**DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley**

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

Herefordshire HR6 9TS

Tel: 01568 770640 email: diddleburypc@gmail.com website: www.diddleburyparish.co.uk

**MINUTES**

**of the**

 **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**held on Wednesday 22nd May 2019, 7.30pm at Diddlebury Village Hall**

**041/19 - Present**

Cllr. D Hedgley - Chairman

Cllr. K Worthington

Cllr. Stephen. Povall

Cllr. T O'Boyle

Cllr. A Watson

Cllr. S Thomas

**Apologies** were received and accepted from:

Cllr. Mervyn Thomas, Cllr Robert Povall and Cllr. M Woodhouse

**In attendance**

Mrs J de Rusett – Clerk, Unitary Cllr. Cecilia Motley and three members of the public.

**042/19 – 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.

**043/19– REPORTS**

**043/19/1 – Report of Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2018/2019 – Cllr. David Hedgley**

There have been no changes in the membership of the council. The council held two Extraordinary meetings in November 2018 to meet public concerns over planning issues centred on The Moors.

**Main Issues**

1. Concerns over speeding/safety issues on the B4368/ The Moors and Mill Lane led to a number of meetings debating how to address these concerns. At present there are ongoing proposals for the purchase and deployment of Portable Speed Awareness sign.
2. The council addressed complaints from a parishioner’s agent regarding their handling of a Tree Application and reviewed the processes involved in dealing with Tree Applications.
3. Discussed issues relating to cattle and families accessing Corvedale School via the footpath from The Moors
4. Entered into detailed and ongoing consultation with Shropshire Council regarding the allocation of the Council Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
5. Worked with the Parish Plan Steering Group over a number of Shropshire Council consultations centred on Place Plans and future county-wide housing criteria.
6. Discussed and reviewed concerns from a parishioner over parking issues centred on DVH.
7. Constantly reviewed the issues raised over increased planning applications and SAMDev.
8. Precept.

At the council meeting on the 243rd January 2019 it was agreed to leave the precept for next year at its present level.

**Planning**

21 planning applications have been considered, all of which bar 3 were supported. (20 last year with 2 not supported)

No pre planning enquiries were received (3 last year)

3 inquiries were investigated for possible planning breaches. (1 last year)

**Responses to Consultations**

The parish council responded to the following consultations: Shropshire Council led-EMO Grant proposals , Bringing Banks, Post 16+ Transport,

Draft Place plan Proposals, Car Parking in Ludlow, Housing Survey

Also- Corfton’s Housing Petition,

**Meetings attended.**

At Shirehall re CIL allocation to DPC, Housing Survey Proposals.

Chairs of Parishes with Cllr Motley.

**Public Sessions**

Supported Westhope Village Hall restructuring meeting.

**Sample of other topics arising.**

Silent Soldier erection, signage problems at Pedlars Rest junction, potholes, Severn Trent road closures, local connections verification, letters of support on parishioners’ behalf for planning applications challenged by planners.

Over the last year the parish council has yet again continued to work closely with the Flood Action Group, Diddlebury Village Hall Committee and the Parish Plan Steering Group. The work load and pressures on the council has been intense. As Chair I would like to thank my colleagues for the unstinting work they put in within a voluntary role and the extra work our Parish Clerk continues to absorb as well as Councillor Motley for her unstinting support.

.**043/19/2 – Unitary Cllr. Motley’s Report**

This has been a difficult and frustrating year for Shropshire Council due to Parliament being in chaos over Brexit. Legislation that should have come forward hasn’t: there has been no Local Authorities Budget, no Education Budget and no indication how the government plans to deal with the ever soaring cost of care for vulnerable children and the elderly which consumes substantial amounts of SC’s budget, resulting in SC slashing budgets in other areas, such as the removal of the recycling Bring Banks, which has predictably resulted in an increase in fly-tipping. The highways maintenance budget has been slashed: SC is responsible for 5,000 miles of lanes and roads in Shropshire which are mostly in a poor state of repair. The new Highways contractors, Kier, got off to a slow start but some progress has been made with the potholes issue.

Cllr. Motley and her Scrutiny Committee have been investigating and challenging SC over many issues, including the apparent demise of the LJC, burial grounds, public and community transport – all of which need action. She has been asked to chair a Task & Finish Group for youth services: the funding this work has run out. The loss of the Community Enablement Team formerly run by Lisa Bedford continues to create problems which particularly affect rural communities.

Work is in progress on a revised Local Plan, but it won’t be available until the end of the year. In order to try and meet the housing demands in Shropshire SC has set up a new housing company and plans to develop homes for the elderly and affordable rental homes for families in the county utilizing parcels of land owned by SC: she represents the south of Shropshire on the board of this company.

She chaired a meeting for parish councils held recently with Vicky Turner and Maria Howells (SC’s Housing Enablement Officer) to discuss housing need and SC’s proposed Housing Needs Survey. This Survey is funded by SC and is designed to feed current housing needs information into the Local Plan as most Parish Plans are out of date.

