

# **DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley**

## **MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Held at Diddlebury Village Hall on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.30pm**

### **051/25 Present and apologies for absence**

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

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

In attendance: The Clerk, Mrs C Motley and Cllr. Colin Stanford, newly elected Corvedale Division councillor of Shropshire Council who stayed for part of the meeting and two members of the public.

### **052/25: 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.

**053/25: Annual reports of the Parish Council and other groups/committees for the year 2024 - 2025. 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.**

053/25/1 – Cllr. Colin Stanford briefly introduced himself but had to leave after a short while as he also had to attend Munslow PC's APM. He looks forward to working with Diddlebury PC and will be at our June meeting. He promised to be a conduit between parish councils and Shropshire Council and is happy to be contacted by councillors and parishioners with any problems they may have. If he is unable to attend a meeting, he will submit a written report beforehand.

The Chairman welcomed and thanked Cllr. Stanford for attending and advised him DPC is not a politically motivated parish council but rather focuses on local needs, for which we will seek his support, particularly with any thorny planning issues.

### **053/25/2 – Report from Chairman of the Parish Council**

We were due an election on the 1<sup>st</sup> May alongside the election for a Unitary Councillor but as there were only 8 nominations it became an Uncontested Election as notified by the returning officer. The 8 nominees listed were all previous councillors and were duly elected. They will be formally appointed and sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form at the first meeting of the new council on the 14<sup>th</sup> May.

Councillor Tim Pardoe decided not to apply for re-election and has thus left the council as of the 1<sup>st</sup> May. We are sorry to be losing Tim who was a valued member of the council in more ways than one. Even before he joined the council Tim had contributed to his local community by erecting the noticeboard at Sutton. He continued his community work commissioning notice boards and maintaining and repairing them. The resurrected bus shelter at Peaton is his work as is the really impressive picnic table shelter at the new playground. As a councillor

Tim always expressed his views and argued his case even if it differed with others. Although he only served one term it was a very memorable one.

We will, as advised by SALC, be instigating at the meeting on the 14th May the procedure for co-opting a further councillor onto the council.

This year saw the death of Mervyn Thomas who, prior to his retirement from the council, had served it loyally and diligently for a considerable period of time.

### **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 link and there have been issues with the new service provided re loss of signal or slow down load speeds.

#### **Place Plan Priority.**

2. **Public transport** -encouragement of improved local public transport. Ongoing but with little hope of funding.

#### **Place Plan Key**

3. **Measures to control the speed limit through Diddlebury and other road safety measures.**  
Ongoing but with little progress

The Place plan priorities will need reviewing with a new council being formed in May.

### **Non place plan issues**

4. **Provision of a communal playground area.** This was completed last summer and is being used quite extensively after school and at weekends, as was intended.

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 and have met with the local police team. There has been an open public meeting with the local Community Officer.

7. **Flood control measures.** We manage and financially support these through the work of the Flood Action Group led by Cllr Martyn. Flooding along the B4368 at Bache Mill has been raised.

8. **Potholes** -an ongoing issue - DPC has encouraged people to use Fix My Street to report concerns as they seem to be effective in dealing with potholes once reported.

9. **Planning** - recently SC planners have made decisions that oppose DPC's recommendations and whereas before these would be referred to the Southern Planning Committee for a review or an opportunity to contest their decisions, this has not happened. We and other parish councils are opposing this changing in planning policy.

**10. Local government reorganisation** of boundaries and wards is an ongoing debate and we have been in discussion with Culmington Parish Council over possible boundary changes.

**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 Councillors and members of the public which has saved the parish a lot of money and we would like to encourage the expansion of this and to offer our thanks to all concerned.

### **Diddlebury Parish Council Precept 2025-26**

Following the council meeting on the 22nd January, the precept for the next financial year has remained at £7,500. This will cost each Band D household £25.01

The council made a conscious decision to keep the precept low and will absorb inflation increases within its running costs and reserves. We again reduced costs regarding Asset Management by work being undertaken 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 did however commission the cleaning of road signs throughout the parish. 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, which we received from Shropshire Council last year was 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 playground area is now open even when the school is not in session and has an all-weather playing surface. We still have £2,199.55 of CIL money remaining and should receive VAT money of around £3,400 back for the playground expenses. We do not know if we will receive any further CIL money from Shropshire Council as they don't divulge this until allocated.

There is 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 but we still await approval for the siting of this from the church authorities.

We are due an election this May for Parish Councillors. If an election is needed because over 9 people stand it will cost approximately £1,200. We have £457.73 already reserved for the election and as the balance of costs can be deferred to the 2026-27 budget we have not included it in this year's costs.

This year we have replaced batteries and pads in the parish's defibrillators and brackets on the speed signs.

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 undertaken**

Household Recycling and Green Bin Questionnaire.

Police Community Charter

Community Governance review

Local Services Contributions questionnaire

Emergency Planning Survey

Shropshire Council Budget consultation.

### **Public Meetings/ External Meetings attended.**

Connexus -Mill Lane empty houses development.

Community Police Officer open forum.

