

HODNET PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Lyon Hall, Hodnet On Thursday 28th March 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Steve Alden, Karen Calder, Steve Freeman, John Parker, John Powell, Maryjayne Rees (Chairman) John Roberts.

In attendance: Mary Hardy representing Compassionate Communities and Ian Cruise-Taylor, Parish Clerk,

1. Welcome: Cllr Rees chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting

2. Apologies: Apologies were noted from Cllrs Alan Cope, Chris Mackie, Paul Nevins, Howard Trevor

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29th March 2018

Councillor Powell proposed that the minutes be signed as a true copy of proceedings, Councillor Alden seconded this, all agreed.

4. Chairman's Report – Councillor Maryjayne Rees

Cllr Rees's report is attached to these minutes in Appendix 1.

5. Shropshire Council Report, Hodnet Ward – Councillor K Calder

Cllr Calder gave a detailed report on the current situation regarding the services and finances of Shropshire Council which included the requirement to make £61m savings by 2022/23. The effect of the reductions in recent years is being felt by residents across the County and in particular there are pressures on Children's and Adults Services and Adult Health Care. Although the County's Council tax remains one of the lowest in the country, the County will experience a £12m shortfall in Government funding. Steps such as spending freezes and the use of reserves have been exhausted and reduction in service will continue to be felt. The effect of the reductions in recent years is being felt by residents across the County and in particular there are pressures on Children's and Adults Services and Adult Health Care. Concerns about public transport cuts and the condition of the county's roads have also been expressed.

Shropshire Council played a very active role in the Future Fit discussions and the resultant recommendations have been submitted. The discussions focussed not just on health-related matters but the importance of appropriate and effective public transport. The proposed solution has been referred to an Independent Review Panel by Telford and Wrekin Council, and if the plans are not approved the County will lose £315m in funding.

A separate health initiative called 'Community Fit' has been introduced in the Primary Care sector in an effort to provide help close to home, reducing dependency on hospitals. The Council was also looking into response times by West Midlands Ambulance Service and seeking to identify where all the community defibrillators were located.

Concerns expressed by Hodnet Parish Council regarding the administration of the Community Infrastructure Fund has been shared by other parishes. It is hoped that lessons have been learnt and there will be closer engagement and cooperation with parishes in future.

The Council will go ahead with the completion of the northern elements of the ring road which will cost £54m, although the Local Enterprise Partnership will contribute.

6. Lyon Hall Report – Councillor J Parker

Cllr Parker advised the meeting that hirings for 2017-2018 showed a slight reduction, have increased recently. Fund raising continues to support the running of the Hall. Extraordinary costs were incurred last year replacing the boiler and broken windows (£736 in total), and this coming year will see repairs to rotten window sills.

The hall is used by various groups and individuals and by all sections of the local community and the installation of Wi-Fi by the Parish Council has proved very popular.

7. Compassionate Communities (CO-CO) – Mrs M Hardy

Mary Hardy reported that the Hodnet scheme has been in existence for 3 years now and aims to serve the area served by the Hodnet Medical Practice. Six volunteers (from High Hatton, Wistanswick, Hodnet, Marchamley and Wollerton) were visiting clients in Hodnet, Ollerton, Lower Heath, High Hatton, Childs Ercall and Marchamley.

A further volunteer had completed their training/DBS and was ready to start visiting. Of the six clients, two had been referred to Co Co via the surgery, three had self-referred as a result of our publicity and one came following discharge from hospital.

After a slow start, the scheme was now more established and appeared to be meeting a need, the factor most appreciated by clients being that the volunteers have time to listen and chat with them. The balance between available volunteers and clients desiring a visitor was currently fairly steady, but circumstances can change very quickly. Volunteers receive ongoing support and training.

Opportunities to publicise the project were always appreciated. Mrs Hardy was pleased to report that Drayton Medical Practice are also starting a Co Co project, and was looking forward to working co-operatively with their Community & Care Co-ordinator where there is overlap.

8. Hodnet Medical Centre Patient Participation Group – Councillor Calder

Cllr Calder advised the meeting that this group supports Co-Co and now meets twice a year. The staff of the Medical Practice are kept very busy and the Patient Access system is dealing with increasing numbers of prescription request but is not being used to book appointments. The extended hours arrangements shared with other surgeries has resulted in appointments being available on Saturday's in Whitchurch.

Cllr Calder also drew attention to defibrillator training on 3rd April at Stanton Village Hall. Mention was also made of the success of the Armed Forces Covenant which provided support to ex-serviceman and women and their families. Charities working with and for ex service personnel had funds to provide grants.

9. Hodnet School Report – Cllr S Freeman, School Governor

This year has seen a lot of change and progress at the school. There has been a successful inspection by Ofsted, where the school has maintained its rating of Good. The resulting report was very favourable, resulting in a letter being sent from the LEA congratulating the school on maintaining focus through a period of change (quite a rarity!). SATs results have been very good, improving on the year before, and being some of the highest in the county.

