

# **Diddlebury Parish**

**Bache Mill, Bouldon, Broncroft, Corfton, Diddlebury,  
Middlehope, Peaton, Seifton, Sutton and Westhope**



**Parish Plan 2013**



# Diddlebury Parish

## *Parish Plan 2013*

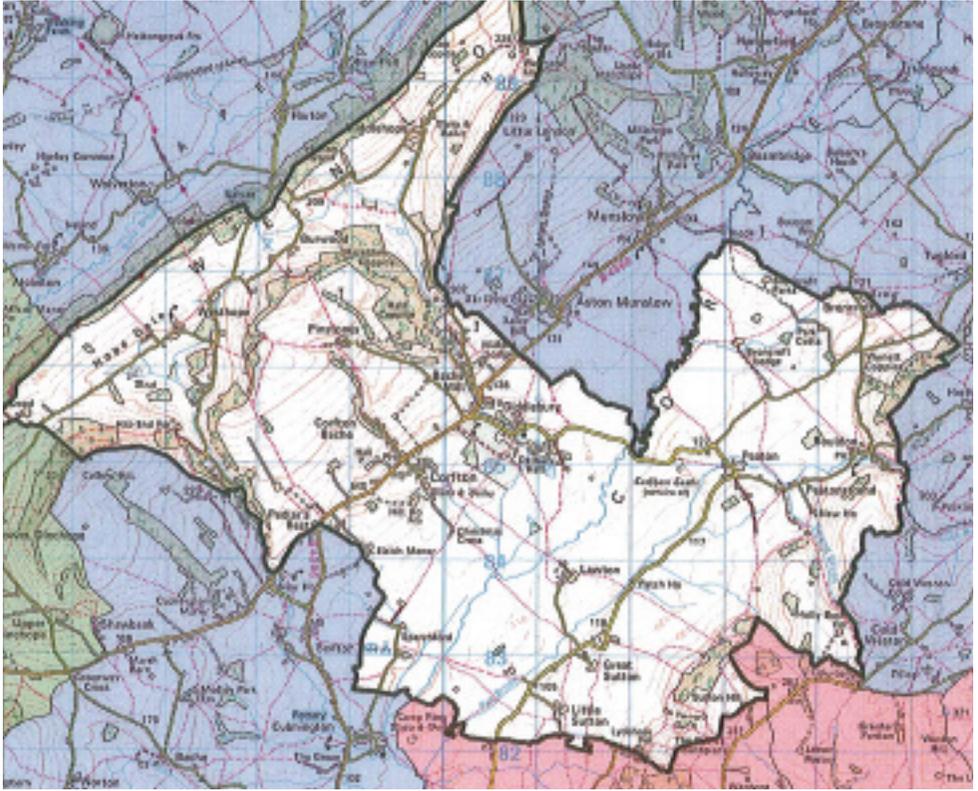
### **Introduction**

Diddlebury Parish nestles in the South Shropshire Hills and is part of an area of outstanding natural beauty surrounded by hills, ancient woodlands, streams and meadows. It has a rich history reflecting centuries of rural life.



Corvedale and the Brown Clee

The Parish has ten villages and hamlets – Bache Mill, Bouldon, Broncroft, Corfton, Diddlebury, Middlehope, Peaton, Seifton, Sutton and Westhope.

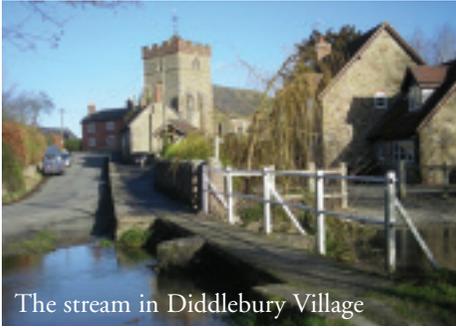


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Diddlebury Parish

The Diddlebury Parish Plan – A Blueprint for the Future – was published in 2004. It has now been refreshed and updated by the Diddlebury Parish Plan Steering Committee.

