

DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley

Clerk: Mrs Jean de Rusett, 12 Church Road, Brampton Bryan, Bucknell, SY7 0DH

Tel: 01547 519282 "e" mail address: clerk@diddlebury-pc.gov.uk

Website address: www.diddleburyparish.co.uk

MINUTES

**of the meeting of Diddlebury Parish Council
held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 7.30pm at Westhope Village Hall.**

089/25– Present

Cllr. D Hedgley - Chairman, Cllr. R Povall, Cllr. R Morgan, Cllr. S Povall, Cllr. A Rattu, Cllr. T O'Boyle, Cllr. A Watson, Cllr. B Watts, Cllr. C Martyn

In attendance - the Clerk. Corvedale Cllr. Colin Stanford plus 14 members of the public.

090/25 – Declarations of Interest.

Members were requested to declare any Disclosable Personal or Pecuniary Interests they may have in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Cllr. R Morgan made a declaration of interest to planning application 25/027723/FUL and took no part in the consideration of the application.

091/25 – Public involvement session.

Most members of the public present came to discuss the various planning applications. No other issues were raised.

092/25– Approval of the Minutes of the parish council meetings of 23rd July 2025

The draft Minutes of the meeting of 23rd July 2025 had been circulated prior to the meeting: no objections were raised to them at the meeting.

Cllr. R Povall **proposed** that the Minutes of the meeting of 23rd July 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Proposal **seconded by** Cllr. Watson

Vote: Eight in favour, one abstention.

093/25: Matters arising from the Parish Council Meeting of 23rd July 2025 not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.

070/25: Cllr. Martyn has investigated the blocked footpath by the B4368 bridge and has ascertained:

- 1, The "path" has been unused for over 40 years.
2. The "path" would require fording the stream instead of using the pavement on the bridge.
3. The endpoint would be onto the B4368 on a dangerous corner with limited vision.

4. The endpoint is the same place where Highways are developing a water channel to take water off the bridge, a water course which would be the same line as the path.
5. The continuation pathway to the old post office steps is now missing.

The “path” is no longer shown on the definitive map of Shropshire Council footpaths and rights of way, so SC would not be interested in clearing it. The Chairman was happy that the path is no longer designated as a footpath.

094/25- Reports

094/25/1 – Chairman’s Report. The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Shropshire Together event in Shrewsbury organised for councillors and clerks. He had sent a summary of the topics dealt with at the event to DPC councillors by email. The bottom line is town and parish councils are being advised they will have to take on the administration and maintenance of services such as leisure centres, claiming the expense for this work via our precepts. Other topics raised included complaints from town and parish councillors about how hard it is to communicate with any specific departments or staff at SC since the Shirehall closed. We put it to SC that they need to set up a dedicated telephone number and email address for Parish Councils to be able to contact SC officers and departments easily. He has met Mr Ross to discuss Diddlebury Village Hall notice board matters. DVH maintain as evidenced in their minutes that the notice board on the hall was for Diddlebury Parish matters only, not for wider parts of the Corvedale or people advertising services. DPC have no recollection that this was ever agreed when it commissioned the notice board. It was agreed that Cllr. Rattu will advise the DVH Committee that DPC would like confirmation of the reasons behind the notice board not being as available as the other parish boards are. It was agreed that the Three Castles board will also be used to house the WWI Memorial information. A new board will be purchased to house the Three Castles map and WWI information which can be sited on the school field fence which the walk passes. The Chairman has also spent a considerable amount of time this month dealing with planning applications and related matters.

094/25/2 – Corvedale Division Cllr. Colin Stanford’s report. Cllr. Stanford reported that SC’s finances are worse than ever and the Cabinet are threatening to declare the Council bankrupt. Cleobury Mortimer and Much Wenlock Leisure Centres are threatened with closure but at the moment Ludlow and Bishops Castle seem to be safe. On devolution, it is suggested Shropshire and Telford hospitals will amalgamate with Stoke on Trent, which will create a huge area with transport difficulties. Shropshire Council has asked Town and Parish Councils, either jointly or individually, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, asking them to deliver and fund via their precept local services such as hedge and verge trimming, drain clearance etc. He referred to the long email which has been circulated to councils about this scheme. The proposal was discussed briefly and it seems to throw up many logistical problems. The Chairman advised a previous effort when Corvedale parishes had jointly employed an EMO had failed.

