

## **DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley**

Clerk: Mrs Jean de Rusett, 1 Pipe Aston Barns, Pipe Aston, Ludlow SY8 2HG

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### **MINUTES**

**Of the meeting of Diddlebury Parish Council  
held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.35pm via the remote viewing platform  
Zoom. The meeting started 5 minutes late due to technical problems.**

#### **013/21 – Present via Zoom**

Cllr. D Hedgley - Chairman, Cllr. R Povall, Cllr. T O'Boyle, Cllr. S Povall, Cllr. A Watson,  
Cllr. M Woodhouse, Cllr. K Worthington

**Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from Cllr. Selina Thomas and Cllr.  
Motley.

**In attendance** - the Clerk and eight members of the public

#### **014/21 – 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. O'Boyle made a declaration of interest in respect of planning application 21/00565/TCA  
and took no part in the discussion or vote concerning that application.

#### **015/21 – Public involvement session.**

No matters were raised.

#### **016/21 – Approval of the Minutes of the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The Minutes of the above meeting held via Zoom had been circulated prior to this meeting  
and publicised on the website. One amendment and one clarification were requested:

1. Cllr. Watson objected to the words imputed to her in Item 6 on page 8, namely "It is  
not the intention of the WVH Committee to compete with DVH ...". which had been added to  
the Minutes after circulation of the first draft, at the request of the Chairman. Cllr.  
Woodhouse objected to this deletion, insisting the words had been said. The Clerk had no  
note of the words but said it has been a difficult part to minute as so many people had been  
talking at once. The Chairman struck those words from the Minutes and initialled the  
amendment.

Cllr. Woodhouse then raised an objection to the vote which had been taken to set the  
2021/2022 Precept at £8,666. He did not believe Cllrs. Watson and Worthington had any right  
to vote on it due to their interest in the grant to WVH.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that this exact issue had been raised at the relevant time and discussed. The grant of £2,000 to WVH had been incorporated into the Precept Budget following a specific vote on Cllr. R Povall's proposal that DPC supports a donation to WVH of £2,000. Cllrs. Watson, Woodhouse and Worthington were all disqualified from voting on that Resolution as they had declared an interest in it. The proposal was adopted as a majority of members voted in favour of it and accordingly the donation became part of the overall Precept budget.

An entirely separate vote was then held on a proposal to adopt a 2021/2022 Precept Requirement in the sum of £8,666. No members were disqualified from voting on that proposal. The Chairman confirmed that was his recollection of the matter.

Cllr. O'Boyle **proposed** that the Minutes as amended of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be accepted as a correct record.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. S Povall

**Vote:** Six in favour, one objection.

The Chairman duly signed the amended Minutes.

### **017/21: Matters arising from the Minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.**

005/21: As Mr Ian Davies of the PPSG was present at the meeting he updated DPC on the matter. He has had a meeting with Renee Wallace (the Projects Co-Ordinator and Rural Housing Enabler at SC) about the Community Led Housing Scheme and the Diddlebury Parish Plan. She advised the Parish Plan should be refreshed and must include two specific questions being put to the community: (1) what is your household's specific needs, and (2) how would you like to see future housing development within the parish?

Ms Wallace felt SC's Housing Needs Survey had not fully addressed these points.

Mr Davies advised the PPSG are considering how to engage with the community on refreshing the Parish Plan: initially they are planning to use social media, the DPC and Googlegroup websites, the Corvedale News and notices on the public notice boards. For the people in the community who do not have access to social media they will need a paper presentation/questionnaire. The PPSG envisage a timescale of 2022 before a revision can be completed.

The Chairman asked whether the PPSG will be seeking funds for this revision. Mr Davies advised the PPSG still hold some funds but they will keep financing under review.

008/12- salt bins: The Clerk confirmed two salt bins, one for Middlehope and one for Bache Mill have been ordered and were due to have been delivered yesterday. She will chase it if they don't appear within the next week. Gary Trim is to be asked to fill them with grit.

006/21/2: Due to her absence Cllr. Motley's success in engaging with Gemma Davis's successor is unknown regarding DPC's CIL funds. The Chairman believes however that SC in general will be concentrating at present on the upcoming elections.

007/21: Despite DPC's strong support, the applicant of 20/04972/FUL (Red Brick Barn, Corfton) has received an indication that SC will refuse permission on heritage grounds. The Chairman sent an e mail to the Planning Officer about this as DPC had strongly supported the application and spoke to Cllr Motley about it. It is possible the application will go to the Southern Planning Committee for adjudication.

009/21: The remnants of the Tally Ho sign at the top of Mill Lane has still not been removed. The Clerk was asked to send a second request.