The Plan is arranged into eight sections of key interest, and provides proposals for action or review. Many of these proposals will inform the Diddlebury Parish Council's future agenda but some will hopefully inspire members of the community to become involved in improving facilities and services within the Parish. It is recognized that in the current climate of economic austerity the severe rationing of funding will possibly hinder larger and expensive projects but the Plan is intended to highlight community aspirations even if these may take some time to deliver.



The stream in Diddlebury Village

## The Refresh Process

The Steering Committee continued to meet regularly after the publishing of the 2004 plan to review and monitor actions. The refreshing exercise began in earnest in 2011. A number of consultation events and articles in the Corvedale News identified key issues and a Community Survey questionnaire was distributed to all households within the Parish in the autumn of 2012. The 2004 plan and questionnaire were used as reference points to

maintain a level of continuity but many of the questions in the 2012 survey were informed by the responses from the initial consultation process. The survey comprised eight sections and provided for analysis by each village/hamlet to identify any particular settlement issues.



Consultation event at the Autumn Show

The survey was delivered to the 280 households within the Parish and 142 responses were received. This represented a return of 51% which improved on the 47% response in 2004 and maintains a statistical significance for the results.

The results of the survey were independently collected, processed and published by Shropshire Rural Community Council. They are published on the internet at <http://dppsg.wordpress.com> and also on the new Diddlebury Parish website at [www.2shrop.net/Diddlebury](http://www.2shrop.net/Diddlebury).

The survey results present the responses for all ten villages and hamlets and are also collated for the Parish as a whole.

During the winter of 2012/13 the Steering Committee analysed the data and summarized the key results into a graphical and tabular presentation. Together with draft conclusions and proposals these were presented at two drop-in consultation events in February 2013. The presentation materials and the responses from the consultation events now form the basis of this document.

Again the consultation presentation materials can be viewed online at the two web addresses above.

## **Section 1 – About You**

This section concentrated on the demographics of the Parish attempting to understand the age breakdown of the community and employment data.

The distribution by village or hamlet of those households responding to the survey from each village was similar to that in 2004 with probably an increase in percentage of respondents from Diddlebury and Bache Mill. The analysis of how long respondents have lived in the Parish showed a similar profile to 2004 with a slightly higher proportion of households living in the Parish for fewer than 16 years.

The results suggest that there is a growing proportion of older residents within the Parish with the number of young people declining. 26% of the respondents were under 30 years old compared with 27% in 2004.

Just under one half of the members of responding households are in work with 2% looking for work.

Some 20% of the household respondents work within the Parish compared to 32% in 2004. Not surprisingly Agriculture is the dominant industry. No respondents indicated they were running a hospitality business. 53 people from the household responses said they were running businesses or enterprises in the Parish. Only 18 indicated that they were employing people of which 10 businesses were home based. The data suggests that the majority of businesses in the Parish are Micro Entities.

## **Section 2 – Parish Amenities**

This section looked at the existing amenities available within the Parish, usage, demand and whether there was a need for further provision.

Responses showed that most facilities are used by many people occasionally, and a smaller number on a regular basis, with the local shop and the local pubs being well supported.



The Tally Ho Inn Bouldon



Diddlebury Village Hall

Diddlebury Village Hall is used by 83% of the respondents and Westhope Village Hall by 40%. On the question of the standard of village hall facilities, Diddlebury Village Hall is mainly viewed as adequate or poor. Westhope Village Hall rated good or adequate but with almost as many respondents not knowing - possibly reflecting its lower usage rate from the respondents. Responses suggest considerable support for improvements to Diddlebury Village Hall.

On the question of parking there was some inconsistency in the survey responses but a general wish for improvements in Diddlebury - particularly in relation to the Village Hall and School area.