Cllr. Standford mentioned the Call for Sites initiative seeking land for houses to be built on in line with the proposed 2028 Local Plan. He congratulated SC’s Children’s Services on being awarded an Outstanding grade in a recent OFSTED inspection. On highways, he advised that there is a Task and Finish Group looking at Kier to see whether its contract should be reviewed, adjusted or cancelled.

094/25/3 - Flood Action Group report. Cllr. Martyn reported on a recent webinar event on riparian ownerships, given by Kent County Council. He will be producing a summary of information that could be published in the Corvedale News. John Bellis has been asked to provide a depth gauge for the bridge on the B4368, but it has yet to appear.

Cllr. Rattu advised that Cardiff University students have been actively looking at streams around the parish during the past couple of weeks.

094/25/4 - Diddlebury Village Hall Report: Cllr, Rattu advised that he had been unable to attend the last DVH meeting. As per the request at the July meeting, he had enquired with the DVH committee whether planning permission was required for the sign which was to be erected. It did initially appear planning may have been required but when the DVH committee got in touch with Shropshire Council, they were advised permission would not be required, therefore the sign had been installed as planned.

094/25/5 - Westhope Village Hall Report. Mrs Worthington reported the electricians will shortly be starting to install the new heating system and fire alarms, which is proof of the effort the committee put into fund raising events. The Chairman congratulated the WVH Committee for their efforts in making the hall so attractive and in such good repair.

095/25 – Planning applications

25/02877/VAR & 25/02888/VAR. Applications for variations to planning permission 24/03616/FUL & 24/03617/LBC, at Green Farm, Middlehope

The Chairman reported that these applications had been dealt with by way of DPC's Standing Order 27. The applications were retrospective re-submissions for one which DPC had previously considered. The Group constituted under S.O. 27 had considered the applications and had supported them.

25/02773/FUL – application for installation of five pods for additional wedding accommodation in Walled Garden at Delbury Hall, Diddlebury.

It was noted there were no public objections to this application. A previous application for 10 pods, which DPC had supported, was refused by SC for reasons DPC could not understand. The plans and supporting documentation were considered and discussed.

Cllr. R Povall **proposed** that DPC should support this application and add a caveat to their response that if the Planners are minded to refuse it, then DPC wishes to be heard at the Planning Committee. The Chairman **seconded** the proposal.

Vote: 7 in support, 1 abstention, 1 non-voter due to declaration of interest.

25/02831/FUL – application for the erection of a garage attached to previously approved new dwelling, Moat Hollow House, Bache Mill, SY7 9JX

It was noted there were no public objections to this application for the erection of a single garage. The application's plan and documents were considered and the applicant answered queries raised.

Cllr. R Povall **proposed** that DPC should support this application.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Watts

Vote: 7 in favour, 2 abstentions.

25/03211/OUT – Outline application (to include access and scale) for the construction of three detached houses and relocation of existing vehicular access on land south of B4368 at Corfton,

There were a considerable number of public objections to this application on the planning portal and a number of those objectors were in attendance to support their objections, plus other residents attended who had not put objections on the portal. The applicant was represented by his agent, Mr Shaun Jones.

The Chairman gave a very detailed outline of the recent history of planning in Corfton, including Resolutions DPC had passed to deny support to open market housing in Corfton. He then gave a detailed summary of the main objections. Every objector who wished to be heard was given time to put their case and, at his request, Mr Jones spoke last to support the application and to deal with some of the specific objections which had been raised.

After hearing all the speakers, the councillors considered this application and agreed unanimously that they would object to the application and that they would set out in detail for the Planning Officer their reasons for objecting to the application. Cllr. Watson **proposed** this course of action, Cllr. Cllr. Martyn **seconded** the proposal and the councillors **voted unanimously** in support of the proposal, which was worded and submitted as follows:
Diddlebury Parish Council (DPC) considered this application at its meeting on 24th September 2025.

The Parish Council strongly **objects** to this application for the following reasons:

1. The Corfton Community had agreed to become a Community Cluster and to accept the development of five new houses. Shropshire Council (SC) increased community clusters to ten houses. By 2019 SC had granted planning permissions, in the face of the community's objections, which greatly exceeded the figure of ten new houses.