## **018/21 - Reports**

### **018/21/1 – Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported he had responded to Mrs Brick concerning her expression of interest of using a parcel of land between Milford House and The Moors for a Community Led Housing scheme. Such a scheme there has the advantage of good access onto the B4368 and the immediate availability of utilities. He has passed the matter on to Maria Howell at SC to follow up. He and the Clerk have spent a lot of time dealing with emails from Mr M Waite which will be dealt with in Correspondence. They had also spent an hour and a half in discussion with HSBC over their threat to close DPC's bank account on 9<sup>th</sup> April. The person they spoke to refused to explain why DPC is involved in what seems to be a money laundering investigation. After lengthy prevarications he finally stated we should ignore the letter threatening to close down DPC's bank account on 09.04.21, saying it was just a computer generated letter. He refused point blank to put this advice in writing. The Chairman has sounded out Lloyds Bank as alternative bankers for DPC and the Clerk is pursuing this.

He has drafted and sent a report to the Corvedale News explaining the amount of the 2021/2022 Precept. An enquiry had been received from Stanton Lacy PC inviting DPC to jointly appoint an EMO. DPC has responded that the current arrangements DPC has in place with Mr Trim place work well.

### **018/21/2 – Flood Action Group Report**

Cllr. O'Boyle reported that Geoff Neden is trying to get a volunteer in each of the settlements the FAG covers to act on its behalf at times of flooding, his first preference being the Core Group Member in that location. In particular, anyone who has useful skills (e.g. First Aid) or useful equipment (4x4 etc). He could also do with sites for storage of sand bags etc in most settlements. He intends to add this data – if and when available – to the Flood Response Plan. There is a good chance of ongoing funding for the Slow the Flow project in the Corvedale. He is pushing for a new flow gauge in the Pye Brook above Bouldon so that settlements downstream have some early warning of flooding. The one in Diddlebury has proved to be very useful. Geoff continues to try to get Highways to clear blocked gullies (like to one in Mill Lane opposite the Mortar's house).

Cllr. Woodhouse suggested that DPC give their thanks to Geoff Neden and all associated with the Flood Action Group for all the sterling work they do on behalf of the Diddlebury Parish community. The Chairman endorsed the statement on behalf of the parish council members.

### **018/21/3 – Diddlebury Village Hall**

Cllr. Woodhouse reported the village hall remains closed due to the restrictions, but has been booked by SC on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 for the elections. He is hoping they may be able to resume normal service at the village hall in April or May.

## **019/21 – Planning applications**

**21/00564/FUL** – Application for the conversion of a Dutch Barn at Hales Barns, Diddlebury, into storage for the residents of Barns A and B.

The Chairman noted there were no public objections to this application. The external features of the Dutch Barn will be repaired and restored. There are no ecology or drainage issues.

The applicant was present and explained this is an historic (1870) Dutch Barn which had been used as a milking parlour but is now a redundant farm building which he is seeking to preserve and

repurpose for the benefit of the Hales Barn development which otherwise would have to be demolished as part of the conversion of barns A & B's planning approval. The plan is to make available to each of the residential barns an area to store wheelie bins and a storage area for items such as mowers, bicycles etc. This will result in an uncluttered environment around the residential barns.

In response to councillors' questions, Mr Wrigley confirmed the interior of the barn will remain as one level. The external walls will be weatherboarded and where the roof is repaired it will be painted black.

Cllr. O'Boyle **proposed** that the parish council supports this application and raises no objections to it. Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Worthington

**Vote:** councillors voted unanimously to support the application.

**21/00656/TCA** – application for the removal of branches from one Beech Tree, removal of branches from one Walnut Tree overhanging the road and path, removal of dead branches and reduce height of tallest trees to control hedge, within the Diddlebury Conservation Area at Glebe Farm, Mill Lane, Diddlebury.

The Chairman noted there were no objections to these tree works on the planning portal and none had been received by DPC.

Cllr. S Povall, reported that in his role as Tree Warden, he had visited the property and discussed the works with the applicant. In his view the works proposed were responsible routine maintenance and he had no objections or concerns about any of them.

Cllr. S Povall therefore **Proposed** that the parish council should support this application.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. R Povall

**Vote:** Cllr. O'Boyle had declared an interest and was disqualified from voting. The remaining six members present unanimously voted to support the proposal.

### **020/21 – Consideration of highways and environmental matters**

Members deplore the state of the roads and the apparent complete in-action of the Highways department to deal with potholes, landslides, collapsing highways, blocked drains, failure to provide the mirror requested for the B4368 and the failure in any way to engage with DPC over an extension of the 30mph limit in Mill Lane to beyond Honeydene. Repeated requests from the Clerk to the Highways dept. merely results in emails saying the matter has been logged. In an effort to progress matters the Clerk had gone to the depot in Craven Arms in the hope of discussing our concerns face to face. The office was full of people but the door was firmly locked and had a notice on it saying reception was closed to visitors. At Eaton & Hope Bowdler PC's recent meeting Cllr. Motley had advised that £5m has been transferred from SC's Highways budget into adult and social care. The Department of Transport has shaved £10m off SC's 2021/2022 highways funding. The Clerk was asked to try once more communicating our concerns and highlighting H & S issues with copies to Cllr Motley.

