

DIDDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr D Hedgley

Clerk/RFO: Mrs Jean de Rusett ,

MINUTES

of the

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held on Wednesday 25th May 2022, 7.45pm at Diddlebury Village Hall

058/22- Present

Cllr. D Hedgley – Chairman
Cllr. R Povall
Cllr. T O'Boyle
Cllr. A Watson
Cllr. A Rattu
Cllr. T Pardoe
Cllr. R Morgan
Cllr. S Povall

Apologies were received and accepted from Unitary Cllr. C Motley

In attendance

Mrs J de Rusett – Clerk and four members of the public.

059/22 – 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.

060/22– Reports

060/22/1 – Chairman's report for April 2021 – May 2022

Certificates of Recognition of Service were presented to the councillors who stood down in the May 2021 election and to Cllr Worthington who was not re-elected. The new council has settled in well and meetings within COVID guidelines have been held physically throughout the year. We have recently had to reluctantly accept the resignation of Cllr Geoff Neden due to ill health. Alongside resigning from DPC Geoff has also stood down from running the Flood Action Group and Google Group both of which he set up and successfully developed. Geoff has been a great asset to the community and will be missed from these roles.

Main Issues

1. **Road Safety.** Identified as a major concern DPC has supported the pursuit of increased road safety measures. An access mirror supplied by Mr J Wrigley has been erected at Bache Mill at its junction with the B4368. Ian Davis and Cllr O'Boyle have successfully deployed the Mobile Speed Indicator sign in various positions in Diddlebury. Wheelie Bin stickers asking people to slow down obtained through Sara Thompson have been distributed throughout the parish and signs alerting motorists to

pedestrians in the road have been positioned where families often walk and there is no footpath present. Cllr's O'Boyle and Rattu have attended meetings with other local councils, the police and highways to try and work out a common strategy to combat road safety in the Corvedale. Speeding was one of the three areas highlighted in our Police Community Charter return.

2. **DVH Car Park.** This remains an ongoing project and we must thank Cllr Motley for her help and support in trying to pin down Shropshire Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) officers to committing the funding initially promised to enable us to proceed. We have an achievable estimate for the work and new CIL grants have given us the financial means to complete the work. Contact with the chief CIL officer has assured us that the funding is still valid but actually accessing it remains an issue despite previous promises. This all now goes back to 2019.
3. **Westhope Village Hall (WVH).** We have worked with WVH committee to support their purchase from Ann Dyer of the hall with a grant of £2,000 towards this.
4. **Policies.** This year we have revised the Standing Orders and adopted a new Code of Conduct for Councillors promoted by Shropshire Council, a Persistent Vexations Policy which we were advised to adopt by our professional body and a Grievances Policy for Employees.
5. **Environmental Maintenance Officer (EMO)** Yet again we have had to recruit another EMO and review the funding and operations of this role. This year has seen an increase in voluntary work being undertaken by Councillor's and members of the public which has saved the parish a lot of money and we would like to encourage the expansion of this.
6. **Crime.** We are aware of concern over crime in the parish and are working closely with the police to combat this. We complete and update a Community Police Charter every 3 months with community theft, speeding and scams are our 3 priority areas at present. We have held sessions on Smart Water deployment and this has been supplied to everyone in the parish. We have attended a chairs meeting with the Crime Commissionaire to highlight speeding and road safety.
7. **Boundary Changes.** There is an ongoing review of parish/town boundaries throughout the country and Cllr R Povall is leading a working group to review our local parish boundaries
8. **Broadband**-we continue to press for acceptable broadband reception throughout the parish.

Diddlebury Parish Council Precept 2022-23

Following the council meeting on the 26th January the precept for the next financial year was set at £8,655.00. This is an actual decrease of £11.88 on last year's precept

The council made a conscious decision to try and keep the precept the same after three years of rises especially last year's £1,714.88 increase. Unlike last year we have not incurred extra costs such as the purchase of Smart Water Kits or a grant to Westhope Village Hall. By accessing our Neighbour Fund during the last financial year to pay for infrastructure work we have been able to reduce the amount used to top this up. We have also reduced costs here by work on the local infrastructure being under taken by councillors and local people volunteering their help. We are always happy to accept such volunteering with painting, light repairs and cleaning of assets.

We have however increased the clerk's salary by £200.00 and allowed £1,350.00 for election expenses. We have included this year a contingency fund of £750.00 to cover any possible future unexpected expenses. We continue to financially support our village halls, local charities and work such as the Flood Action Group. A full copy of the precept can be found on DPC's web site.

Responses to Consultations.

Use of Green Lanes.
Community Police Charter.
Police and Crime Commissioners Survey.

Public Meetings/ External Meetings attended.

