

MINUTES

**of the parish council meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024 at
7.30pm at Hope Bowdler Village Hall**

027/24 - Present

Cllr. G Watts – Chairman

Cllr. S Jones

Cllr. L Gray

Apologies received and accepted from

Cllr. P. Jenkins, Cllr. C. Pugh, Cllr. T. Madeley, Cllr. B Orme and Shropshire Councillor
Cecilia Motley

In Attendance

The Clerk

028/24 - Declarations of Interest relating to this meeting.

Members are requested to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests they may have in matters to be considered at this meeting in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

No declarations were made.

029/24 – Public question time

No members of the public attended the meeting.

030/24 – Approval of the Minutes of the parish council meeting held on 19th February 2024

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 19th February 2024 had been circulated and considered by the councillors. No objections were raised to the Minutes.

Cllr. Jones **proposed** that the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 19th February 2024 be approved by the councillors.

Proposal **seconded** by the Chairman

Vote: Councillors voted unanimously to approve the Minutes.

031/24 – Matters arising from the Minutes of 19th February 2024

131/23 and 005/24: The Clerk reported that a grant application had been submitted to the Police & Crime Commissioner for a second SID unit for Hope Bowdler, but had been declined. The only other way to fund a second SID unit is via an increase in the precept but the precept for 2024/2025 had already been set. The matter is therefore deferred for the time being.

032/24 – Reports

032/24/1 – Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he is arranging an informal get-together between Rushbury Parish councillors and Eaton & Hope Bowdler Parish councillors, so can they meet each other and discuss issues in common to establish a closer relationship in finding solutions between the two parish councils. The event will take place on 8th April 2024 and will be held at Hope Bowdler Village Hall.

032/23/2 – Report from Shropshire Councillor C Motley

Cllr. Motley was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report:

“Many apologies for being absent: I am in London for a couple of days due to longstanding commitments. It’s my very bad luck that there should be three parish council meetings on the same Monday evening, and one on Tuesday which is normally on a Thursday. I have been well and truly caught out!

You will have heard of Shropshire Council’s budgetary difficulties, which have occupied a huge amount of Cabinet’s time over the last month. It is galling, bearing in mind the Council worked so hard last year to produce £42m of savings only to be presented with a potential deficit budget for the next financial year of £62m. It’s worth emphasising that this is a revenue deficit, not a capital one, so the schemes in Shrewsbury you will have heard about – the Smithfield Riverside rebuild and the North West Relief Road (to be funded in full by the Government) are not part of this as they are capital schemes.

The revenue deficit is mainly caused by increased pressure in 4 areas: adult and children’s social care and SEND costs which have ballooned due to increased demand; school transport, particularly for children with Special Educational Needs – again, a number that has increased hugely since Covid – and temporary housing for homeless people. All these service areas are statutory responsibilities for us – we have to provide resource for them. This means that some of the ‘discretionary’ spend, which is basically all those facilities which make people’s lives more pleasant such as libraries, leisure centres, museums, sports grounds, the Theatre and arts, will be badly squeezed.

The Council and the County Councils Network has been lobbying Central Government vigorously for a rural premium in recognition of the costs rural authorities have to bear for delivering services in rural areas. School transport and social care are probably the two most expensive examples as it’s much more costly to deliver care to the rural elderly, and transport children from the rural areas to school. So far, the Government appears not to be listening, but we will continue to lobby.

My area, adult social care and public health, is under the spotlight at present as we are due to have a full Care Quality Commission assessment of our services. The team has already had to deliver a report on the ASC work (some 250 pages!) and we’re not expecting the full inspection for a couple of months.

Providing care for both adults and children is by far the most expensive service provided by the Council, absorbing 77% of the Council’s overall budget. Shropshire is a very rural county, so travel times are longer and care delivery costs higher than in the towns. Costs are rising every year as our population grows and our customers develop increasingly complex needs. In order to mitigate costs, Shropshire Council has been developing technological solutions to help our elderly population stay supported in their own homes and we are working on a transformation plan with partner organisations to improve outcomes and service to our customers.

You may have heard that Shropshire is proposing to close its housing list for 12 months. There is a growing need for housing nationally and the number of people to whom the council have a statutory duty is also increasing. People are confused about this, so below is an explanation from Laura Fisher, our Housing Officer:

“Currently in Shropshire we operate an open housing register which means we allow people who have the financial means to apply as well as those with no local connection. We need to make sure people the council have a duty to are prioritised before those who do not. Furthermore, the number of people the Council has a duty to accommodate is growing and currently the number temporary accommodation is increasing. This is bad for clients as B&B accommodation is not suitable for their needs and is also costly to the Council. We have temporary accommodation schemes in the pipeline, some of which will come online over the next 12 months. Our aim is to not use B&B at all. However, to do this we must ensure that those to whom we have a statutory duty can access the scarce available accommodation. By closing the register for a short period we can focus on those the Council has a duty to house. We can then put additional pressure on the social landlords to encourage them to accept our highest priority households. We will still allow those to whom we owe a statutory housing duty to join the register and there will be some other groups who can too, e.g., those fleeing domestic abuse but who do not want to make a homeless application, or those care leavers who have not yet reached 18 and so cannot make a homeless application. Those to whom we do not owe any duty will not be able to join for a while. We will not remove anyone from the register who is already on it, so there will still be a significant number of people on the register (over 7000) to whom we do not owe a duty. We are working on the application criteria right now, and we are aware this needs to be wider than simply those to whom a statutory duty is owed, but not so wide that we cannot reduce our temporary accommodation figures.”