Cllr. Watson advised that the sign on the B4368 indicating the turn to Middlehope has been knocked down and is lying in a hedge. The Clerk will report this to Highways.

### **021/21 – To consider the following communications and correspondence received and to deal with any issues arising therefrom as appropriate.**

1. 29.01.21 email from Mrs A Brick making an expression of interest in providing land in Diddlebury Parish for a Community Led Housing Scheme.

2. Letter from the Director of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer of SC reminding parish councils of the special rules which apply to pre-election periods and compliance with the Publicity Code.
3. Notification from the Planning Officers re application 20/02197/VAR – variation of Condition 2 to planning permission 16/03628/FUL – old poultry sheds development in Corfton.  
Planning permission granted 17.02.21
4. 09.02.21 email from the Secretary to Diddlebury Village Hall Trustees re DPC's proposed grant to Westhope Village Hall. They were pleased to hear Westhope Village Hall has no intention of offering classes and activities in competition with those provided in Diddlebury and look forward to working with Westhope wherever possible for our mutual benefit.
5. Chairman's correspondence with Maria Howells of Shropshire Council re Item 1 on this list.
6. email 17.02.21 from Cllr. Ray Wickson sent via SALC inviting support for Early Day Motion 57477 re county lines and child criminal exploitation measures.
7. email 12.02.21 clerk to traffic engineering at SC seeking progress on (1) DPC's request two years ago for the extension of the 30mph limit in Mill Lane to past Honeydene Farm, and (2) for the provision of a mirror on B4368 which on 17.11.20 advised would be funded by a local resident[: no response has been forthcoming.
8. Notification of road closure on B4368 at Aylesford Brook for 5 days. Should be concluded by 23.02.21
9. email 18.02.21 Clerk to Highways pointing out that a request made on 04.02.21 for the underground drain by The Old Chapel, Westhope Road remains unjetted and therefore blocked, causing the road to be flooded. Only response, of 19.02./21, states the request has been logged with the relevant Department for action. Log ref. SR-133189-TSN1M9.
10. Correspondence with Mr M Waite  
27.01.21 – email from Mr Waite re DVHC car park issues, and a request to know why Cllr. O'Boyle is not visible at Zoom meetings and whether Cllr. S Thomas intends to remain as a councillor as she rarely attends meetings.  
03.02.21 – response from Clerk providing answers to the queries concerning the two councillors named.  
08.02.21 – email from Mr Waite indicating he is not satisfied with the response given.  
12.02.21 – response from Clerk indicating his queries have been answered and DPC will not enter into further correspondence on the matter.  
16.02.21 – email from Mr Waite seeking further information from DPC and indicating if he does not receive it by 23.02.21 he will make a complaint to Shropshire Council and will require DPC to invoke Section 3 of its Complaints Policy.  
22.02.21 – email from the Chairman to Mr Waite attaching a copy of DPC's proposed response to be delivered at the parish council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February.  
23.02.21 – email from Mr Waite indicating he is not satisfied with the response proposed.

Responses to items of correspondence

Item 4: Cllr. Watson asked it be noted that the letter from the Secretary of the Diddlebury Village Hall Trustees attributed statement to Cllr. Watson which are factually incorrect: the correct version of events is as contained in the signed Minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It was agreed the Clerk will notify Mrs Kirk accordingly.

Item 10:

The Chairman advised that Mr Waite's last email had emphasised that he was asking the question to ensure that DPC was meeting the legal requirements in remote meetings..

In reply and in view of the possible wider public interest surrounding both remote meetings and the forthcoming election, Covid led us into uncharted territory with regard to holding Council meetings. Consequently the clerk sought advice from the Local Government (LGA) Association and SALC and the Council has been following the current LGA guidance, which we keep abreast of via their updates. We will always seek to clarify issues raised by the public such as yours with SALC.

The current advice published by the LGA is:

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Government has temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person. This means that councils have powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. Councillors use the equipment presently available to them to attend the meeting within the guidelines provided, so those with a camera facility do so, those without by sound whether by internet or telephone. The means available may not always be the same and there isn't any onus on councillors to resource a camera or internet.

We believe that we are satisfying the current temporary legal requirements with all councillors attending the meeting with the Zoom facilities presently practically available to them which accounts for the variation in facilities used. We have now answered all queries raised or the public may have re the new remote meetings use of technology.

A council Election is imminent, and all the current councillors have to decide, by the relevant date set for the return of the statutory paperwork, whether to re-stand for election or not. Our past practice has been for councillors to informally tell the clerk nearer the time of their intentions regarding the election so she knows the overall position. This is purely voluntary.

