

DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley

Clerk: Mrs Jean de Rusett, 1 Pipe Aston Barns, Pipe Aston, Ludlow SY8 2HG
Tel: 01568 770741 "e" mail address: diddleburypc@gmail.com
Website address: www.diddleburyparish.co.uk

MINUTES

**Of the meeting of Diddlebury Parish Council
held on Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 7.30pm via the remote viewing platform
Zoom. The Chairman's Broadband connection disconnected briefly around 8.25pm
and the Vice-Chairman took over the meeting until the Chairman was able to return.**

024/21 – 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

In attendance - the Clerk, Unitary Cllr. Cecilia Motley and four members of the public

SALC who organised the Zoom meeting had been asked to record it. Cllr. Robert Povall requested that the meeting should not be recorded and the Chairman agreed to that request.

025/21 – 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.

No declarations were made.

026/21 – Public involvement session.

Whilst the Agenda mentioned raising things not on the Agenda, the Chairman stressed that items on the Agenda could also be raised.

Mr Ian Davies raised the issue of two landowners who had shown interest in providing land for community housing. The Chairman has reported their interest to Maria Howells at SC. Mr Davies felt the drive should come from the parish council to keep the initiative alive and progressing.

027/21 – Approval of the Minutes of the meeting on 24th February 2021

The Minutes of the above meeting held via Zoom had been circulated prior to this meeting and publicised on the website.

Two amendments were requested by councillors. (1) Cllr. Woodhouse stated the vote at 016/21 was incorrect: he had voted against, not abstained as recorded. The Chairman corrected this. (2) The Chairman referred to page 6, the Response to Item 10: he denied he had said the words in the first paragraph of that Response, namely "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 regarding how councillors appeared. In his view if it is practicable for Cllr. O'Boyle to be seen but, for some reason he is not visible, he is deemed not to have attended the meeting and he becomes ineligible to participate or vote. Therefore all votes made at previous meetings where he participated and voted will be void." Mr Waite had asked the Chairman to read this email out so that Councillors and parishioners are properly informed of the questions he has asked. In fact what the Chairman said was: "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" and he then continued to say: "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 guidelines, which we keep abreast of via their updates. We will always seek to clarify issues raised by the public such as yours with SALC."

Once the amendments had been made and initialled by the Chairman, Cllr. Robert Povall **Proposed** that the Minutes of the 24th February 2021, as amended at this meeting, be adopted as a correct record of the meeting's business.

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

Vote on Proposal: Six in favour, one abstention.

The Chairman duly signed the amended Minutes.

028/21: Matters arising from the Minutes of the 24th February 2021 not dealt with elsewhere on the Agenda.

008/12: The salt bins have now been delivered and Mr Trim has been asked to fill them with suitable grit.

006/21/2: Cllr. Motley has now arranged a meeting on Friday to discuss/review DPC's CIL payment and the resurfacing of DVH car park.

021/21 item 5: the Chairman has spoken to Maria Howells at SC re Mrs Brick's interest in CLH and the ball is now in their court.

023/21/3: A defibrillator has now been installed at Bouldon House, Bouldon with the help of a grant. Other settlements in the parish might consider making similar arrangements.

029/21 - Reports

029/21/1 – Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported he had replied to SC's letter about Community Governance Review, to register DPC's interest: he had outlined the ways in which DPC was liaising with other parishes, and asked to be kept informed of any developments with the Review.

He had considered a request for a letter confirming a local connection and discussed it with the clerk and councillors. He had liaised with the Police about the SmartWater signs, which are now installed around the parish. He attended a site meeting in Bouldon with a representative from Highways about the collapsed wall by the stream. Highways' response was work was needed but there is no money in the budget for it this year.

He had taken up a footpath issue with Jenny Vine and it is being resolved. He had considered and responded to SC's winter policy document, emphasising that salt bins in Diddlebury are not being refilled and gritting has not been carried out on many roads, which are important

H&S measures. He has been in communication with Jack Wrigley who has expressed an interest in making land available for community housing in Diddlebury. He has considered an email from Geoff Neden about Emergency Plans for the parish and found a draft Plan prepared by SC some years ago which was never seemingly progressed.

029/21 – Unitary Cllr. Motley’s Report

Cllr. Motley apologised for being unable to attend our February meeting: she had been unwell. She discussed the Community Governance Review and reported on action being taken by other parishes. She feels Corvedale parishes could consider joint action on public transport, speeding on the B4368, rural affordable housing and many other issues where a joint approach might carry more weight. Discussion should also be taking place about anomalies in parish boundaries, such as in Seifton/Culmington, which might avoid the Boundary Commission taking the issue on and perhaps merging parishes. So far as the forthcoming elections are concerned, efforts should be made to ensure there is a candidate for each settlement in the parish. The Chairman advised he has made efforts to attract candidates from outlying parts of the parish, with little success.