Public session on Broadband Connections in Shropshire.
Public session on SWS provision of broadband in the parish
Chair of Parishes meeting on boundary changes with Cllr Motley.
Chairs meeting with the Crime Commissionaire on planning enforcement and speeding.
Shropshire Council CIL briefing on how CIL is now applied.

Planning applications.

21 planning applications have been received this year as opposed to 22 last year.
All bar two, which included reapplications, were supported as compared to three not supported last year.
Within the 21 applications four were related to tree work which was the same as last year.
There were no enforcement enquiries from DPC again this year but the council was notified of two received from the public within the parish.

Sample of other topics arising.

Provision of dog litter bins. Support of defibrillators in Bouldon and Diddlebury.
Tree replacement from Ash die back. Collapsed river wall in Bouldon
Attendance at Remembrance Day ceremony. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee input.

Over the last year the parish council has yet again continued to work closely with the Flood Action Group, the village hall committees of Diddlebury and Westhope and the Parish Plan Steering Group. As Chair I would like to thank my colleagues for the work they put in within a voluntary role, the hard work of our Parish Clerk, Jean, Sara Thompson for her excellent website work as well as Councillor Motley for her continued unstinting support.

060/22/2 - Unitary Cllr. C Motley - Corvedale Division - Annual Report to Parishes 2021/22

It is a relief to be finally emerging from the Covid pandemic which has had such a disruptive effect on so many in our community over the last two years. Let us hope we can all withstand any future outbreaks and I hope everyone who is eligible is taking up the offer of another booster jab.

It has really been a strange year; first covid and then the horrific events in Ukraine, together with unexpected fuel cost increases and climbing inflation. Shropshire Council is working hard to roll out the Government's Council Tax rebate programme of £150 to eligible households with approximately £10m rebated across 65,000 households throughout the county.

The Council has been supporting the Homes for Ukraine programme and we have set up a 'one stop shop' web page: [Homes for Ukraine|Shropshire](#). To date 434 Ukrainian individuals are due to come to Shropshire with 74 individuals having already arrived. Our housing officers have been working to organise payments, DBS checks, property checks and safeguarding checks as well as seeking school places and GP practices through the CCG. Corvedale residents and parishes are opening their homes to Ukrainian guests as well. A hub to welcome Ukrainian nationals has been set up in Shrewsbury and Ludlow is also working to set up a similar reception centre.

We haven't had much luck with Government funding over the year. The local government financial settlement was disappointing as, having promised a three-year funding programme

it reverted to a one-year rollover budget. The settlement still failed to recognise the huge burden that is placed on large rural authorities like ours by the demands of social care. Over the period of the covid pandemic the number of children requiring our care has increased to over 600. Despite the government's introduction in April of the National Insurance surcharge to pay for health and social care we know that very little of the funding raised will be heading into local authority social care services. Once again this puts our finances under serious strain.

The first two rounds of the Levelling Up Fund did not help Shropshire either. We put in bids (strongly supported by our MPs) for three excellent projects, including one in Craven Arms. All of them were rejected. We then applied for the big public transport fund, the Bus Strategy Improvement Plan. We believed we had put in an excellent and imaginative application to enable us to run a truly county-wide public transport service and - along with all our neighbouring rural authority areas - were once again rejected. Since then together with our Passenger Transport manager I had the opportunity of meeting the Transport Minister to explain our plans to her and she has strongly encouraged us to reapply in the next funding round which comes in July. Hopefully we will be third time lucky.

Another Government initiative which is likely to affect us is County Deals, whereby local authorities are encouraged to work closely together and potentially elect a mayor or governor to represent them, as in the city regions. We are unsure of the benefits of this in Shropshire as we are such a large county already, but we will certainly look at options for how to do this at maximum benefit to the county.

Closer to home one of my portfolio responsibilities is the Community Governance Review, involving the Town and Parish Councils reviewing their boundaries and considering the case either for merging with neighbouring parish councils or for straightening out anomalies in some of the boundaries. The other is a more official review by the Local Government Boundary Commission, asking us to make recommendations for changes to the Council's Divisional Boundaries. The timing on this is strictly controlled - we must start the review process in October 2022 to be completed and signed off by Parliament in 2023. No pressure there then! It means that we will have to stop work on the Governance Review to concentrate on the divisional boundaries but by then we should have a good idea of where the areas of difficulty lie. Nevertheless, it will take a lot of time in the ensuing months. I am really grateful to all the Corvedale parishes for looking very closely at this and coming up with some constructive suggestions for their own boundaries.

Corvedale parishes have been working hard on plans for traffic calming measures over the last year including getting VAS signs set up and considering particular calming measures to slow traffic speeds on our very busy B roads, which are so often used as diversionary routes when the A49 is under repair/resurfacing etc. The Cabinet is meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the new Chief Constable later in May and I will take the opportunity to press the case for funding for traffic calming measures for the parishes since this is such a widespread problem.

