

MINUTES

OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD AT HOPE BOWDLER VILLAGE HALL

MONDAY 15th MAY 2023 at 7.30pm

051/23 - Present

Cllr. G Watts
Cllr. L Gray
Cllr. S Jones
Cllr. B Orme
Cllr. P Jenkins
Cllr. T Madeley

Apologies received from:

Cllr. Pugh and Unitary Cllr. C Motley

In attendance:

Clerk, Mrs J de Rusett and three members of the public.

052/23 – Notice convening the meeting

In accordance with statute, the Notice convening the meeting has been duly published on the parish notice boards, in the Parish Magazine and on the parish website.

053/23– Reports

053/23/1 - Chairman's Welcome and Annual Report for the Parish Council for the year 2022 - 2023

As Chairman for the year 2022/2023 Cllr. Graham Watts delivered the following report and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

I commence my report by thanking my fellow councillors, Unitary Councillor Cecilia Motley and our Clerk for all their help and support during the parish year 2022/2023.

At our January 2022 meeting we agreed a precept budget of £6,472 to cover the administration of the parish council for the year 2022/2023 and we kept well within that budget during the financial year. Parish council assets such as the bus shelters, railings and the war memorial were maintained and cared for, overgrown vegetation strimmed as necessary and drains cleared utilizing the parish council's precept funding

The Parish Council has continued to be the “eyes and ears” of the parish, checking on any possibly unauthorised building works, reporting damaged bridges, culverts, drains and dangerous trees to the Highways Department and has endlessly reported on, and have sought remedial work to, potholes, flooding issues and other highways defects or hazards.

The Parish Council has considered twelve planning applications in the year, ten of which the council supported. We have continued our efforts throughout the year to get Shropshire Council to take enforcement action against those elements at the Oaklands Leisure & Fishing site in Harton, which continues to advertise the site and trade, without planning permission for many aspects of its operation, to the continuing inconvenience and annoyance of local residents.

Progress of Shropshire Council’s Community Governance Review, which centres on possible revisions to town and parish boundaries, has been delayed due to a re-organisation of the divisional boundaries in Shropshire. It remains this parish council’s aim to amalgamate with Rushbury Parish Council, the amalgamated parish council to be known as Apedale Parish Council. It continues to be our belief that such an amalgamation will result in lower precept funding and more clout with Shropshire Council. Acton Scott Parish Meeting believes the residents of the hamlet of Hatton wish to leave Eaton Under Heywood & Hope Bowdler Parish Council and amalgamate with Acton Scott: these negotiations are on-going and no decisions are likely to be formalized as yet.

The Parish Council meets 10 times per year, no meeting being held in August and December. We alternate our meetings between Ticklerton and Hope Bowdler village halls. The agendas for our meetings are on our website (www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk) and notice boards and members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings to raise any issues with the councillors.

Graham Watts

Chairman - Eaton Under Heywood & Hope Bowdler Parish Council

053/23/2 - Unitary Councillor’s Annual Report to Corvedale Parishes
May 2022 – May 2023

What a topsy-turvy year!. We watched in bewilderment as Prime Ministers and Cabinet Members came and went; the war in Ukraine rumbled on; fuel and energy prices rocketed and consequent high inflation brought on a cost of living crisis. Industrial action is still affecting part of the Public Services Sector and doesn’t look like ending any time soon.

Local Government has worked hard through all this and Shropshire Council has had some successes not least with the rollout of extra recycling bins, a positive result at last with one of our Levelling Up Bids which will help the

redesign of the Riverside in Shrewsbury; and the recent introduction of the Shared Prosperity Fund. Performance in highways (mending potholes) improved and FixMyStreet has generally been welcomed. We've also been ploughing through the new Local Plan Inspection process which has been tortuous at times and is likely to be concluded at the start of next year. Despite a more generous financial settlement than expected, we are still facing an historic debt of £50m which has to be cleared by the end of the new financial year. This is largely due to high social care costs in both adults and children's services. Last year we set up the Shropshire Plan 2022-2025, based around the four pillars of Healthy People, Economy, Environment, and Organisation. Everything the Council does feeds into one or more of these pillars and gives us the clarity to improve our communication, financial tracking and efficiency exponentially. We have involved transformation partners PwC who are helping us completely redesign service areas to drive down costs and improve efficiencies. Over the winter the Council worked to help people in hardship through the Social Task Force and the Warm Welcome initiative by using community buildings for people in need of a warm space and social contact. The Corvedale parishes have been brilliant - opening up village halls to welcome people in for coffee or a hot meal and organising extra events. The Council has issued a lot of information through the website and leaflets for people struggling with the cost of living to help them get extra financial help from the government. There's also been help for children with the Holiday Activities Fund.