Responses show strong support for making the Corvedale School hall and playing facilities available to the Parish. There was some evidence of interest in more local amenities for recreational purposes such as benches and seats.

A larger number of respondents are using Diddlebury Church - mainly for weddings, funerals and major festivals - and a smaller number for regular services and other occasions. Responses to additional facilities at the Church suggested some demand including a choir, and coffee after services.

A few respondents use the recycling facilities at the Sun Inn Corfton regularly, and a larger number occasionally.



Diddlebury Church



The Sun Inn Corfton

#### *Proposed Actions*

- *Support improvements to Diddlebury Village Hall facilities*
- *Review the car parking arrangements at Diddlebury Village Hall and School*
- *Explore the provision of additional amenities in the Parish*
- *Investigate the further use of the Corvedale School facilities by the wider Parish*

### **Section 3 – Social Activities**

This section looked at the extent of social activities within the Parish.

As in the previous Amenities section responses did not indicate any significant areas of under provision. Although a very low proportion of the respondents felt that the current level of sports & social activities are good or adequate, the large number of don't knows suggests either a low level of activity provision or of limited interest/importance. Interestingly a higher proportion of older people thought that activities were good or average.



Church Fete at Delbury Hall

On the question of activities take-up, responses were relatively low, with perhaps demand for Fitness/Dance groups and also a Gardening Club.

Again the numbers of responses were relatively low on the issue of activities for children and young people. 15 respondents (47% of responses to the question) indicated weekly support for Cubs/ Scouts/Brownies/Guides.

When asked why household members do not participate in leisure activities poor publicity was identified as one factor in the survey responses.

#### *Proposed Actions*

- *Explore the setting up of Fitness/Dance Groups and a Gardening Club*
- *Improve the promotion and publicity of Social Activities within the Parish*

## Section 4 – Roads, Footpaths and Transport

This section looked at transport and safety issues and with answers and comments to the ten questions in the survey split into the ten villages and hamlets there is a wealth of micro data. This is published on the two websites noted above and is available for further analysis in a local context.

95% of the survey respondents use the motor car as the prime mode of transport and road safety issues are clearly a concern for all of the community. On a range of questions any response of 50%+ for essential or 66%+ for essential or desirable was highlighted. There is considerable support for a 20 mph speed limit within the vicinity of the Corvedale School in Diddlebury. Respondents also indicated support for flashing speed signs in the villages together with improved passing places in the lanes and more grit bins.

With regard to improvements there is considerable concern about poor road drainage. There is also support for improved pedestrian paving along the B4368 and a continuous pavement in Mill Lane, Diddlebury. Comments on the survey also highlighted dangers at junctions with the B4368 – particularly where there is no restricted speed limit. A turning area in Corfton Bache was also suggested. Other danger points are also identified in the response comments.

In response to the question on transport difficulties the vast majority of respondents indicated that they rarely or never experience problems getting in or out of the Parish. However flooding, winter weather and lack of public transport are identified as issues.

Although most of the respondents said they would not use a voluntary car scheme to assist with transport difficulties 13 respondents did say they would use such a scheme. This could be an essential lifeline in the community.

Most of the respondents indicated awareness of the Buzzard minibus service and Shropshire Link but have no need for them. A small proportion was not aware of the provision and some would use them if they better met their needs. Again this can be an essential service for those without car transport. Suggested improvements were better timetable information, routes and frequency, and publicity.

The survey indicated very little take-up of the primary and secondary school bus service other than school pupils. Responses indicate a general view of the facilities as adequate or good but with an issue regarding access outside the Corvedale School.

Most of the safety concerns would need to be taken up with the relevant highways authority and will be a matter for the Parish Council to follow up.

