on the parish website to promote the current workings of the Flood Group. Our local Flood Action Plan has been updated at each local meeting. Our last meeting was held on 10/4/24, The issues discussed

- Consideration of the development of Bache Mill, which raised the ground levels within the development and the knock-on effects it had to other local properties.
- The Local Resilience Plan updating.
- Shropshire Council are now investing again in the leaky dams project
- Correspondence with Cardiff University showed that the previous leaky dams were insufficient to hold back the volume of water needed
- New culverts under the road at Peaton Strand improved the control the run off water.
- New gauge fitted on Pye Brook to monitor levels,
- Annual stream clearing at Diddlebury footbridge was carried out.
- New culvert pipes installed at Delbury Hall to relieve the flood waters beside ‘The Malthouse’ caused by the small road bridge next to Delbury Hall

- The ‘Boulton Wall’, several visits by highway agencies but no forward action \ highways now asking landowner if an emergency channel could be created to take the floodwater flows.
- Going forward we will consider our catchment area actions by splitting the area into three water basins – Corfton, Diddlebury, Pye Brook. It is hoped that this may encourage a higher involvement by residents.

Flood Warnings

We receive ○ Weather warnings from the Environment Agency. ○ Stream level warnings from the gauges on the Diddle at Diddlebury B4368 bridge, and on the Pye Brook at Bouldon

These are sent out by email, and relayed onwards to the Flood Group Google group, and the Corvedale Google group

Leaky Dams,

After an initial period of scepticism over leaky dams, a general perception that local flooding has been reduced by our efforts.

However during Storm Babet flooding again occurred after the rapid rise in the Diddle stream levels, 1.4m over period of 2 hours, again raised questions. After contacting Cardiff University they suggested a review of their modelling meant there was insufficient containment behind the built dams. Secondly, on inspection of the dams upstream of Diddlebury it was noticed several were now damaged and in need of reinstatement.

Timeview Level Gauges

○ On the Diddle - Mounted on the B4368 bridge
Diddlebury

○ On Pye Brook – Mounted on footbridge upstream from
Bouldon

Storms during the year

- Babet 18th October 2023 ○ Once again the harsh storm produced sufficient rainfall to cause flooding of several properties within the parish, namely at Bouldon, Peaton Strand, Diddlebury and Bache Mill
- Henk 2nd January 2024 ○ Luckily on this occasion although a storm of heavy rain, no flooding of properties was reported
- No new areas were flooded, unfortunately all properties previous flooded, again suffered

059/24/7 – Diddlebury P.C’s website manager’s report 2023 – 2024 – Cllr. C Martyn

The Parish website continues to maintain its core function of broadcasting news about the parish, the announcement of events, parish council meetings, and keeping a record of the parish council business.

This year

- ✚ A new page was added – Corvedale Walking.
- ✚ New page added for the Flood Action group until the old page can be merged into new page
- ✚ Outdated links have been removed.
- ✚ All parish council meeting dates, agendas and minutes have been kept updated.
- ✚ There has been a small increase in views over the year

Site Analytics of the page landings show

- ✚ Most popular landing page is **Diddlebury Parish Council**

At Parish council meetings it is noted

- ✚ The website is not used as a resource for parish council matters by the public
- ✚ Many things published by the council on the website are not seen
- ✚ Does the website need to mirror the Corvedale news? The events page only publishes one month ahead.
- ✚ Should the website be used to encourage tourists to the parish?

Cllr. Martyn's suggestions for the website were discussed and it was agreed it would be useful to put parish events on it at least two months ahead of them occurring, plus the development of tourist information would be useful. It was unclear how more people could be made aware of the website. Cllr. R Povall was concerned enlarging information it would make the voluntary job of website manager more onerous. It was agreed these suggestions should be a separate agenda item to be discussed fully.

060/24 – Open Forum – an opportunity for parishioners to raise any questions or issues with the councillors.

No issues were raised.

061/24 – Closing comments from the Chairman

The Chairman thanked everyone for their reports.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm

Minutes signed by: David Hedgley

Dated: 26th June 2024