### **Planning applications.**

20 Planning applications have been received this year as opposed to 15 last year.  
All bar 3 were supported as compared to 1 not supported last year.  
Within the 20 applications 2 were related to tree work the same as last year.  
There was 1 enforcement enquiry from DPC this year against 2 last year and 1 ongoing investigation to see if an Enforcement Enquiry is warranted.  
A number of planning related site visits were undertaken by councillors.

**Sample of other topics arising and activities undertaken.**

Severn Trent pipe work at The Moors site. Supporting Westhope Defibrillator..  
Notice Board renewals. WW1 plaque-still seeking diocese approval.  
Attendance at Remembrance Day ceremony.

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. 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 which will be missed once she steps down on May 1<sup>st</sup>. We have formally acknowledged and thanked her for her tremendous work and support over the years.

David Hedgley  
Chair  
Diddlebury Parish Council

**054/25/3 – Report from former Corvedale Divisional Cllr. Cecilia Motley**

Former Councillor Motley apologised for not being at the April meeting. She thanked the parish council for their kind words, card and gift. She advised her final report contains no good news – it has been a turbulent and difficult year: the new Liberal Democrat administration were shocked to find the state of SC's finances when they took over in May. Stuart Anderson, our new MP, has been working very hard on rural issues but is facing an uphill battle as the Labour government has an urban bias and no rural MP's in the Cabinet. SC has a deficit of £50 million, due in part to an overspend of £37 million due to the ever-increasing demands for adult and child social care. At present Shropshire still has libraries, museums and leisure facilities but their continuance cannot be guaranteed. Due to a mixture of voluntary and compulsory redundancies, staff have been reduced by 15%. Staff are mostly packed into the small and ill designed Guildhall as the Shirehall is now closed. She urged parish councils to amalgamate if possible, or at least to work co-operatively to give the rural hinterlands more clout at SC. Our Shropshire Local Plan will be swept aside, as will Planning Committees and individual planning officers will have an enlarged role in reaching delegated planning decisions. This will probably result in many locum or consultant planning officers being appointed to deal with the increased volume of planning applications, and they will have no knowledge or connection with the values and ethos of Shropshire people. The Chairman thanked Cecilia Motley for coming to the meeting tonight and for all the help and support she has given him and DPC down the years.

**054/25/4 – Flood Action Group Report for 2024 – up to May 2025 from Cllr. Clive Martyn**

First, a reminder of the Group's aims:  
To liaise with other county agencies about the flood issues in our parish  
To report any flooding events and their impacts  
To assist the community in times of flooding.

The Group's area covers the tributaries of the Pye Brook, the Diddle Brook and the Corve. The year has been marked by a storm on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024, then a major storm on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024 which resulted in the highest water levels recorded by the gauge on the B4368 bridge. Again, several houses in Bache Mill were flooded. The Pinstones Road floodwaters caused issues at the Bridge areas. In Corfrton there was property flooding. In March 2025 an inspection of the leaky dams on the Diddle was carried out, which concluded the majority of the dams were now either missing or ineffective. A report was sent to Shropshire Wildlife Trust with a request for funding to repair or reinstate the dams. SWT will contact the landowner to discuss the matter. Multi-Agency meetings were held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025, at which the local action plan as updated.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 a SWT Landowners Engagement Meeting was well attended by both landowners and FAG members. The Chairman thanked Cllr, Martyn for his report and for all the work he does on flood issues for the residents of this parish.

#### 054/25/5 – Diddlebury Parish Council's Website Manager's Report

In addition to running the Flood Action Group, Cllr. Martyn is also the DPC Website manager and he reported as follows:

##### **Highlights 2024 – 2025**

- All parish council Agendas, Minutes, accounting and audit documents published
- All planning applications and decision notices published, including links to the Shropshire Council planning portal.
- The News section was regularly updated with both local and county news.
- The Events page was updated monthly to synchronise with the Corvedale News.
- New section added relating to Walks available in the parish

**The analytics** on the site show on average 3 hits per day.

The breakdown of visitors by country have been:

- Germany – 46%
- Hong Kong – 35%
- UK – 13%

These generate two emails per day offering to build up the site's footfall for money.

##### **Current project**

Currently transitioning the website Domain name from [diddleburypc@outlook.com](mailto:diddleburypc@outlook.com) to [clerk@diddleburypc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@diddleburypc.gov.uk)

Again, the Chairman thanked Cllr. Martyn for all the time and effort he puts into managing the parish council's website.

#### 054/25/6 - Louise Powell Almshouses Charity report by Cllr. Tom O'Boyle

- 1 Finances are in a healthy state  
The vacancy of a Louisa Powell property is currently being upgraded and repaired
- 2 The formation of a single board of trustees for administration of the following
  - The Hosyer-Foxe Charity
  - Massey Almshouse Charity
  - Sir Job Charlton Hospital Charity
  - Louisa Powell CharityWith 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

This has worked successfully, the board being called the Administrative Trustees Board

3 The website is being updated

4 There is a continued upgrading of personal alarms for residents and to the telephone systems

The charity is exceptionally well managed

T O'Boyle 15 May 2025

**055/25 – Open Forum – an opportunity for parishioners to raise any questions or issues with the councillors.**

No issues were raised.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm and thanked everyone for their reports.

The next Annual Parish Meeting will be on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**Minutes signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_