### *Proposed Actions*

- *Investigate a 20 mph speed limit in vicinity of Corvedale School*
- *Investigate provision of flashing speed signs*
- *Lobby for improved road drainage/flood prevention, B4368 pedestrian paving and junction safety measures*
- *Share identified danger issues with Parish Council for discussion with relevant*

- *public agencies*
- *Promote a Voluntary Car Scheme in the Parish*
- *Liaise with Buzzard and Shropshire Link management over survey results*

## **Section 5 - Communications**

This section covered communication in the Parish including mobile phone coverage and internet broadband.

The Corvedale News remains one of the main sources of information in the Parish with 78% of the respondents subscribing to it and an even higher level of awareness. The proportion of households getting information via the internet remains very low. However, the majority of responses indicated the amount of information available about local events was average or better.

A clear majority of responses indicated support for a comprehensive Parish Website. Since the survey the Parish Council has set up a Parish website at [www.2shrop.net/Diddlebury](http://www.2shrop.net/Diddlebury).

Access to internet broadband within the Parish is up from 55% in the 2004 survey to 81% in 2012. Internet speed remains on average very poor. However, the majority of respondents indicated that they would not be prepared to pay extra for faster broadband.

The majority of respondents was not aware of broadband and BT Hot Spot access at the Sun Inn Corfton. Training on the use of a computer and the lack of availability of broadband is an issue with a very small proportion of the Parish. The majority of respondents (66%) do not wish to retain the Diddlebury Village Hall computing facilities.

The survey indicted there is a small level of interest for training in IT, digital photography, computer maintenance, getting on line and eBay/internet shopping.

Most respondents use mobile phones. Whilst a range of mobile networks are used within the Parish, the vast majority of respondent households use Orange or T Mobile who have merged to form EE. Only 8% of respondents indicated they receive a good or very good mobile signal.

On the question of how well the Parish Council publicises information on its work the proportion of respondents that have indicated adequate or better is up from 50% in the 2004 survey to 67% in 2012.

### *Proposed Actions*

- *Develop content on Parish website and promote events*
- *Publicise internet facilities at the Sun Inn Corfton*
- *Explore provision of IT and internet training*
- *Lobby Telephony providers for improved mobile signal and broadband speeds*

## Section 6 – Housing, Development and Planning Control

Pinstones and the Cleve Hills



This section dealt with future housing development within the Parish. It is of particular importance to the Parish Council which has to make informed contributions to both the local Place Plan (Craven Arms) and the county-wide Development Plan (which will cover the planning period up to 2026).

The survey results are published for each village and hamlet in the Parish.

The total number of households across the entire Parish indicating a requirement for additional accommodation in the next 14 years is 31 (22% of total responses). The highest number indicated within any one village or hamlet is 7 in Diddlebury - representing 14% of the responses from that settlement. Sutton was the only hamlet that indicated no requirement for additional accommodation.

A mixture of types of accommodation was indicated across the various villages and hamlets including both affordable and 'market' housing. There was no clear preference for any particular type of housing but the survey question allowed multiple choices.

In all settlements, except Diddlebury and Sutton, there is a majority in favour of some new housing within their village or hamlet over the next 14 years. In Diddlebury, there is a clear majority against new housing. In Sutton, the numbers in favour and against new housing are equal, with the majority indicating "Don't know".

With the exception of Diddlebury and Corfton, the largest proportion of respondents indicated a preference for 1 to 5 additional houses within their village or hamlet over the next 14 years. In Diddlebury, the largest proportion of respondents indicated a preference for no new housing. In Corfton, there was an equal split in the largest proportion of respondents between a preference for none, 1 to 5, and 11 to 20 new houses.

In all villages and hamlets, except Diddlebury, the largest proportion of respondents indicated a preference for conversions, single dwellings, redundant buildings or small groups. In Diddlebury, the largest proportion indicated a preference for no new housing.

There was a number of comments made in this section – many of which concerned the unoccupied cottages in Bouldon.

There is very little support for large housing development in the Parish. No respondent selected the ‘more than 50 houses’ option. This is not surprising as one of the issues of concern identified in the 2004 survey was housing over-development and the responses in Section 8 of the survey show how much people value the rural character of their surroundings.