Cllr. Motley remains enraged about the way SC have dealt with CIL issue. She and the Chairman of DPC had a meeting with Gemma Davies at SC about the refusal to pay DPC’s CIL: as a result the application is being reviewed. She has also vigorously taken up with Cllr. Gwilym Butler, the new Cabinet member for the south of Shropshire, the many ways in which the south of the county is being neglected as most project funding is going to Shrewsbury and the north of the county.

Cllr. Motley also spoke of her on-going work with the AONB, and the Rural Services Network. RSN and a number of rural stakeholders (NFU, CLA, ACRE etc) are putting pressure on the government to create a new rural strategy to re-boot the rural economy.

The Chairman, on behalf of the community and the parish council, gave a vote of thanks to Cllr, Motley for all the work she has done on our behalf during the past difficult year.

**043/19/3 – Diddlebury Village Hall Committee Report**

No report was received.

**043/19/4 – Parish Plan Steering Group – report by Mr Ian Davies**

It is now 6 years since the Diddlebury Parish Plan was refreshed and most of the action points from the plan have been implemented.

The Steering Group has continued to monitor the development of the proposals set out in the plan and maintains an ongoing action plan update. The Group reports to the Parish Council with an update of the outstanding action points.

During the last year the Village Hall Committee has reported that the refurbished Diddlebury Village Hall has exceeded the engagement targets agreed with their Lottery funding - key actions from the Parish Plan. It has been noted that Children’s activities require development. Resurfacing of the Diddlebury Village Hall Car Park is now embedded into the Craven Arms Place Plan. A new management committee is also in place for the Westhope Village Hall.

Another long-standing action point, now set to be delivered, is the provision of road safety equipment. The Steering Group is grateful for the Parish Council setting aside funding to acquire a portable speed camera. The Group is organising a team of volunteers to manage the scheme.

Flooding risk was a key concern in the Parish Plan consultation. The Diddlebury Flood Action group was set up and with invaluable help from the National Flood Forum and Shropshire Wildlife Trust a series of water flow attenuation measures have been implemented in key areas of the Parish catchment. The members of the PPSG want recorded their admiration for the huge amount of work Mr Geoff Neden does on behalf of the Flood Action Group. He spends a lot of time working with various bodies and third parties cajoling them into assisting the FAG.

Excess housing development approvals in the Corfton settlement have challenged a key recommendation in the Parish Plan, together with an application for a development at The Moors, Diddlebury: these exposed a lack of robustness in the county housing planning process. Shropshire Council now propose to conduct a Housing Needs Survey in the Parish. The PPSG hopes that the Housing Needs Survey will be very carefully analysed once the responses are in.

The Steering Group continues to respond in the consultation programme for the Shropshire Local Plan Review.

Funds held by the Committee remain at £778

The Chairman thanked Mr Davies for all his work on the PPSG and for the parish generally: it was good to see that things requested by the PPSG are actually getting done.

**043/19/5 – Website Manager’s Report – Mrs Sara Thompson**

The Diddlebury Parish website has been well established over the last three years and continues to work well as a community asset and information hub.

Councillors will recall that the clerk obtained the initial funding for the website set up and five years annual hosting fees in 2016. Thus, two years annual hosting fees remain, after which time the Parish Council will need to fund the annual costs.

Google analytics reports show that there has been some 7,200 unique page views over the last 12 months (up from 4,900 in 2017.18). The most popular pages remain the Parish Council Meetings pages, the Flood Action Group and Planning Applications. On average there are around 210 active users per month, based on last 12 months (200 active users in 2017.18).

As mentioned in last year’s report the website now includes the directory of local business services. The list simply shows the name of the business, the type of service offered and the relevant contact details. The list comprises those local businesses who pay for advertising in the Corvedale News. A disclaimer is included on the website page to the effect that the listing does not imply any endorsement or recommendation by Diddlebury Parish Council.

The ‘Google Group’ which was set up to run alongside the website and is run by Geoff Neden continues to grow and now has 82 members (2018 - 77 members).

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The Chairman gave a vote of thanks to Ms. Thompson for her diligence and unstinting work in administering the website for the parish council and the wider community.

**043/19/6 – Diddlebury Charities Report**

Mr D Francis is away but sent the following report**.**

I have set out below the accounts for the Diddlebury Charities for the year ended 31st December 2018 for the Parish Council to consider. If there are any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Diddlebury Charities Account**

**For the year ending 31st December 2018**

# Income Expenditure

B/fwd: £488.25 Grants to Parishioners: £188.00

Dividend Income: £245.38 Contribution towards Louisa’s

 Powells Almhouses £100.00

 C/Fwd £445.63

## Total: £733.63 £733.63

Note:

There is £18.64 in the Business Account . There is also a cheque to Louisa Powells Almhouses for £100 that has not been presented.

