

**MINUTES**

**OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD AT HOPE BOWDLER VILLAGE HALL**

**MONDAY 15th MAY 2017 at 7.30pm**

**035/17 - Present and Apologies for absence**

Cllr. G Watts  
Cllr C Pugh  
Cllr. L Gray  
Cllr. S Jones  
Cllr. T Madeley  
Cllr. P Jenkins

**In Attendance**

Clerk, Mrs J de Rusett, Unitary Cllr. Cecilia Motley, Mr Bruce Orme and one member of the public

**Apologies for absence**

None received.

**036/17 – 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.

**037/17– Chairman’s Welcome and Annual Report for the Parish Council for the year 2016 – 2017**

As Chairman for 2016/2017 Cllr. Graham Watts delivered the following report and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

As always, I start my report by thanking my fellow councillors, our Clerk and our Unitary Councillor, Cecilia Motley, for their help and support during the past year. This was an election year and sadly we lost councillors Bruce Orme and Malcolm Young, both of whom I thank for their service to the Parish Council over many years. We are pleased to welcome our new councillor, Peter Jenkins of The Manor, Hope Bowdler and look forward to working with him. Only six candidates stood for the parish council, so we have one vacancy to fill. We shall be looking to co-opt a seventh member as soon as possible.

During the past year the Parish Council has held meetings on ten occasions, alternating between Ticklerton and Hope Bowdler Village Halls. The date and venue of the meetings are advertised on the public notices boards in the parishes, in the parish magazine and on the Parish Council's website – [www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk](http://www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk). The public are invited to attend all meetings to raise any issues with us. We also offer pre-application planning advice to any would-be planning applicants.

In the past year the Parish Council has received and considered only four planning applications, far fewer than usual. However, one application received in August relating to a controversial application in Ticklerton

(16/03746/FUL) occupied the Parish Council at three separate meetings. A decision on that application is still awaited from the Planning Officers.

The Parish Council received an approach from Church Stretton Town Council inviting our Parish Council to share in the cost of running the library, leisure centre and swimming pool in Church Stretton, as Shropshire Council is withdrawing its funding from those services. The councillors considered this matter very carefully, as participation would have involved trebling our annual precept on a permanent basis. A further concern was that the swimming pool needs £300,000 worth of refurbishment, part of the funding for which may also fall to the Parish Council. The councillors therefore deemed it prudent to decline involvement in the scheme.

The Parish Council has continued to receive a Shropshire Council grant to carry out minor highways and environmental works around the parish. We have used these funds for works such as painting bridges, clearing vegetation, grass cutting, cleaning road signs and the bus shelters and maintaining the area around the war memorial in Ticklerton. In addition we arrange for all ditches and lay-bys around the parish to be cleared by a JCB in the winter. We have obtained a larger grant this year as parish councils will have to take over some functions currently serviced by the Highways Department. We again made grants to the churches in Hope Bowdler and Eaton to help them keep their graveyards tidy.

### **038/17 - Unitary Councillor's Report**

Unitary Councillor Motley opened by thanking everyone in the parish who voted for her in the May 2017 elections, returning her – with an 80% majority - as unitary councillor for a further four years: she has served since 2009. She has just attended the first cabinet meeting of this new Conservative administration: the new Leader of Shropshire Council is Peter Nutting. He has offered her a position in his administration but she has not decided yet whether to accept.

Cllr Motley continues to be concerned with funding for rural local authorities, which remain under-funded in contrast to urban authorities. The government has moved a small way to alleviate the problem by offering a Rural Services Delivery Grant and also by allowing local authorities to retain all business rates: in Shropshire the latter is hardly advantageous as the business rates generate less income than the level of grant support previously received from central government. A further serious problem with business rates is the effect of the revaluation carried out last year, which has seen a very large increase in business rates in Shropshire often falling on small rural firms, many of which are faced with going out of business. Meetings are being arranged with local Shropshire MP's to see what can be done about the problem.

Of further concern is the fact the government's autumn statement made no new financial provision for the care of the elderly, which means it will have to be funded by a raise in council taxes. After years of negotiating there is still no consensus on the question of where and how acute care in hospitals in Shropshire is to be provided.

There are big developments in the exploration by local government authorities of ways to combine forces to fund infrastructure projects. Shropshire Council has been given associate membership of the newly formed West Midlands Combined Authorities Group.

Cllr. Motley concluded by saying she was pleased with the Chairs' meetings she had held regularly for Corvedale and Apedale parish councils and felt it is worth continuing with them.

### **039/17 – Open Forum.**

As no issues were raised, the Annual Parish Meeting was closed at 7.50pm and was followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council.

**MINUTES SIGNED BY** Tony Madeley

**DATED** 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017