In all villages and hamlets there is a clear majority in favour of guidelines and planning controls for the design and building materials used in new developments. The majority of comments indicated a preference for new developments to be in keeping with the existing constructions and sympathetic to local traditional buildings with many in favour of the use of stone and local materials. The use of environmentally-sustainable materials and designs was also indicated by some respondents.

#### *Proposed Actions and Guidance*

- *The Parish to maintain its rural character*
- *No large housing developments*
- *A clear preference for no new housing in Diddlebury*
- *Support in the other villages/hamlets for small developments of 1 to 5 houses*
- *Support for new single dwellings, conversions and the use of existing sites*
- *Development of a ‘Design Statement’ to provide a protocol to ensure that any development is sympathetic to existing buildings and would not disturb the character and nature of the Parish*



## Section 7 – Local Services and Economy

This section covered the provision of public and local services and economic factors.

Respondents indicated that the majority of the Parish does not have trouble accessing healthcare services - with the exception of a NHS dentistry service. The vast majority of support needs (e.g. carers, community nurses and medical equipment) is provided. However, some unsupported need was also identified, for example counselling and home help.

Respondents indicated that access to services would be difficult without a car. 8 respondents identify a lack of public transport as a barrier to accessing services.

Respondents indicated a very clear importance to the maintenance and cleaning of roads and verges (as also indicated in Section 4 – Roads, Footpaths and Transport). The provision of library services and public telephones was also ranked important.

There is a clear desire from respondents to use local services (e.g. window cleaning, logs/oil purchasing schemes etc).

A number of business development and employment opportunities was identified in the survey with Farm Shops being favoured. On the question of barriers to employing people there was no clear problem identified by responding employers although the availability of appropriate skills ranked highest. This data will be shared with relevant economic development agencies.

### *Proposed Actions*

- *Assist unsupported needs by publishing referral pathways to the local community using notice boards and the 'Corvedale News'*
- *Explore the development of a voluntary car scheme (see Section 4) and a referral pathway to Shropshire Council transport services*
- *Refer the data from this section to the highways department and other appropriate agencies for consideration and action planning*
- *Publish local service requirements and employment opportunities in the 'Corvedale News' to encourage service provision and provide advertising opportunities to connect the community with service providers*
- *Request Parish Council to review provision of local services with other agencies, and develop and promote delivery schemes*

## Section 8 – Environment and Conservation



This section covered the community's view on its environment and conservation issues.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents considers the quality of life in a rural community to be of fundamental importance. Appreciation of a village community, rural life, countryside, wildlife and peace was considered very important or important by over 90% of the respondents.

Improved flood prevention is a considerable concern for most respondents across the whole Parish – also identified in Section 4. The majority of the respondents thought street lighting was not necessary.

In response to a question on energy production there is an interest in solar panels and ground source heat pumps, but a reluctance for anything which would have a large visible impact on the landscape.

A significant number of households is spending a large amount of disposable income on energy costs and suffers from poor insulation.

### *Proposed Actions*

- *Lobby for more action on flood prevention measures (see also Section 4)*
- *Share data on energy costs and insulation with relevant public agencies*



Hope Dale



Lambs in the Corvedale

## Acknowledgements

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The responses and contributions from parishioners during the consultation events and completion of the survey questionnaire have been of huge importance and they are thanked for their time and efforts.

Some members of the original Diddlebury Parish Plan Steering Committee monitored the implementation of the 2004 proposals over the intervening years and then began the process of revising and refreshing the Plan in 2010. They gradually made way for new members representing the different settlements within the Parish. Some of these were able to contribute for short periods of time and some have seen the process through to the end. Thanks are due to all included below for their commitment, hard work and enduring some very cold meetings.

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**Peter Bellamy**  
**Chair of Diddlebury Parish Plan Steering Committee**  
**March 2013**