029/21 – Diddlebury Village Hall Report

Cllr. Woodhouse reported the DVH Committee are making arrangements to re-open the hall but are hampered by the tentative guidance currently available. A meeting was held involving DVHC, DPC, the school and Cllr. Motley to discuss funds for the car park resurfacing and its on-going maintenance. A further meeting on Friday hopes to get some movement on the CIL position.

029/21 – Westhope Village Hall report

Cllr. Watson advised all the questions DPC wants answered have been put to both sets of solicitors involved in the transaction but the solicitors seem to have no sense of urgency where responding is concerned. She had a meeting with Ann Dyer, the Vendor, last week and asked if she could give her solicitors a nudge.

Cllr. Robert Povall asked if the village halls had received any Covid support and how difficult it has been to access support. Cllr. Woodhouse was unable to say as that part of DVH’s administration was dealt with by the Treasurer. Cllr Watson said WVH had received quite a bit of support: initially their application was refused but they persisted and did finally get a grant. She had found SC to be quite helpful and supportive.

030/21 – Planning applications

On the Agenda was **21/00782/FUL** – an application for installation of external wall insulation with render finish, to include associated alterations to eaves, verges, rain water goods & SVP at 2 and 4 Mill Lane Diddlebury.

The Chairman advised that the application had been withdrawn on the 19th March 2021.

031/21- Consideration of highways and environmental matters

Despite prodding from the Clerk and Cllr. Motley, DPC has still heard nothing from Highways about the provision of the mirror for the Bache Mill junction. The Clerk had sourced a suitable mirror and suggested DPC buy it and ask Mr Trim to erect it. Cllr. R Povall said Mr Trim is not allowed to work on the main road; it was also felt getting the mirror correctly angled was a Highways job. Cllr. Motley agreed to press Highways again on the matter. Cllr. Woodhouse, a frequent user of this junction, said the situation was worse now the hedgerow was growing, restricting visibility further. Cllr. S Povall said the responsibility for cutting the hedge is that of the landowner. No one present

knew who owns this hedge. Cllr. Motley agreed to discuss the hedge cutting when she raises the mirror again with Highways.

032/21 – To consider the following communications and correspondence received and to deal with any issues arising therefrom as appropriate.

1. 27.02.21 – Email Clerk to Jayne Kirk and Email from Jayne Kirk response.
2. 25.02.21 – Email from Mr L Robinson of behalf of Middlehope residents thanking DPC for providing salt bins.
3. Email from Mr Martyn advising DPC of a damaged stile. Chairman reported it to Mrs Vine (Foot paths officer) who is organising a new gate. Notifying Mr Martyn accordingly.
4. Email Clerk to Police Officer re DPC's SmartWater signs – and his response. Signs have now been installed around the parish.
5. 01.03.21 – email Clerk to Highways reporting on directional/junction sign on B4368 at Bache Mill road which is lying in a hedge. Highways responded logging the report as SR-134926-JSHOZ5.
6. 04.03.21 Email Clerk to Highways Dept, re blocked drain by the Old Chapel in Seifton (4 emails sent to date on this topic). NB: Local residents have now given up on expecting any help from SC and have cleared the drain themselves.
7. Email 01.03.21 from the Marcher Apple Network – part of Shropshire Wildlife Trust – seeking volunteers in SW Shropshire. Plus they have some apple trees for sale at £5 each. Contact: marinac@shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk
8. 23.02.21 – letter Clerk to HM Revenue and Customs asking why VAT refund form submitting a claim for £665.24 and sent on 13.05.20 has not been paid. Enclosed with that letter was a copy of the relevant form and vouchers supporting the claim. No response received, so further letter sent on 19.03.21. No response to date.
9. 03.04.21 Email Clerk to councillors suggesting that DPC should purchase the safety mirror for the junction with Bache Mill on the B4368, given that Highways have failed to respond to our requests starting in November 2020 that one be installed, and that Mr Jack Wrigley had kindly agreed to pay for it. A suitable mirror costs £453.92 plus delivery and installation costs. 04.03.21 – Cllr. Motley advised she had taken this matter up with Mr David Gradwell (Highways engineer) he said he will get Kier on to it.
10. 12.03.21 notification from SC re planning application 20/05271/FUL for various works at Bouldon Mill, Bouldon. The application has been withdrawn.
11. Email 02.03.21 Graham White, solicitor at SC, acknowledging Chairman's expression of interest in Community Governance Review. DPC proposes to consider proposals as they emerge from consultations, in liaison with Cllr. Motley and all Corvedale Parishes.
12. Letter, Clerk to the Rural Housing Enabler at SC re local connection confirmation for Mr R Lewis.