Finally, if you hear rumblings that the health checks for farmers delivered by our Health/Wellbeing van at the livestock markets are being run down, this is untrue. This initiative has been so popular that it’s been extended and we are very pleased at the uptake. Best wishes to everybody and please let me know if there’s anything you need me to pick up arising from your meeting.”

Councillors discussed the contents of Cllr. Motley’s report in conjunction with the notification from Shropshire Council that it is proposing to build a leisure complex in Shrewsbury, housing three types of swimming pools, spectator seating, a unisex changing village with two group changing rooms, soft play area and café, fitness gym with 130 stations, two multi use studio and toning suites and much else. This was compared and contrasted with the information in Cllr. Motley’s report that Shropshire Council is proposing to close its housing list for 12 months to all but those SC have a statutory duty to house. It appears there are already 7000 people on the housing list. This cut follows the news last month from SC that libraries, leisure centres and household re-cycling centres may be closed due to budget constraints. The councillors wish to discuss these matters in detail with Cllr. Motley at their April meeting as they object wholeheartedly to the new proposed leisure centre in Shrewsbury in the face of the cut backs which will affect Shropshire residents.

033/24 – Planning application

24/00831/FUL – application for the erection of a rear porch and workshop/store modifications at Hill View Barn, Hill View, Ticklerton SY6 7AQ.

Councillors considered the plans submitted with the application.

Cllr. Jones **proposed** that there was nothing objectionable in the application and thus the parish council should support it.

Proposal **seconded** by Cllr. Gray

Vote: councillors voted unanimously to support the proposal.

034/24 - Correspondence/Communications considered at the meeting

Councillors considered the following documents.

1. Letter from Police & Crime Commissioner advising that the parish council's application for a grant towards a second Speed Indicator Unit in Hope Bowdler has not been successful.
2. Road closure notifications:
 - 21st – 22nd March: closure of Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton
 - 8th – 9th April: closure of carriageway due to repairs at Claybrook Farm, Ticklerton
 - 8th – 9th April: closure of un-named road between Longville in the Dale and the B4371
 - 29th April – 3rd May: closure of un-named road between Harton and A49
3. Notification from Shropshire Council's Affordable Warmth & Energy Efficiency Officer of a meeting concerning an Affordable Warmth & Energy Efficiency Retrofit Event at Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Monday 25th March 2024 between 2 – 4pm.
4. Notification that Shropshire Council's Church Stretton Place Plan Area Health & Well-Being Survey is live from 28th February to 21st April 2024. All residents of this parish are invited to participate in the survey. The link is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ShropLocalHealthandWellbeingSurvey>.
5. Notification from Shropshire Council of a proposed Public Consultation relating to its developing plan for a major new swimming, fitness and leisure facility to be developed at the Shrewsbury Sports Village on Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury. The public have until **8th May 2024** to comment on the proposal. Links are: www.shropshire.gov.uk/sportsvillagetransformation <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2024/03/proposed-28m-swimming-pools-enhanced-leisure-facilities-shrewsbury/>

Responses:

No. 3 – councillors look forward to receiving a report from Cllr, Madley who is going to attend this meeting.

No. 5 - councillors will formulate a response to this once they have discussed the matter with Cllr. Motley.

035/24 – Highways and Environmental matters

The parish council had been notified that a very large mobile home had been delivered to the Oaklands Leisure site at Harton. It was so wide that hedges along the route and part of the road alongside Lower House Farm in Ticklerton had been damaged. Queries will be raised with the Planning Department as to the planning status of this mobile home and the damage to the highway will be reported to the Highways Dept.

036/24 - Finance Report for March 2024

1. Precept Funds – balance b/fwd from February 2024 £4,648.50

LESS; Payments to be made on 18th March 2024 from Precept Fund

- HSBC bank charges £ 6.20
- Clerk's net salary for March 2024 plus 2023/2024 arrears due £343.06
- HMRC PAYE on Clerk's March 2024 salary inc. arrears due £ 85.60
- Admin expenses incurred in March 2024

paid by Clerk and reclaimed by her.

• Contribution towards telephone/internet provision for March 2024 @ £20 p.m.	£20.00		
• 1 x pkt A4 copying paper	£ 4.75		
• Electricity for heating at TVH on 19.02.24	£ 2.00		
• Travelling expenses @ 45p per mile 18.03.24 to Hope Bowdler Village Hall			
Total: 34 miles	<u>£15,30</u>		
Total of March 2024 admin. expenses	<u>£42.05</u>	<u>£ 42.05</u>	
-		<u>£476.91</u>	<u>£476.91</u>
Balance of Precept fund c/fwd to April 2024			<u>£4,171.59</u>

Cllr. Jones **proposed** that the payments totalling £476.91 be approved.

Proposal **seconded by the Chairman**

Vote: Councillors voted unanimously in support of the proposal.

Ring Fenced funds held by Parish Council

<u>Environmental/Maintenance Fund</u> balance b/fwd from February 2024	£1,161.78
<u>Neighbourhood Fund</u> – balance b/fwd from February 2024	£ 451.59
<u>Total funds held by Parish Council following authorisation & presentation of the above cheques.</u>	
Precept Fund	£4,171.59
Environmental/Asset Maintenance Fund	£1,161.78
Neighbourhood Fund grant	<u>£ 451.59</u>
	<u>£5,784.96</u>

Bank Statement/Cash Book reconciliation.

Clerk's reconciliation between Cash Book and HSBC Bank Statement 149 was verified by Councillor Jones..

037/24 – Any Other Business (for dissemination of information only)

No matters were raised.

There being no further business to conduct, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.15pm

Date & Venue of the next Parish Council meeting
Monday 15th April 2024, 7.30pm at Ticklerton Village Hall

SIGNED Graham Watts

DATED 15th April 2024