We have had a change in Headteacher, with the existing deputy being promoted after an intense interview, lasting a full day.

There has been a programme of building works this year, the largest project being the construction of a new secure entrance lobby. A new general use teaching room and disabled toilet are planned for construction in the summer of this year. The school perimeter has been enhanced with a new metal, mesh fence, securing the playgroup area, as well as the school playing field.

An all-weather running path has been built around the perimeter of the school playing field, tying into the existing tarmac footpath and playground. This has allowed all year groups to partake in the Daily Mile programme come rain or shine. Adding to the goal of keeping children active the PTA have helped with donations to allow the school to purchase and install 3 items of outdoor fitness equipment, also available for daily use.

Despite the weather there was another successful bonfire night, contributing over half the PTA's annual fundraising budget. This helps the PTA subsidise all school trips and equipment and is also now being put towards an outdoor learning space, along with the help of local Co-op stores' charity donations.

10. Hodnet Charities Trustees Report – Cllr Powell, Trustee for Hodnet Charities

No financial statement has been received from the treasurer, but all commitments have been met and income is much as previous years.

The trustees issued 115 vouchers to parishioners for Christmas, the majority of which were redeemed. The Trustees' thanks to the staff at Hodnet Stores for dealing with the redemption of the vouchers. Financial assistance has been given to Hodnet Seniors Luncheon Club.

The trustees have had a financially demanding year with large bills from the solicitor David Raymont drawing up the Landowners Agreement, and the agent Toby Shaw acting for the sale of the land at Market Drayton. Funds had to be drawn from reserves to accommodate these expenses. There have been several enquiries regarding the land, but no firm offers as yet.

11. Hodnet 2000 Report – Cllr Parker

Although there wasn't a detailed report from this charity Cllr Parker advised the meeting that there were funds to be allocated as and forms were available from various places around the Parish.

12. Public Session

There were no members of the public present.

There being no further items for discussion the Chairman closed the Annual Parish Meeting at 8.25 pm

Approval of the Minutes held on 28th March 2019

Minutes accepted and approved at Annual Parish Meeting held in 2020

Signed by the Chairman

DRAFT

This has been an interesting first year as Chairman and I would like to start by thanking all those who have supported me with their good advice. Not only my first year but also a new Parish Clerk whose first year in this demanding role has probably been made more difficult by having such a novice Chairman.

The amount of administration now required to run the Parish Council has increased and so have the costs e.g. with the new GDPR implementation, new Audit rules etc fortunately the Parish Council is still on course for a small surplus at year. Budgeting will increasingly become more difficult and an area where we must have tight control. I am pleased to report that was no increase in the Parish element of Council Tax.

Savage cuts to Shropshire Council budgets inevitably have a knock-on effect for us. For example, the cut in Transport & Environmental Department of £5m has resulted in suspension of Community Led Road Safety Concerns, whilst we can still report problems unfortunately it would appear that very little will be done. We have local traffic problems of HGVs and speeding traffic from Hodnet through Marchamley and in the absence of county assistance we may have to consider alternative remedies.

In addition, Shropshire Council is now preferring to spend CIL local funds on priorities in Shropshire Infrastructure which they admit is not recognised by the local community from which it was raised as a priority. It will become progressively more challenging for Parish Councils to obtain these funds for their own local projects.

Shropshire Council is undertaking a Local Plan Review, Hodnet has been identified as a hub and over the period to 2036 is expected to increase housing stock by 52 dwellings the preferred site being land to the East of Shrewsbury Road adjacent to the School. These houses will be in addition to the houses that have already been planned i.e. the development off Abbots Way of 44 houses which has finally been approved after 5 years.

It is with sadness that I have to report that two stalwarts of the local community are stepping down from their posts.

Randall Hardy who was responsible for getting Hodnet Website off the ground and then maintaining it over the past 10 years

Phil Wellings – The Parish Council go to man for all our general repairs and maintenance for many years and his vast amounts of unpaid work keeping Hodnet tidy and clean.

The Council's grateful thanks is extended to both these gentlemen.

For the Future

The Parish Council is working hard to make sure that the Parish Website continues.

Our existing Community Led Plan expires next year, this year will see the beginning of consultation and formal review.

I have briefly touched upon budgetary constraints and the realities of working within them. Our Parish community should look to the Parish Council for support when reporting problems/concerns, requesting grants etc but the way that we can provide that support will have to change. It can be frustrating that as a Parish Council we neither have the funds nor the jurisdiction to provide a resolution to some of the genuine concerns of ourselves and members of the public.

In the future providing a resolution to a problem may well have to become a partnership between the Parish Council and the community. The Parish Council will need to become a facilitator to help the community help themselves.

For example – the speeding and HGV problem on the Marchamley

We should encourage and assist the setting up of a speed watch group and or a group to count HGV's. For the Parish Council's part, we could consider erecting our own signs (yes this is legal)

Over the last year there have been marvellous examples of village communities getting together and raising funds to match the various Community Led Grants – it is exactly this kind of community spirit that the Parish Council needs to nurture and build upon.