13. Email from G. Neden, Flood Action Group, enquiring (1) if DPC has an Emergency Plan and (2) if DPC has insurance which would cover volunteers engaging in litter picks, stream clearance etc.
14. Email 10.03.21 from Mr Jack Wrigley to Chairman of DPC expressing interest in the topic of affordable housing for the parish, and the need for a pavement/path from Diddlebury bus stop to half way down Mill Lane.
15. Email from SALC requesting that DPC appoints two representatives to serve on the South Shropshire Area Committee. The Committee Secretary is Clive Leworthy.
16. Bundle of correspondence, emails and telephone attendance notes concerning HSBC's safeguarding review and their threat (made on 01.02.21), to withdraw all services and close DPC's bank account on 9th April 2021. Matter finally resolved by their letter of 19th March 2021 apologising for the service DPC has received, crediting £100 to DPC's bank account by way of apology for the distress and inconvenience caused, and confirming the review is now complete and all threats to close DPC's account have been withdrawn.
17. 19.03.21 email from SALC about CIL (seems to be limited to highways works).
18. Bundle of correspondence with Mr M Waite:
 26.02.21 email Clerk to Mr Waite enclosing a first draft of DPC's Minutes of 24th February 2021.
 26.02.21 email Mr Waite to Clerk enclosing pages 5 and 6 of the Minutes to which he has made amendments based on his recording of the meeting and raising various issues, which he requires to be answered by 05.03.21 or he will lodge a formal complaint with Shropshire Council.
 04.03.21 Clerk's letter in response to the points raised by Mr Waite as above.
 05.03.21 email from Mr Waite stating Clerk's letter does not answer his points: he will complain to Shropshire Council if DPC's Minutes are not amended as he requires and he reserves his right to take legal action.

Responses

Item 13: The Chairman advised he and Mr Neden will have a meeting to discuss an emergency plan. Mr Neden also enquired whether volunteers working for the FAG are covered by DPC's insurance, failing which there is an insurance available at a cost of around £100: would DPC be prepared to fund it?

The Clerk had investigated the matter and did not feel that DPC's insurance would cover anyone other than volunteers working directly under DPC's control and covered by a risk assessment DPC had prepared. Cllr. Woodhouse responded that the DVHC would be pleased to allow the FAG free use of the hall for a fund-raising exercise.

Cllr. R Povall felt the matter of insurance required further investigation: if DPC are to fund a policy it would be better to get a policy which covers the footpath teams, litter pickers etc. as well as FAG volunteers. Cllr. Watson felt volunteer's own household insurance might cover them. Mr Neden agreed to investigate the insurance issue further and to bring it to the meeting on 28th April when it will be an Agenda item.

Item 14: Cllr. Worthington asked why a footpath was proposed were one already existed. Cllr. R Povall sought to explain the issue (in the Chairman's absence due to temporary Broadband failure) advising it is also involved possible land for community housing.

Item 18: The Chairman advised that after the Correspondence List had been compiled and sent out to councillors a further email had been received dated 22nd March 2021 from Mr Waite reinforcing the 5th March 2021 email.

The Chairman advised that Mr Waite has now lodged a formal Code of Conduct Complaint against him with Shropshire Council.

033/21 – Consideration of proposed amendments to DPC’s Complaints Policy and adoption thereof if agreed.

The Chairman advised this matter is deferred to the 28th April 2021 meeting.