**043/19/7 – Diddlebury Flood Action Group – Cllr. T O’Boyle**

Cllr. O’Boyle reported on the works the FAG had been involved in during the past twelve months.

FAG have had two successful stream Working Parties which have cleared the stream bed through Diddlebury village of excess weed growth and encroachment from the banks. Work on de-silting the Diddlebrook below the Mill Lane bridge took place in mid-June with kind assistance from Andy Farnell and Topher Morgan. Repair works to the wall beside Mill Lane bridge, funded by DPC, took place in July when the flows were low. This should now remain stable for many years to come. All 50 leaky dam structures were completed by Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) in the Diddlebrook catchment up to Middlehope by the end of February. These were tested by the storm which occurred in the evening of Thursday 31st May. Despite quite serious flooding in Middlehope (estimated to have been a 1 in 20 year event) the stream remained within its banks through Diddlebury village. In our opinion, such severe rainfall would have resulted in flooding within the village in the absence of the 50 new leaky dams. Work by SWT on designing and constructing almost 100 new such structures is now nearing completion in the Pye Brook catchment area around Clee St. Margaret and at Heath.

Several of our members took part in a litter-picking exercise in June along local watercourses as part of a scheme throughout the Severn Catchment. One of our members attended a Road Show on Natural Flood Management organised by the Environment Agency in Worcester.

The Chairman of Pontesbury Parish Council was shown around the leaky dams below Wilderhope as he had expressed interest in using the same techniques in his area. One of our members attended a Conference in Birmingham organised by the National Flood Forum on 10th November concerning insurance against flooding.

Cardiff University have started their Slow the Flow research project in the Corvedale and hope to report by April 2021. Hopefully this work will enable promoters of Natural Flood Management techniques to quantify the results of their proposals and hence make it easier to obtain funding. This is cutting edge stuff in the Corvedale!

We have extended our membership by inviting Cllr. Stephen Povall to join the FAG and he has kindly accepted the invitation. This step was taken to include the views of the local farming community in the FAG as they are the owners and managers of the catchments on which our rain falls and their actions have a significant effect on flooding downstream. Taking this further, we have also had discussions with the local NFU office in the person of Sarah Faulkner. Sarah represents the farming community on the Shropshire Slow The Flow Steering Group. The NFU have discussed Natural Flood Methods (NFM) with Shropshire Council and SWT for some years and aim to ensure that such proposals can be delivered within the framework of the farming business.

Over the last year, SWT has aerated 75 acres of land near Clee St Margaret as a pilot project. The hope is that farmers will see the benefits of this work and keep on doing it themselves. Aeration of land has many benefits, one of which is to increase its capacity to absorb surface water and hence reduce run-off. Its use can also increase yields from the land by up to 200%. This and other Natural Flood Management techniques were explored with farmers at a meeting held in the Diddlebury Village Hall on 16th May led by the NFU and with input from the SWT – the first concrete result from our liaison with Cllr S Povall and the NFU.

Cllr S Povall has also kindly volunteered to allow the Small Woods Association (based in Ironbridge) and working with Birmingham University and Earthwatch to undertake a research project to investigate the value of the coppice bundles (river faggots) for the prevention of soil erosion and nitrification of water courses on his land.

SWT has recently received £28,000 for tree planting with assistance from the Woodland Trust. A proposed tree planting exercise arranged with the SWT in Lower Corfton had to be cancelled recently due to problems with obtaining the tree whips but we hope to proceed with this later in the year. The FAG was successful in their submission for funding to the Ludlow Rotary Club and an award of £300 was made to us. The work we had planned to do above Middlehope using these funds has had to be abandoned due to lack of co-operation from the land owner. We hope to do alternative work there later in the year, but in the meantime the Rotary have agreed we can use the funds to do similar work elsewhere in the Corvedale – probably near Cold Norton.

Due to the persistence on the part of one of our supporters Shropshire Council have finally unblocked the storm drain below Delbury Farm entrance in Mill Lane Diddlebury. SWT have many current plans including tree planting, hedge reinstatement, 25 more leaky dams above Middlehope and work on wetlands on the Millichope Estate.

FAG regrets that it seems CIL funds due to Diddlebury are being diverted away from local projects. However, FAG would like to thank DPC for its continued support.

The Chairman paid tribute to Mr Geoff Neden and all members of the FAG for the tremendous amount of work they do on behalf of the whole Diddlebury Parish community.

**043/19/8 – Westhope Village Hall**

Cllr. Watson reported that the new management committee were working well and dealing with maintenance issues and promoting bookings.

The Chairman thanked all those who attended the Annual Parish Meeting and delivered reports and for the work they carry out on behalf of the parish throughout the year.

No Open Forum matters were raised, so the Chairman closed the Annual Parish Meeting at 8.15pm and proceeded with the Annual General Meeting.

**MINUTES SIGNED BY**

**DATED**