I started the year with continuing portfolio responsibility for culture, leisure, tourism and communities. In late 2022 I moved to another busy role: adult social care, public health and wellbeing and the Integrated Care System healthcare partnership between ourselves, Telford & Wrekin Council, The Shropshire & Telford Acute Health Trust, the Voluntary Sector and Healthwatch. This is at times fairly intense particularly as new healthcare arrangements are still settling in. I also have responsibility for co-chairing the Shropshire Health & Wellbeing Board and sit on a number of related Boards.

We are making good progress with discharging patients from hospital, relieving bed-blocking, supporting carers and working closely with primary care networks on programmes to reduce obesity, smoking and mental health problems through social prescribing. We also have more patients able to return home with domiciliary care packages after a hospital stay rather than needing residential care.

I retained responsibility for Communities, and with this hat on I have regular meetings with Shropshire Association of Local Councils and am leading on the Community Governance review of Towns and Parish

boundaries. I am really grateful for all the input on this from the Corvedale parishes which have come up with some sensible ideas for straightening out anomalies in their boundaries.

Last year the Local Government Boundary Commission announced a review of Shropshire Council's divisional boundaries. This was the first review we have had since the unitary authority was formed in 2009 and some parts of the county have had a lot of development since then. The Commission's guideline was that the number of seats and population per division should remain as they are now.

We put forward proposals to allow for expanded population numbers, but the Commission has rejected our proposal and come back with their own version which would involve changes to almost every division in the county, some of them in rather strange configurations which ignore the new parliamentary boundaries. We are not satisfied with their conclusions and are working on revised plans, working to a deadline of 10th July

One of the Commission's proposals was that the Corvedale, notwithstanding its size, rurality, topography and number of existing parishes, should take on an extra parish - Cardington - from Burnell division.

I am reserving judgement until I have had a chance to discuss this with all 10 Corvedale parishes but it will obviously add an extra administrative burden to the second largest division in the county. The LGBC appears more interested in parity of electorate per division rather than the best communities of interest. I am meeting the Corvedale parish Chairs and Clerks shortly to talk it through and prepare a response.

The Commission's proposals are on their website and Shropshire residents can add comments and counter-proposals until July 10th. I hope Corvedale residents will study the maps and let the Commission have their views.

I stood down as Chair of Rural Services Network last November, after 8 years in the role, but am still an active member of the RSN Executive so keep in touch with all their excellent work in supporting rural areas. The new Chair is Cllr Roger Philips from Herefordshire who is extremely experienced and a great ambassador for RSN's work.

Finally, I would like to thank the Corvedale parishes for their brilliant work over traffic calming measures such as lower speed limits and vehicle activated signs. I know it has been a frustrating process to bring to fruition and there is still uncertainty about the different responsibilities of the police, Council and parishes. I am now chairing a SALC Working Group to help tackle these issues and I am hopeful we will be able to clarify responsibilities in the near future.

Cecilia Motley
Councillor, Corvedale Division

054/23 – Community Governance Review – proposed removal of Hatton from Eaton Under Heywood & Hope Bowdler Parish to amalgamate instead with the Acton Scott Parish.

Although the parish council has frequently mentioned the proposed parish boundary changes in the Parish Magazine and in its Minutes, which are available on the website, some councillors report that many parishioners appear to be unaware of the proposed changes and do not wish to amalgamate with Rushbury Parish Council. For its part, the parish council does not accept the contention put forward by Acton Scott Parish Meeting that Hatton residents wish to exit from this parish council and join Acton Scott. However, as the whole issue is in abeyance whilst the constituency boundaries are being reviewed, the matter cannot be progressed at present.

055/23 – Open Forum

No issues were raised.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.

MINUTES SIGNED BY Tony Madeley

DATED 19th June 2023