EATON UNDER HEYWOOD & HOPE BOWDLER PARISH COUNCIL

**M I N U T E S**

# OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

#  HELD AT TICKLERTON VILLAGE HALL

**MONDAY 16th MAY 2016 at 7.30pm**

**049/16 - Present and Apologies for absence**

Cllr. G Watts - Chairman

Cllr C Pugh

Cllr. L Gray

Cllr. S Jones

 Cllr M Young

### In Attendance

 Unitary Cllr. C Motley

 Clerk, Mrs J de Rusett

##

No members of the public attended.

## Apologies for absence

Cllr T Madeley

Cllr. B Orme

**050/16 – 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.

**051/16 – Chairman’s Welcome and Annual Report for the Parish Council**

**for the year 2015 – 2016**

As always, I start my report by thanking my fellow councillors, Clerk and our Unitary Councillor, Cecilia Motley, for their help and support during the past year.

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. The public are invited to attend.

In the past year the Parish Council has considered ten planning applications. The Parish Council fought tenaciously against the proposed solar panel farm at Acton Scott, but was overruled when the matter went to appeal.

The Parish Council continued to be active in pursuing the provision of improved Broadband service to our parishes. Whilst we are delighted that faster Broadband is finally available in Hope Bowdler, we continue to be concerned that no provision is being made for rural areas.

The Parish Council responded to the provisions of a Transparency Code by setting up a website, in order for parishioners to easily access our Minutes, Agendas, financial records and details of planning applications. We hope this has proved to be a useful service.

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. We have obtained and installed a new bench to replace a broken one at Gaerstones layby in Hope Bowdler. 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 also provide grants to the churches in Hope Bowdler and Eaton to help them keep their graveyards tidy.

 **052/16 - Unitary Councillor’s Report**

Unitary Councillor Motley spoke about the difficult year Shropshire Council has experienced, with the sudden departure of one Leader, who was replaced by Cllr. M Pate, the previous Leader of the Council prior to unification. Under his leadership she has received a additional portfolio - that of Rural Services and Local Communities.

The biggest challenge Shropshire Council faced in the past year was dealing with additional budget costs of £61 million, in addition to the £146 million already made since 2009. This has led to reconfiguring all council budgets, whilst coping with the ever spiralling costs of caring for Shropshire's increasingly large elderly population, safeguarding children and dealing with children with special needs. Services have had to be slashed: the population of Shropshire was invited to join in the discussion of what services should be cut and which retained, via a process called The Big Conversation. This revealed support for Shropshire Council's emphasis on the care of the elderly and children.

The looming problem is cuts to discretionary services such as libraries, leisure centres and museums. Many town and parish councils are involved in discussions about taking over the provision of such services. This is does not affect the Apedale and Corvedale so much as issues about the lack of public transport, keeping rural schools filled, upkeep of village halls and churches, the state of the roads, inadequate Broadband and poor mobile telephone provision. Planning has become less of an issue since SAMDEV was finally adopted and we have a five year land supply in place.

Parish Councils are finding a increasing administrative load is being placed on them, at a time when it is becoming more difficult to recruit councillors and parish clerks. She has set up a series of Chair's meetings, to discuss shared parish council problems and to seek resolutions by collaborative efforts. There are some good results already, with some councils sharing a parish clerk, others are pooling their environmental maintenance grants to get better value for money, others have set up flood action groups which are supported by neighbouring parishes.

So it has been a busy year and is likely to get busier. Despite all the grand Government talk about economic powerhouses and devolved councils, I am convinced that at the local level it will be the small, solid gains and combined efforts which will keep our Apedale and Corvedale communities thriving and I will do all I can to work with our parishes and residents to achieve that.

**053/16 – Open Forum.**

As no members of the public had attended, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm and proceeded with the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council.

**MINUTES SIGNED BY**

**DATED**