

**MINUTES**

**OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**HELD AT HOPE BOWDLER  
VILLAGE HALL**

**MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021 at 7.45pm**

**054/21 - Present and Apologies for absence**

Cllr. G Watts - Chairman  
Cllr C Pugh  
Cllr. L Gray  
Cllr. S Jones  
Cllr. B Orme  
Cllr. T Madeley  
Cllr. P Jenkins

**In Attendance**

Clerk, Mrs J de Russett, Unitary Cllr. Cecilia Motley and one member of the public.

**055/21 – 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.

**056/21– Chairman’s Welcome and Annual Report for the Parish Council  
for the year 2020 - 2021**

As Chairman for the year 2020/2021 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 2020/2021.
- Our financial year commences on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year and in April 2020 we started the year in lockdown, which left us wondering how we were going to operate the parish council without being able to hold meetings. Meetings are necessary to consider and vote on a wide range of issues, including planning applications and financial matters. At the Annual General Meeting the Chairman is voted in and other statutory matters are voted on. Our Annual Parish meeting, Annual General

Meeting and ordinary business meeting usually held in May 2020 all had to be cancelled.

- Initially we administered the parish council by email, telephone and with the Clerk driving around the parish getting signatures and delivering documents, including dealing with the annual audit arrangements. Then in May 2020 the government brought forward legislation which amended the way normal parish council business is conducted: the legislation continued in force until 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Amongst other things, it enabled parish councils to hold their meetings via remote viewing platforms. We therefore adopted the practice of holding our meetings via Zoom, with varying degrees of success given the poor Broadband signal in our part of Shropshire.
- During the 2020/2021 year we managed to hold six parish council meeting, and we now return to face to face meetings on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Members of the public are always invited to attend these meetings to raise any problems or queries with us relating to parish matters. Dates and venues for our meetings are on our website ([www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk](http://www.eatonhopebowdler.co.uk)) and on notice boards around the parish.
- Since January 2020 the Parish Council has considered thirteen planning applications, eleven of which the parish council was able to support. Of those the parish council did not support, one is being appealed to the Planning Inspector and the other is awaiting a Shropshire Council planning committee meeting.
- Elections took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Six existing councillors sought re-election and were returned unopposed and thus were duly re-elected. We have one vacancy for Hope Bowdler which we will seek to fill by co-opting a further councillor. We were pleased that our Unitary Councillor, Cecilia Motley was also re-elected.
- The Parish Council has been working hard seeking to reduce the speed at which traffic passes through Hope Bowdler. We have discussed the matter with the Police and with engineers from the Shropshire Council Highways Department. It is hoped that we will shortly be purchasing and arranging for the installation of a speed indicator device on the B4371 from the Much Wenlock direction. This will be funded by the parish council and we will seek grant aid during the year to also instal one at the Church Stretton end of the village.

### **057/21- Unitary Councillor's Report**

Unitary Councillor Motley thanked all who had voted for her in the recent elections. and was pleased to see all the Eaton & Hope Bowdler councillors had been re-elected or co-opted back onto the parish council She reported that the new Leader of Shropshire Council is Cllr. Leslie Picton, the first ever woman to be elected as Leader of Shropshire Council. She is a councillor with a lot of local government experience and determination. In particular as Leader she wants to improve communications with parish councils and

one of her priorities is getting the state of Shropshire roads sorted out. She holds a rural ward north of Shrewsbury and so has in-depth knowledge of rural issues. Cllr. Motley will keep us up to date with all the news from Shropshire Council.

**058/21 – Open Forum.**

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Jane Wrench of Soudley to address the meeting on behalf of the group Restoring Shropshire’s Verges Project. Mrs Wrench outlined the objectives of the Project, namely the prevention of mowing of roadside verges until the end of July at the earliest, in order to give wild flowers time to seed, to promote wild life including butterflies, to give wild animals a chance to breed and to create corridors for wild life. 97% of wild flower meadows have been lost in Shropshire and this has had a huge impact in Shropshire on wild plants and wildlife generally. The Project works closely with the National Trust and they are placing notices on verges asking for mowing to be delayed until the end of July or August and Mrs Wrench showed the councillors copies of the posters. She advised they are endeavouring to make contact with the Highways Department to discuss their initiative.

Cllr. Orme and Cllr. Madeley enquired about the width of verges on which mowing was to be delayed, pointing out that many lanes in this parish are narrow and vegetation often obstructs the view of motorists, especially at road junctions: not mowing the verges can be hazardous. The issues were discussed at some length and after assurances were received about road safety, the Parish Council agreed to support the Restoring Shropshire’s Verges Project. Mrs Wrench was thanked for her presentation.

The Annual Parish Meeting was closed at 8.00pm and was followed by an ordinary business meeting of the Parish Council.

**MINUTES SIGNED BY**     Peter Jenkins    

**DATED**             21<sup>st</sup> June 2021