All those standing for election must satisfy the qualifications for standing for elections set out in "Parish and community council elections in England and Wales Guidance for candidates".

It was agreed that a draft copy of these Minutes will be provided to Mr Waite as soon as possible as he is unable to attend tonight's meeting.

**022 /21 – Finance Report for February 2021**

**1 Precept balance b/fwd from January 2021** **£2,894.04**

**Less:** Cheques authorised to be drawn on Precept Funds in Feb. 2021

1. Clerk's net salary for February 2021	£214.17
2. PAYE on Clerk's February 2021 salary	£ 6.00
3. Inv. from BarriersDirect for salt bins for Middlehope and Bache Mill	£252.46

4. Administrative expenses incurred by the Clerk in February 2021 on behalf of DPC

• February 2021 contribution to telephone & Broadband @ £20 per month	£20.00	
• A4 paper	£ 2.85	
• 6 x 2 <sup>nd</sup> class stamps	£ 3.96	
• Fee to pay on invalid stamp on incoming post	£ 2.00	
• Ink cartridges	£12.98	
• Travelling expenses claimed at 45p		
05.02.21 – to Bouldon to join Chairman for a telephone discussion with HSBC to discuss their proposal to close DPC's bank account & to collect Minutes Book and papers following Zoom meeting on 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021.		
24.02.21 to Diddlebury & Bouldon to discuss Zoom meeting with Chairman deliver Minutes, financial papers and correspondence .		
Total mileage – 70 miles	£31.50	
Total of administrative expenses	£73.29	£ 73.29
Total claim on Precept funds in February 2021	£545.92	£ 545.92
<b>Balance of Precept Funds c/fwd to March 2021</b>		<b><u>£2,348.12</u></b>

2 **Ring-fenced, reserves & third-party funds held by Diddlebury Parish Council**

• <b>Community Infrastructure Levy /Neighbourhood Fund</b>	
Balance b/fwd from January 2021	<b>£3,040.63</b>
• <b>Environmental Grant/Fund – b/fwd from January 2021</b>	<b>£ 750.81</b>
• <b>Transparency Code Grant fund – b/fwd from January 2021.</b>	<b>£ 71.49</b>
• <b>Funds held for Flood Action Group - bal. b/fwd January 2021</b>	<b>£ 150.09</b>
• <b>Ear-marked reserves for village hall car park resurfacing - balance b/fwd from January 2021</b>	<b>£4,723.39</b>

Cllr. O'Boyle **proposed** that the cheques listed above be approved for payment.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Watson

**Vote:** Councillors voted unanimously to approve payment of the cheques listed.

3. **Balance held by DPC following authorisation of the above listed payments on 24.02.2021**

1. Precept	£2,348.12
2. Community Infrastructure Levy	£3,040.63
3. Environmental grant/fund	£ 750.81
4. Transparency Grant fund	£ 71.49
5. FAG third party funds	£ 150.09
6. Ear marked DVH car park reserves	<u>£4,723.39</u>

Total: **£11,084.53**

#### **4 Bank statement and cash book reconciliation**

Verification by Councillors of the Clerk's reconciliation between HSBC bank statement numbered 342 and DPC's Cash Book was verified by Cllr. O'Boyle.

#### **023/21 – Any Other Business (for dissemination only).**

023/21/1: It was agreed that the next meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, be held via Zoom in view of the on-going Covid lockdown provisions.

023/21/2: The Chairman advised the meeting that a resident of Bouldon had personally financed the installation of a defibrillator, which is sited at Boulden House. DPC had agreed not to fund a defibrillator in the 2021/2022 Precept, but will encourage the local communities to seek grant funding or possibly local crowd funding. Cllr. Woodhouse advised that DVH Committee would be happy to site a defibrillator on the village hall.

023/21/3: The Chairman asked if there was any news about the SmartWater road signs. The Clerk has not had any news but will contact the police officer in charge of the matter for an up-date.

023/21/4: The Chairman has heard that the regulations permitting Zoom meetings finishes on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and the likelihood is face to face meetings will be the norm thereafter. Some parish councils want the option to continue with Zoom and NALC are taking this up with the government.

023/21/5: Cllr. O'Boyle stated that the past year had been exceptionally challenging for the Chairman and the Clerk. They had to cope with all the rule changes and difficulties the Covid pandemic had placed on parish council administration. Despite the difficulties they had managed to keep Diddlebury Parish Council functioning successfully throughout and were due a thank you from all the members.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman closed the Zoom meeting at 8.45pm and thanked everyone for their attendance.

**The next meeting is on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30pm and will be held via Zoom.**

**Please refer to the Agendas posted on the parish website or notice boards – information on how to join the meeting will be displayed on the Agenda.**

**Minutes signed by:** David Hedgley

**Dated:** 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021