On the subject of highways, I hope you have seen improvements in the work to reduce the pothole problem in the county. We now have a full complement of local traffic engineers and a new way of reporting problems - Fix My Street - is being rolled out which is a far speedier and more responsive tool than the My Shropshire app which was extremely slow. There is also more resource going into sorting out the many clogged and damaged road drains which cause localised flooding and damage to the roads and lanes.

Once again this year the Corvedale has done a great job in mitigating flooding through the Flood Action Groups and I am delighted to have been asked to act as the flood champion for the south of Shropshire. I have since recruited Dan Thomas, Member for Much Wenlock as another champion for the south east of the county.

Finally, the new recycling wheelie bin with a purple top is being rolled out now in the south of the county. If you haven't already applied, there is still time to do so on the Council

website. This bin will take all the bottles, plastic, tins etc which currently go into the recycling boxes. The blue bag will still take newspapers and cardboard. You don't have to return your old recycling boxes. I'm going to use mine to grow tomatoes... As ever, please don't hesitate to let me know if you have a problem with the Council services that I can help with.

060/22/3 - Diddlebury Village Hall Committee annual report for 2021 - 2022: report prepared by Cllr. Anil Rattu

Elected trustees

Jayne Kirk

Steven Ross

Mike Woodhouse

Appointed trustees

Sally Woodhouse - PCC

Anil Rattu– Parish Council and Vicky Oldhams – Corvedale School

Main Activities 2021/2022

Throughout the year, activities were somewhat impacted based on the Covid restrictions at the time, since restrictions have been fully lifted many of the regular activities have returned. The DVH acquired a TV licence which allows us to broadcast free-to-air channels. The Six Nations rugby was shown and it is planned to show the Home Nations games for the 2022 Football World Cup in November/December 2022, we hope to see many of you there so cheer on our teams! The DVH also acquired a contactless card payment machine for bar and ticket purchases.

AGM

The 2022 AGM took place on 12th May 2022, please see website for further details. The next AGM has been scheduled for May 2023, please check DVH website closer to the time for further details, the public are invited to attend.

The DVH Committee wishes to thank users for their continued support and encourage residents to book the hall for functions and events at this great community asset.

060/22/4 - Westhope Village Hall Committee: report prepared by Cllr. Amie Watson

I'd like to start this report off by first of all by saying a massive thank you to the committee of Westhope Village hall. Without their hard work and dedication we would not have achieved as much as we have in the last year.

Westhope village hall has had a good year and even though covid was still impacting activities during 2021/2022, we are now in a good position, with regular activities taking place once again and a diverse range of people taking part in the activities.

The committee successfully purchased the freehold of the Hall and are now in a much better position to be able to apply for grants to enable the community asset that is Westhope Village hall continue into the future. The committee's thanks once again go to the parish council for their donation towards this.

The hall has also been working in collaboration with Flounders Folly, a venture aimed to help both historic buildings by making the most of the footfall in Westhope on the Folly open days.

The committee's focus this coming year is the replacement of the roof. We have already had one amazing fundraiser that blew everyone away.

Lastly, the committee would like to thank the supporters of the hall, those of you that attend regular events, those of you who donate their time to the hall, those of you who help with the running of events, people who give up their time and pick up a paint brush or cut the trees. Everything is so very much appreciated and never goes unnoticed.

060/22/5 – Diddlebury Parish Plan Steering Group: report prepared by Mr Ian Davies

The Diddlebury Parish Plan was refreshed in 2013. The action points from the plan have now been largely implemented and the Parish Council has been regularly appraised of progress. A copy of the Action Plan review is available to view on the website.

During the last year, the Group commissioned the Parish Council Speed Awareness Device, and this is now in action at various locations in the parish. The Police have suspended community speed awareness groups on the B4368 due to safety concerns, so the device has been mounted on brackets fixed on signposts (approved by Shropshire Highways). Speed awareness wheelie bin stickers have been distributed.

Discussions have been held with the Parish Council to investigate a Community Led Housing Scheme aiming at providing some affordable housing within the parish. Suitable land plots need to be identified.

Following discussions with Shropshire Rural Communities the Steering Group have agreed that a further refresh of the parish plan will be undertaken. This will again involve parish wide consultations and a communication plan will need to be designed to develop a programme.

060/22/6 - DPC's website manager's report: prepared by Ms Sara Thompson

The Diddlebury Parish website has been established for over five years now and continues to provide a valuable community resource. The website is an extremely effective way of getting information quickly to a large group of people, especially throughout the recent Covid-19 pandemic and during flooding events etc.

The Parish Council is now responsible for funding the annual costs and hosting fees itself. There have been some issues with the website provider / host this year, particularly in relation to the automatic uploading of planning applications. This is currently being done manually. The problem is yet to be resolved.

