Whixall Parish Council

Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of WHIXALL'S PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

<u>**Present:**</u>
Chairman: I Mercer
Whixall Parish Councillors: B Harris; A Rawlinson; and M Evans
Whixall Social Centre Committee: S Beer and W Edge
Parishioners: 8
Clerk to Whixall Parish Council: A Roberts

1. <u>**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 28 April 2022 to be approved and signed**</u>

    The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He asked that the minutes of last year's meeting be approved as an accurate record. Proposed Cllr Mercer, seconded Cllr Rawlinson agreed by all present. The Chairman signed the minutes.

2. Cllr Mercer reported on behalf of the Parish Council.

    1. <u>Changes on the Council</u>:
        None this year.

    2. <u>Shropshire Councillors</u>
        Edward Towers and Peter Broomhall are the current Shropshire Councillors and have attended most meetings and been very supportive and able to use their own experience of being Town councillors at Wem.

    3. <u>Spending summary</u>

	2021/22	**2022/23**
Opening Balance	£7,7774	£11,898
Income	£11,852	£12,426
Expenditure	£7,728	£11,562
Closing Balance	£11,898	£12,761

    4. <u>Website</u>
        The parish website is kept updated by the Clerk. In addition, meeting notices and information are posted on the Council's Facebook page.

    5. <u>Assets and reserves</u>:
        We have continued to improve the funding, information on and the maintenance of the council's assets. Purchase of tools and maintaining the Marlot. Arranging grass cutting at the social centre, Moss cottages playing field and the green at Hollinwood. I would like to thank the Marlot Conservation Group for their hard work on the Marlot and Hollinwood green.

    6. <u>Grants</u>
        We have managed to provide modest funding to local facilities: North Shropshire Wheelers and the trust that looks after the chapel cemetery as well as making a one-off grant to the Primary School towards the purchase of Coronation medals.

    7. <u>Boglife</u>:
        Work is in progress supported by a substantial grant from EU and we are starting to see changes on the ground. Unfortunately, the community liaison post has been discontinued but there is expected to be an alternative put in place by Natural England, in the meantime councillor Alan Rawlings has been designated the council point of contact for issues around the project and flooding in particular.

8. <u>Flood management</u>:
    There is ongoing work in conjunction with NE, SC and landowners to try and find sustainable solutions

9. <u>Crime Prevention</u>
    We are getting regular updates from the police and thanks to Graham Turnbull who is the Neighbourhood watch coordinator for pushing this.

10. <u>Keeping residents involved and informed</u> i
    This is important and a number of parishioners have attended meetings, which is welcomed; please feel free to attend any council meeting. We will continue to publish an annual newsletter. For the last two years we have taken a different approach to the Older Peoples' Christmas meal and intend to continue with this approach. We also intend to run, with the churches, the Armistice Sunday event.

11. <u>The Marlot</u>
    The council continues to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the Marlot Local Nature Reserve and has spent over £4,000 on the Marlot over the last five years.

Cllr Mercer thanked all the councillors who had been involved over the last year with special thanks to Bob Harris who has been Vice chair and to the clerk.

3. Broadband Presentation by Ben Walker, Shropshire Council
A summary of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

4. Parish Debate
Some parishioners reported that their connectivity was good, however the majority of questions and comments centred around frustration at the rate of progress implementing the broadband project in Whixall along with issues concerning specific properties. Ben advised anyone with specific questions to contact Freedom Fibre using the details shown below.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

5. Scheduled date of next Annual Parish Meeting
15 May 2024 (to be confirmed)

Broadband update for Whixall Parish - May 2023

Connecting Shropshire works to provide better broadband to premises in the Shropshire Council area that would miss out if left to market forces. Since 2013, the programme has provided access to superfast broadband infrastructure for over 70,000 homes and businesses.
The build phase of the programme completed in March 2023.

Current superfast broadband situation
Most premises in Whixall parish have access to superfast broadband (30mbps) from infrastructure commissioned by Connecting Shropshire:

- Openreach's 'fibre to the cabinet' broadband network - five roadside cabinets installed since 2016
- Airband's 'fixed wireless access' broadband network - seven transmitter sites installed since 2018

Parishioners wanting to access the Openreach broadband network need to make the switch by upgrading to a fibre broadband package with their chosen internet service provider.
Parishioners can visit the Openreach website to check the availability of fibre broadband.
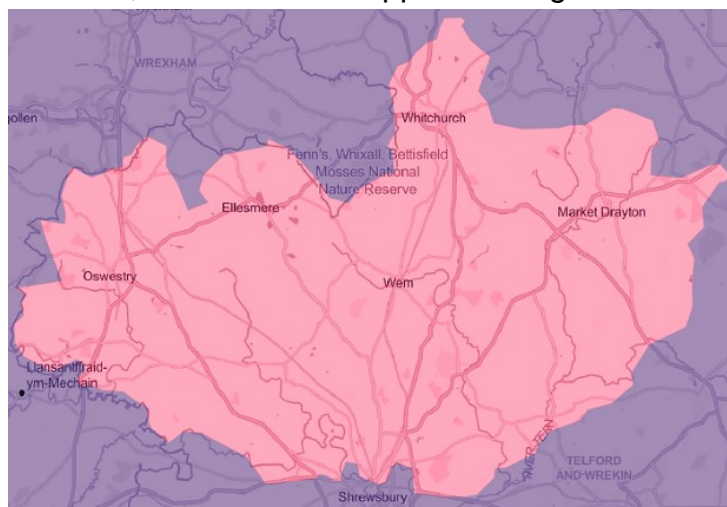
Premises in the parish that cannot access superfast broadband from the Openreach network, may be able to order a connection from Airband, which serves premises in the parish from its 'fixed wireless' broadband network. To check availability and place an order, please order online via the Airband website, call Airband on 01905 676121 or email: hello@airband.co.uk

Future gigabit broadband plans
The UK government is now delivering improvements to broadband infrastructure through its £5bn Project Gigabit and holds the responsibility for procurements, contracts and supplier management.

It was recently announced that broadband infrastructure supplier Freedom Fibre have been awarded a £24 million contract to provide 12,000 premises in North Shropshire with access to a 'fibre to the premises' broadband network.

Stage one of the contract involves on-the-ground survey work and detailed network design, and is due to complete in Autumn 2023. Whixall parish is expected to benefit from the new Freedom Fibre broadband network, but it is too early to say which premises will have access to it and when.

Link to the Freedom Fibre press release: https://www.freedomfibre.com/post/major-broadband-upgrade-will-benefit-12-000-shropshire-homes-and-businesses

If parishioners have any questions for Freedom Fibre, please email: careline@freedomfibre.com

Visit the Freedom Fibre website to register for updates: https://www.freedomfibre.com/connect

Queries about current broadband coverage
If parishioners have specific queries about current broadband availability, please contact Connecting Shropshire providing your address and landline number (if you have one).

Connecting Shropshire contact details:
- https://shropshire.gov.uk/connecting-shropshire
- connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk
- 01743 252203