

Stottesdon & Sidbury Parish Council

Annual Parish meeting held in Chorley Village Hall on Monday April 17th, 2023, at 7.30pm.

Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speaker, Ben Walker, Shropshire Council Senior Project & Engagement Officer, Connecting Shropshire, Economic Growth.

Ben thanked the Parish Council for inviting him to the meeting and gave an update of the broadband.

From 2013 to 2023 the Connecting Shropshire broadband programme oversaw an increase in superfast* broadband coverage from 24% to >98% of premises in the Shropshire Council area.

- Open Reach and Air Band contracts but these have just ended with no active contracts at present.
- Many residents in the parish are either with Open Reach or Airband with some very good speeds in Stottesdon and Chorley, including the Village Hall.
- Government wanted full fibre connections by 2025 but this has now been pushed back but the aim is for people to get at least superfast broadband can deliver 30 megabits per second (mbps).
- Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme explained.

Comments put to Ben included:

- Some areas of the parish are getting speeds but then it drops – can get booster system to plug into the house.
- Sidbury has a cabinet but not connected – Ben did not know why not!
- Airband have problems in some areas with no 'line of sight' due to trees.
- Costs per month commented on.
- Broadband service is essential to everyone.

Ben handed out cards with his contact details on or can contact via the Clerk.

Chairman thanked Ben for attending the meeting, which he said was good to be 'out' after Covid, and he left the meeting.

01. **Apologies:** Shropshire Cllr S Harris, Grant Jones, Val Hart.

02. **Minutes of last meeting – May 16th, 2022:** These had been circulated with the agendas and were proposed, seconded, and **RESOLVED to approve these as a true record.**

03. **Matters arising from minutes:** No items raised.

04. Chairman's Annual Report:

First, some relatively good news regarding council tax bills for this year. Councillors decided to reduce the parish council precept for this year by 2.3% which means that the overall annual council tax bill for properties in the parish has risen by 4.8% compared to 5.1% nationally.

Potholes remain a major road hazard in the parish, unfortunately. Some of the worst affected roads are from Almshouse bank to both Duddlewick and Hinton and from Hardwicke Forge to both the ford and to Farlow. The road from Bagginswood to Punches Corner is also in a very poor state. I'm sure there are others, too. We report potholes to Highways every month. The repairs carried out, though, are inadequate. The contractor appears to adopt a "throw and go" approach and the holes reappear a few weeks later. Freda has tried to impress on the Highways department the inadequacy of the repairs numerous times. We have invited them to spend a few hours with us so they can see how poor the roads are, but we are still awaiting a reply. The poor state of our roads is putting all road users at increased risk. Central government has promised extra money for pothole repairs. We must make sure we get our fair share. In the meantime, please report new potholes using the FixMyStreet app as advised on the County Council website.

Another ongoing problem is roadside litter. Fortunately, we have a number of dedicated litter pickers who are "doing their bit" while out walking/ walking the dog etc. Thank you to all those trying to help maintain and improve the local environment. We live in a beautiful area- let's try and keep it that way.

On the subject of roadside verges, we are now into the second season of RSVP (Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project). We've planted wildflower seeds on two verges so far- the long, sweeping verge from the doctors' surgery and the verge from the bottom of Moon House bank towards Hardwicke Farm. Hopefully, we will see the fruits of our labour this spring.

In June we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We decided to plant some trees around the parish to commemorate the event. And all school age children in the parish were presented with a commemorative coin in a presentation box.

The parish council is currently up to full strength. One of our councillors (John Rogers) resigned due to a health issue but we have since recruited two new councillors, Rob Kennett, and Claire Adams.

Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow councillors and our two Shropshire Council representatives, Gwilym Butler and Simon Harris, for their continued support and valuable contributions over the last 12 months. But I'd like to say an especially big thank you to our fantastic parish clerk Freda, who keeps everything ticking along efficiently and doggedly pursues the various county council departments for answers to our requests and problems. She is well known for going the extra mile and I'm sure all the councillors would also have no hesitation in showing their gratitude for the excellent job she does.

05. Shropshire Councillor's reports:

Chairman read out attached report.

06. Organisation reports:

a) Stottesdon School/Nursery: Katie Jones gave the attached report:

b) Chorley Village Hall/Show: Claire Bradley Chairperson Chorley Village Hall gave the attached report:

c) South Wheatland Archive Group (SWAG):

Rosemary Abbiss reported that this group had now been 'wound up' with the balance of the money being split between Stottesdon School and the Dr's Surgery.

The book 'Stud on the Hill' is available to read on the Parish Council website as there are no copies available, despite requests still coming in.

d) WI: No report received.

e) Nightingale Nurses: There is to be a public meeting regarding this.

f) Stottesdon/Sidbury Church: Attached report from Rector Mark Daborn was not received in time for the meeting:

g) Chorley Chapel: from Sue Vincent read by Clerk:

Since the last update in May of last year we have met much more frequently in the chapel. The cream teas continued through the summer months. Also, we started 'warm hubs' through the winter months including a MacMillan and Air Ambulance charity event. All of these were well attended and much enjoyed by all. Thanks go to Jean and Jan from Homelands Park who make delicious soup and have been a tremendous support.

The plan is to continue with the cream teas as the weather improves 😊 I am also planning for a small group to look at the scriptures together either at the chapel or my home soon, all are invited. We continue Open the Book each week at the school with Katie Jones being part of the team. It's so good to see the children's enjoyment and participation in opening up the scriptures to them. This has been going on for twelve plus years now and Gwen Edge and Jenny Home are valuable team members.

The men's weekends continue throughout the year making good use of the building. We have been able to purchase a large wood burner for the chapel. We also have some electrical work planned to upgrade the building.

Well, what does the future look like? Thankfully, God alone knows, and our trust is in Him.

h) Lengthsman Scheme:

- Drains around the parish have been cleaned out to alleviate flooding.
- Visibility splays at the Harcourt junction (Bagginswood end) were not cut due to the amount of dog mess.
- Compost recently dumped round the Harcourt Road.

07. Parish problems:

- Chairman gave a brief report regarding the very well attended meetings regarding the Ditton Priors Medical Practice.
Dr Railton is wanting to retire and the position for a new Dr is being advertised. For a 'new' Dr to come to a practice such as this it is expensive to buy a property to live on top of buying into the practice.
If anyone knows of any property of low or 'free' rent, they are asked to contact the Surgery.
- Resident raised a complaint regarding the amount of dog mess in the Churchyard, field across the footpath to Glebe Drive and around the Millennium stone.
- Three stiles need replacing/repairing in Bush Woods – two have been done but one left.
- Resident raised the problem of parking outside Stottesdon School.
- Sleepers replaced by residents on the bridge over the brook towards Pitt Cottage, Chorley.

08. Kings Coronation: Commemorative coins have been purchased for all children under the age of 16 in the school and parish.

09. Chairman's closing comments: Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited them to stay for tea/coffee/biscuits.

10. Date of next meeting – 24th April 2023 (Parish Council meeting)

Signed: Chairman

Date: