**DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley**

Clerk/RFO: Mrs Jean de Rusett , The Grange, Leinthall Earls, Leominster,

Herefordshire HR6 9TS

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**MINUTES**

**of the**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**held on Wednesday 17th May 2017, 7.30pm at Westhope Village Hall**

**038/17 - Present**

Cllr. D Hedgley

Cllr. K Worthington

Cllr. Mervyn Thomas

Cllr. Stephen. Povall

Cllr Robert. Povall

Cllr. T O'Boyle

Cllr. A Watson

Cllr. M Woodhouse

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies were accepted from Cllr. Selina Thomas and Unitary Cllr. C. Motley

**In attendance**

Mrs J de Rusett - Clerk and six members of the public

**039/17 – Notice Convening the meeting**

In accordance with statute, the Notice convening the meeting has been duly published on the Parish Council’s Notice Boards throughout the Parish and on the Parish Council's website.

**040/17– Report by Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2016/2017 – Cllr. David Hedgley**

The term of the council members elected in May 2013 or co-opted later came to an end with new elections on the 4th May 2017. Councillor Fowler a member since 2008 chose not to stand again and we must thank her for her work as Vice Chair of the council. Councillors Hedgley, O’Boyle, R. Povall, S Povall, M. Thomas, S. Thomas, Watson and Worthington were re-elected unopposed and Councillor Woodhouse was also elected unopposed.

**Main Issues**

1. The improvement of the footpath running from The Moors to the school was raised along with the possibility of putting in a gate to access the school at the rear of it to aid parents walking their children to school. Whilst the footpath committee has agreed to replace stiles with kissing gates the improved surface other than maybe at the gates ways themselves does not seem viable. Similarly the Governors of the school on safeguarding and practical grounds have declined to put in an additional gateway.
2. A new Environmental officer has been appointed in conjunction with Culmington and Munslow Parishes to provide a more integrated and cost effective service. In addition Didddlebury has contracted a JCB operator to clear the ditches and drain approaches.
3. At the May meeting it was agreed to reduce the number of meetings to nine a year with no meetings in August, December and April. If necessary delegated planning inspections could take place as covered in the operating orders or an emergency meeting could be held.
4. Planning applications again formed the consistent part of our work with both the number and complexity of applications up. In addition Shropshire Planning’s decision to partially review its SAMDev Place Plan has involved us in responding along with the PPS to this on behalf of the parish. This is an important response as it sets the tone for future planning criteria regarding applications.

5. Precept: The council meeting on the 25th January 2017 agreed to leave the precept for next year at its present level. In previous years the council has set the precept to raise £1,000.00 above the actual running costs in order to save up for the resurfacing of the parking area next to Diddlebury Village Hall. At present we have approximately £5,500 saved and ideally could do with another £1,500.00. As Shropshire Council would no longer meet the costs for May’s parish elections and if Councillor Motley was unopposed, DPC would have to meet the full election costs if more than 9 people stood for election we estimated that it would cost us over £2,500.00 so earmarked the £1,000.00 surplus towards these costs. The bill did not have to be paid until 2018-19 so we could do the same next year if needed. If no case.

6. Planning: 22 planning applications have been made all of which bar 3 were supported. (18 last year, one not supported)

3 inquiries were investigated for possible planning breaches. (2 last year)

7. Responses to Consultations

Financial upkeep of services, SAMDev Place Plan Partial review, the removal of phone boxes from Diddlebury and Bouldon, future bus strategy.

8. Meetings attended: Place plan partial review consultation, Chairs of parishes with Cllr Motley.

**Sample of other topics arising.**

War memorial listing as grade 1 building, numerous road issues, broadband roll out, web site upgrade.

Over the last year the parish council has worked with the Flood Action Group, Diddlebury Village Hall Committee and the Parish Plan Steering Group. The work load and pressures on the council has steadily increased over the last few years and as a community we need to work together with strong planning and representation to maintain and meet our future needs and the demands placed upon us. More and more financial responsibility for local services and decisions is falling upon the parish council.

**041/17 – Reports from groups and committees for the year 2016/2017**

**041/17/1 – Diddlebury Village Hall Committee Report.**

Cllr O’Boyle on behalf of the Diddlebury Village Hall Committee reported on what has been a momentous year for the village hall. The lottery bid had been successful, owing in the main to Mr Tony Bennett and Mr Mike Woodhouse. The renovation works on the village hall are nearing completion; all are looking forward to grand re-opening in September.

**041/17/2 – Local Joint Committee**

Cllr. O’Boyle reported on two LJC meetings he has attended for DPC. One was on health care provision which was controversial due to the continuing threats to close Ludlow Hospital, which remain at a planning stage.

The second was a meeting at which local councils shared information on issues concerning them, with Broadband provision being a particular concern: it transpired that coverage was even worse in some parishes than in Diddlebury. Many parish councils also reported that as Shropshire Council continues to suffer financial problems, more services are being devolved on to parish councils.

**041/17/3 – Parish Plan Steering Group**.

Mr. Ian Davies reported that the Parish Plan was refreshed in 2013, since when the PPSG has continued to monitor development of the proposals set out in the plan and maintains an on-going plan update, reporting the Parish Council in July 2016 with an update of outstanding action points. Many of the actions have been completed, with some awaiting the redevelopment of the village hall – it is hoped this renovation will provide a fresh impetus for renewed activities in the parish.

The PPSG were disappointed with the final wording of the SAMDev which failed to reflect the conclusions of the Parish Plan and the relevant sections in the Craven Arms Place Plan. The PPSG wrote to the Planning Department of Shropshire Council expressing its concerns about the manner in which the SAMDev publication was concluded: the officer response was equally disappointing.

Shropshire Council has now announced a review of the SAMDev and the PPSG will provide an effective input in the consultation. It is hoped this time there will be a better communication process from Shropshire Council. An officer of Shropshire Council attended a PPSG meeting to explain about Community Led Plans. It was felt that the resource requirements and timing meant it would not be appropriate to embark on such a project at this time.

The PPSG retains funding of £778.

On behalf of the parish council and the community, Cllr. Hedgley thanked Mr. Davies and the PPSG members for their continuing work on this important matter.

**041/17/4 – Website Manager's Report - www.diddleburypc.co.uk**

Mrs Sara Thompson, honorary website administrator, reported that the new Diddlebury Parish website has been up and running for just over a year now and seems to be working well. She recalled that the Parish Council commissioned the new website from a professional firm of website designers and the funding was obtained by the Clerk successfully applying for a grant to cover the set up and training, and five year’s annual hosting fees. The revamped website has a much more modern look and feel and is user friendly on mobile devices. News articles, up-coming events and Parish Council meetings and information are all easily accessible from a home page. The one thing she has not had a chance to do is to get any reliable statistics on the website to enable us to monitor performance and usage.

The ‘Google Group’ which was set up to run alongside the website and is run by Geoff Neden now has 69 members up from 61 last year.

Cllr. Hedgley and the Clerk both thanked Mrs Thompson for all the time and work she puts in to administering the website. It was noted that the Internal Auditor for the 2016/2017 audit process had commented favourably on the website and confirmed it complied with the requirements of the Transparency Code to which DPC is subject.

**041/17/5 – Diddlebury Charities**.

This is a small charity which makes donations to the needy within the parish. A statement of accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016 had been prepared by Mr David Francis and was read to the meeting by the Cllr. Hedgley. The Charity had made grants totalling £188 to 13 parishioners and £100 to the Louisa Powell Almshouses. It carried forward a balance of £635.82.

Cllr. Hedgley thanked Mr Francis for his report.

**041/17/6 – Diddlebury Flood Action Group – FAG.**

Cllr. O'Boyle reported on behalf of the Flood Action Group. The focus of the past year had been on “slow the flow”. Surveys were conducted in the River Diddle catchment area resulting in the planned construction of “leaky dams” – natural obstructions which slow the flow of water. It is anticipated that this will prevent inundation in Diddlebury which has in the past led to gardens and the road being flooded. Another success with “slow the flow” is the installation of water gauges which will provide information on the rate of flow: a password to access this information is available from Geoff Neden. A public presentation will be held shortly to explain these measures and details will be posted on the website.

The Group has held multi-agency group meetings: attendance by Chris Jackson of the Highways Department has resulted in better drain clearance, especially in Bouldon and more scrutiny on the potential flooding impact posed by the poultry shed proposed development in Lower Corfton. It is hoped the FAG will be granted consultee status which will give its views and recommendations more authority. It is also planned to establish a Corvedale Flood Forum which will involve Ludlow and Culmington.

Finally, the FAG is hoping to work with the school on projects involving the River Diddle such as wildlife studies.

Cllr. Hedgley thanked Cllr. O’Boyle and all members of the FAG for their significant work on alleviating flooding in the parish and especially in Diddlebury.

**041/17/7 - the Buzzard**

Cllr. Worthington advised that the Buzzard is still successfully operating, however it urgently needs additional drivers. A full page advertisement in the Corvedale News recently attracted three new volunteers, but still more are needed.

Cllr. Hedgley thanked all of those who had prepared and presented reports.

**042/17 - Open Forum**

There being no questions from the members of the public in attendance, Cllr. Hedgley closed the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.50pm.

**MINUTES SIGNED BY David Hedgley**

**DATED 28th June 2017**