On the 23rd January 2019 DPC passed a Resolution to formally request that Corfton be withdrawn from the Community Cluster and become Open Countryside for planning purposes; that DPC will not support any further applications for new housing in Corfton and that DPC will submit a response to the SC Local Plan Review – Preferred Sites Consultation which reflects this decision. This view point was supported in a meeting with SC's Head of Planning, Councillor Motley and the Chair of DPC and was reflected in the refusal by planners of subsequent planning applications for open market housing in Corfton.

On the 22nd January 2025 DPC amended part of this Resolution as follows: "Diddlebury Parish Council will not support any further applications for open market housing in Corfton, only affordable or exception sites will be considered".

DPC has not received any request from the Corfton community to revise this Resolution and thus as a matter of principle DPC objects to this outline planning application.

2 .Having given notice that Corfton was to be removed from the Community Cluster and reclassified as Open Countryside, in the draft SAMDev Plan of February 2025 Shropshire Council's cabinet agreed that the evidence base supporting the now withdrawn Local Plan forms a material consideration in decision making in relevant planning applications and it follows therefore that this application should be considered with Corfton classified as Open Countryside, not as part of a Community Cluster.

3. In considering this application the Parish Councillors had considered the nine letters of objection on the Planning Portal. The Parish Council noted and fully supports the facts and the concerns raised.

4. At the parish council meeting eight of the Objectors who had submitted comments on the planning portal attended, plus further objectors. The Applicant's agent also attended and addressed the meeting. The council carefully considered the basis of the objections and concerns raised by Corfton residents and particularly noted the following salient points, which we hope the Planning Officers will take fully into account:

1. Highways safety issues
2. The excessive number of planning permissions which have already been granted
3. The lack of local amenities
4. The risk that this development would significantly contribute to existing flooding factors in Corfton, thereby increasing the severity of flooding in the Corfton community and to users of the highway.

5. The lack of due diligence to identify a water supply to existing Corfton residents, their rights to access the water supply and the likelihood that the water supply would be disrupted during development.
6. The encroachment of the development on this rural settlement.

It is the Parish Council's wish to address the Planning Committee, should the Planning Officers be minded to support this application.

096/25 – Highways, foot paths and environmental matters.

096/25/1 - The Clerk advised that in August 2024 she had advised the council that a resident had complained about a damaged gate on a bridleway. At the 26th March 2025 Cllr. S Povall advised the gate was on land he farmed and he was having the gate attended to, and the resident was duly advised. However, the resident has written again this month to say the gate has not been repaired and it has now been in disrepair for over a year, causing inconvenience to users of the footpath, especially riders. Cllr. S Povall will remind the contractor who damaged the gate to get it fixed.

096/25/2 – The Chairman advised the hole in the wall in Bouldon has finally been repaired. It took six years for the repairs to be effected.

096/25/3 – Cllr. Rattu advised that the bridge on the B4368 has recently flooded again despite FixMyStreet having cleared the drains, which were promptly blocked again. Cllr. Martyn advised debris washing down Pinstones Lane causes the blocked drains. Cllr. Rattu advised that his gravelled drive has been flooded and expensive gravel swept away on at least four occasions. He has concluded his only option is to tarmac the driveway, which will of course reduce its permeability. He wants a Highways engineer to come and discuss the flooding issue with him.

Cllr. Watson advised that there is a dead tree on the Bache Mill side of the bridge which she thinks is becoming dangerous, and a branch may fall onto the B4368. Cllr. Martyn advised all the trees in that vicinity are on Highways verges and thus are their responsibility: he believes a risk assessment needs to be carried out. The Clerk was asked to raise the issue with SC.

096/25/4 Cllr. Watson advised that there is now insufficient parking available at the village hall car park and some cars now park in Mill Lane. The Chairman advised that two parking spaces have been removed due to residents' complaints. The school are looking at the possibility of extending part of the staff car park to create additional spaces.

097/25 – Consideration of correspondence and communications - Correspondence List for meeting on 24th September 2025

1. Road closure notification: Un-named road between Middlehope and Bache Mill will be closed on 14th October 2025 – OpenReach works.
2. Planning decision dated 18.08.25: 25/01873/FUL – demolition of a pair of semi-detached dwellings and replace with 2 pairs of semi-detached dwellings at 3 & 4 Mill Lane, Diddlebury. Permission granted.
3. Notification that the next South Shropshire Area Local Committee will take place on Monday 1st December 2025, 6pm at Craven Arms Community Centre.