Alongside information on the Parish Council the website includes the directory of local business services, details of church services, local events, Flood Action Group and Diddlebury Parish Plan articles and news. This information is useful for existing residents, newcomers to the area and the public alike.

Over the 12 months to 30 April the website had 2,600 users, which was an increase of 18% over the previous 12 months. The average session time was just around one and a half minutes (down from an average of 2 minutes in 2021). The most popular pages remain the home page, meetings, planning and news. Over half the users access the website via a desktop computer, followed by mobile device and then a tablet computer. The most popular times to access the website seems to be around midday, 6.00pm and 8.00pm. As regards demographics 54% of users are male and 46% female (no change from 2021). Interestingly, the largest user group by age remains 18-34 years old (61%), followed by 28% in the 35-55 age group, and just 11% in the fifty-five and over age bracket (again no change from last year).

The 'Corvedale Google Group' which was established to run alongside the website, and was founded by Geoff Neden, continues to grow, and now has 221 members (2021 - 180 members). Geoff has recently stepped down from running the Google Group, but I would like to express my thanks to Geoff for all his efforts over the last ten years. He was instrumental in setting up the current parish website and has been a regular contributor to articles, photographs, and ideas. The Google Group was Geoff's brainchild and has grown from just a handful of members to a

significant online asset. Geoff has been extremely diligent in all that he has done and has given very generously of his time to the local community. Geoff will be sorely missed and a hard act to follow. Martin Jones has kindly offered to take over the running of the Google Group.

060/22/7 - Diddlebury Charities: report prepared by Mr David Francis

Mr Francis reported that as at 31st December 2021 the charity held a b/fwd balance of £491.63 to which was added dividend income of £255.89, making a total income for the financial year of £747.52. Grants totalling £160 were paid out to parishioners, and a donation of £100 was paid to the Louisa Powell Almshouses, leaving a carried forward balance of £487.52.

060/22/8 - Diddlebury Flood Action Group:

Due to the sudden and serious illness suffered by Mr Geoff Neden, no report is available this year. Mr Clive Martyn of Bache Mill has agreed to take on the role of Chairman of the Flood Action Group, for which the parish council thank him and wish him well. The Chairman paid homage to Geoff Neden for all his tireless work on the FAG, on the parish council and for setting up and running the Diddlebury Google Group.

060/22/9 - Louisa Powell Almshouses: report prepared by Cllr. R Morgan

Cllr. Morgan reported that an August 2020 quinquennial survey undertaken of the properties identified the need for a five-year improvement programme for the housing stock. In the 2021/2022 financial year £38,447 was spent on capital works and a further £20,000 has been spent so far in this financial year. The works carried out included:
Re-roofing No's 3 and 4. Installation of fire breaks between No's 1, 2 and 3, also removal of a dangerous chimney in No. 3. Replacement of front and rear doors for No's 1, 2 and 3. External decorations to all properties and replacement of several windows, plus a complete renovation of No. 2, which included plastering all walls, rewiring and fitting a new kitchen and bathroom.
The five properties have now been brought up to a good standard, although the bathrooms and kitchens in No's 1 and 3 will need doing in the next few years. All five properties are occupied, two by persons from Corvedale parishes and three from Ludlow.
The clerk Mr Williams had obtained a £10,000 grant towards the works.

The Chairman thanked all contributors for their reports.

061/22 – Discussion about the Community Governance Review involving possible changes to Diddlebury Parish's boundaries.

Residents of the parish had been invited to this meeting to discuss any views or suggestions they had about the proposed boundary review. In the event, no residents raised any queries or views. Cllr. Robert Povall has been conducting the review on behalf of DPC and has had discussions with the Chairman of Culmington Parish Council and some residents in the Culmington/Seifton Bache/Westhope/Sparchford/Elsich areas about boundary anomalies. Some properties are sited in Diddlebury Parish but can only be accessed through Culmington and some via Stanton Lacey. There are also concerns about parts of Seifton being in open countryside and other parts in a cluster in planning terms.
Cllr. Povall's negotiations are on-going.

062/22 – Open Forum for members of the public to raise issues with the parish council

Mr Ian Davies advised he has been Chairman of the PPSG for 10 years and now wants to step down. He feels his replacement should not necessarily be a parish councillor as he thinks an independent person should be in charge. He is looking into refreshing the PPSG committee. The Chairman thanked Mr Davies for all the hard work and time he has put into the PPSG, which as a group has succeeded in doing what it set out to do.

063/22 – Chairman’s closing comments

The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to everyone in the parish who has been doing maintenance works of all sorts on a voluntary basis. Their efforts are much appreciated. He hopes to be able to present Geoff Neden with a Certificate of Recognition for all the work he has done for Diddlebury Parish.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm and proceeded with a parish council meeting.

Minutes signed by: David Hedgley

Dated: 22nd June 2022