034 /21/1 – Finance Report for March 2021

1. Precept balance b/fwd from February 2021 £2,348.12

Less: Cheques authorised to be drawn on Precept Funds in March 2021

1. Clerk’s net salary for March 2021	£213.97	
2. PAYE on Clerk’s March 2021 salary	£ 6.20	
3. Inv. from Castle Bookshop, Ludlow for 12 th edition of Arnold Baker, Local Government Administration – as authorised in 2020/2021 Precept Budget, Item 17	£149.99	
4. S.137 donation to the Flood Action Group	£ 50.00	
5. <u>Administrative expenses incurred by the Clerk in March 2021 on behalf of DPC</u>		
• March 2021 contribution to telephone & Broadband @ £20 per month	£20.00	
• 1 pkt file dividers & an A4 lever arch file	£ 2.60	
• Postage on letter & copies of VAT forms & vouchers to HM Revenue & Customs	£ 2.69	
• 6 x 1 st class and 12 x 2 nd class stamps	£12.90	
• 11.03.21 invoice from Andy Holmes for IT assistance with Outlook – paid cash	£20.00	
• Travelling expenses claimed at 45p 12.03.21 to Westhope, Seifton., Corfton, Diddlebury, Peaton & Bouldon to put elections notices on notice boards and to deliver nomination packs to those councillors who had requested them. Collect Minutes Book and papers from Chairman. 23.03.21 – to Diddlebury and Bouldon to discuss Zoom meeting with Chairman, deliver Minutes, financial papers and correspondence, get Bank reconciliation verified & signed.		
Total mileage – 68 miles	<u>£30.60</u>	
Total of administrative expenses	£88.79	<u>£ 88.79</u>
Total claim on Precept funds in March 2021	<u>£508.95</u>	<u>£ 508.95</u>
Balance of Precept Funds c/fwd to April 2021		<u>£1,839.17</u>

Cllr. Woodhouse **Proposed a resolution** that the cheques and the S.137 donation listed be authorised for payment.

Cllr. S Povall **seconded the proposal**

Vote: The councillors unanimously voted in support of the resolution.

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

- **Community Infrastructure Levy /Neighbourhood Fund**
Balance b/fwd from February 2021 **£3,040.63**
- **Environmental Grant/Fund – b/fwd from February 2021** **£ 750.81**
- **Transparency Code Grant fund – b/fwd from February 2021.** **£ 71.49**
- **Funds held for Flood Action Group - bal. b/fwd February 2021** **£ 150.09**
Add: S137 donation 24.03.21 £ 50.00 **£ 200.09**
- **Ear-marked reserves for DVH car park resurfacing** **£4,723.39**

3. Balance held by DPC following authorisation of the above listed payments on 24.03.2021

1. Precept	£1,839.17
2. Community Infrastructure Levy	£3,040.63
3 Environmental grant/fund	£ 750.81
4. Transparency Grant fund	£ 71.49
5. FAG third party funds	£ 200.09
6. Ear marked DVH car park reserves	<u>£4,723.39</u>
Total:	<u>£10,625.58</u>

034/21/2 - Bank statement and cash book reconciliation

Verification by Councillors of the Clerk's reconciliation between HSBC bank statement numbered 343 and DPC's Cash Book. It was confirmed Cllr. O'Boyle had checked the reconciliation and was satisfied it was correct.

034/21/3 – Consideration of action to be taken in respect of DPC's banking arrangements.

The Clerk and the Chairman outlined the difficulties DPC had faced with HSBC, who were conducting a "safeguarding review" into DPC's bank account and had threatened to shut it down on 9th April 2021. The Clerk had endeavoured to arrange temporary banking facilities with SC which had failed so she had submitted an application for banking facilities to Unity Trust on 19th March 2021 and that application was to be discussed tonight. However on the 23rd March 2021 a letter had been received from HSBC – following the Clerk having lodged numerous complaints – apologising for their poor service, confirming the review was now finished and the DPC banking facilities were fully reinstated. They also said they were paying £100 by way of apology for the way the matter had been handled by HSBC.

Members agreed that it was best to stay with HSBC in view of the unequivocal nature of their letter.

Cllr. O'Boyle proposed that the £100 compensation offer should be paid to the Clerk as she had put in a large amount of unpaid time trying to resolve the matter. It was agreed to defer this suggestion to the April meeting to see if it is actually paid.

035/21 – Any Other Business (for dissemination only).

035/21/1: The Clerk had circulated details of a SALC training course “Handling Difficult Situations” on 22.04.21. She and Cllr. Watson wished to attend, which would exhaust the training budget for 2021/2022. Councillors confirmed they should attend it.

035/21/2: The Chairman confirmed that after the election DPC will look at setting up a number of protocols for the conduct of meetings and a Vexatious Complaints Policy.

035/21/3: The Chairman had gained permission from the Corvedale News and the Google Group that candidates for DPC vacancies could write short pieces of between 250 – 300 words about themselves for the forthcoming May 6th elections.

035/21/4: Cllr. Worthington asked if anyone knew what was happening at Law's Yard as it has recently been cleared. No one had any information.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman closed the Zoom meeting at 8.55pm and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 28th April 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 or can be obtained from the Clerk

Minutes signed by: David Hedgley

Dated: 28th April 2021