4. Notification from Cllr. David Minnery, Chair of the Transformation and Improvement Scrutiny Committee concerning the Shropshire Partnership manifesto.
5. Email from Mr & Mrs Bartell of Bouldon thanking the parish council for their input in the securing of the bank and underpinning works by Shropshire Council on the brook in Bouldon. They would appreciate an update on the problems with the Stone Bridge over Pyke Brook.

098/25 - Finance Report for September 2025

098/25/1 – Finance Report

Balance b/fwd from July 2025			£8,181.37
Less: cheques/direct debits drawn on Precept Funds on 24.09.25			
1. HSBC bank charges on statements 396 & 397	£	7.80	
2. Clerk's net salary for September 2025	£	286.94	
3. HMRC – PAYE on Clerk's September salary	£	24.20	
4. PKF Littlejohn LLF – external audit fee 2024/2025	£	252.00	
5. <u>Administrative expenses for September 2026</u>			
• September contribution to Broadband/telephone	£	20.00	
• 16.09.25 Andy Holmes – renewing the AVG Internet anti-virus security 2025	£	35.00	
• 1 ream A4 copy paper	£	4.90	
• 1 book 8 x 2 nd class stamps	£	6.96	
• Mileage at 45p per mile			
24.09.25 to Westhope Village Hall for PC meeting - 32 miles	£	14.40	
Total admin expenses	£	81.26	£ 81.26
			<u>£652.20</u>
			<u>£ 652.20</u>
Balance of Precept Funds c/fwd to October 2025			£7,529.17

Cllr. Watson **proposed** that cheques & direct debits totalling £652.20 be approved for payment.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. O'Boyle

Vote on proposal: Unanimous

Ring-fenced funds, reserves funds and third-party funds held by Diddlebury Parish Council

CIL/Neighbourhood Fund: Balance b/fwd from July 2025	£5,500.95
Environmental/asset maintenance fund: Bal. b/fwd from July 2025	£ 530.82
Legal Expenses ring-fenced fund	£ 750.00
Diddlebury Village Hall reserves fund for car park maintenance	£3,500.00
Reserves Fund held for SC elections	£ 457.73
Ring fenced fund for WWI Information Board	£ 300.00
<u>Third Party Funds</u>	
Corvedale Walking & Footpath Group bal. b/fwd from July 2025	
NB. Cheque for £300 issued to Stephen Kelby on 23.07.25 is still unrepresented	£ 550.00
Flood Action Group	<u>£ 228.46</u>
	<u>£11,817.96</u>

Balance of funds held by DPC following payment of June authorised cheques etc

Precept Funds	£ 7,529.17
Ring-fenced and third party funds held	<u>£11,817.96</u>
	<u>£19,347.13</u>

098/25/2 - The Clerk's reconciliation between the Cash book and HCBC Bank Statement No's 396 and 397 was checked and approved by Cllr. T O'Boyle

098/25/3 – consideration of approval of the purchase of a notice board for Bache Mill and repairs to the one at Sutton. Cllr. Martyn has identified a place where a board could be erected in Bache Mill.

Cllr. R Povall **proposed** that Cllr. Martyn should select and order a modest notice board. The Chairman **seconded** the proposal.

Vote: Unanimous in support of the proposal.

No progress yet on repairs to the notice board in Sutton.

098/25/4 – 2024/2025 Audit. As the Clerk had advised the councillors by email, the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLF, had raised a number of queries with the latest AGAR audit forms. The internal auditor had omitted to complete one box, the Clerk had transposed the figure of £3,250 as £3,520 and the auditors also raised queries on the variances form and the register of fixed assets. The two errors had been corrected, all queries had been answered and the audit was completed satisfactorily. The public rights notices have been put on the website and notice boards as required by law.

099/25 - Any Other Business (for the dissemination of information only)

No matters were raised.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 9.50pm

The next Parish Council Meeting, commencing at 7.30pm, will be held on Wednesday 22nd October 2025 at Diddlebury Village Hall.

Minutes signed by: David Hedgley

Dated: 22nd October 2025