

Notes: Market Drayton and Rural Parishes Community Covenant Meeting

13th May 2026, Festival Drayton Centre 1pm-3pm

Attendees

Charlotte Hollins – General Manager, Fordhall Community Land Initiative / We're Right Here Campaign.
Mel France - Public Health Principal Integration & Inequalities Health, Wellbeing and Prevention Directorate, Shropshire Council
Malcolm Kay - Chair of Trustees, Festival Drayton Centre
Richard Kolbe - Deputy Chair, Parent Governors Grove School and Communities Lead
Iana Jacobson - Ukrainian Hub
Jenny Horner – Chair, Market Drayton Patient Group
Michael Dams – Parish Councillor, Chair, Sutton upon Tern (welcomed as new members at this meeting).
Gary Hoggarth – Manager, Festival Drayton Centre
Sarah Planton – Parish Councillor, Vice Chair, Stoke upon Tern (welcomed as new members at this meeting).
Catherine Westwood – Manager, Market Drayton Library
Catherine McBride - Market Drayton St. Mary's Church
Alan Cartwright – Market Drayton Community Enterprise (and Market Drayton Town Councillor)

Apologies

Judith James – Parish Councillor, Moreton Say.
Lin Sherwin - Parish Councillor, Hodnet (welcomed as new members at this meeting).
David Strudley - Chair, Market Drayton Foodbank
Helen McSherry – Market Drayton Foodbank
Carolyn Lawrence – Project Lead, Market Drayton Baby Bank
Kerry Williams – Shropshire Youth Association
Ellie Radcliffe – Head of Policy and Research, Power to Change (observer).
Tim Manton – Mayor of Market Drayton Council and Market Drayton Town Councillor.
Grant Robertson – Chair, Market Drayton Sports Association
Market Drayton Amateur Sports Club – David Beckwith has retired from this appointment. Awaiting replacement representative.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Charlotte welcomed the group and introduced new attendees (Barney Hill)

2. Community and Family Hub Weds 13th May.

- Lower footfall due to awful rain and cold. All of town was much quieter. 111 visitors to Festival Drayton
- 8 meaningful conversations, 7 struggled with digital access, 5 Blue Badge applications, 2 attendance allowance support.
- **All agreed** that remembering the Community and Family Hub is second Wednesday of the month is easier for people than remembering the dates. Therefore, suggest moving the last hub date from April 7th – to April 14th **ALL AGREED**

- Mel is requesting that due to audience of Festival Drayton, she recommends Adult Social Care Pilot and occupational health link in to the Community and Family Hub pilot.

Other updates

- Mel has been in positive discussions with Estates at Shropshire Council regarding the Digital Screen proposal shared at the last meeting. Mel will follow up with Cllr Tom Dainty.

3. Presentation from Michael Dams: Development Site at the Barracks

Detailed documents and maps were circulated prior to the meeting.

Michael gave a presentation on the proposed development site linked to the barracks.

Key points included:

- The site has been identified as a strategic development site for Shropshire Council.
- It is already included in the Shropshire Local Plan and will be included in the next Plan.
- The development is linked to the relocation of the Royal Irish Regiment.
- The site could include up to 1,000 houses due to increased housing allocation that Shropshire Council needs to find.
- Keele and Harper Adams Universities have been involved with some of the planning to date. There is hope for a greater collaboration with one of these Universities, possibly bringing in students.
- There is a memorandum of understanding that Keele want to help with green infrastructure and for this to be a live case study for them.
- Some business premises may be included to act as a buffer to the airfield.
- The development land is approximately 178 acres, with around 14 acres of employment land and 163 residential.
- Ancient woodland shown on the map is expected to be retained.

The group discussed the map, the orientation of the site and which areas were proposed for development.

4. Current Progress and Timescales

A recent Shropshire Cabinet meeting agreed to restart the Local Plan process. The timescale is expected to run into 2029, with the process beginning this month through a scoping exercise. The first public consultation is due to close July 15th.

It was noted that there is still a lot of uncertainty and that many details are not yet clear.

5. Key Issues Raised by the Group

The group identified several areas that need more detail and careful consideration.

6a. Transport and Access

Transport was a major concern. The current bus route was described as very limited, with an hourly service that would need to be improved.

Concerns included: The need for more frequent buses, better transport for young people travelling to and from work, safe walking and cycling routes, traffic around the Tern Hill roundabout, whether the speed limit needs to be changed? The need to consider mobility access for older people and those with disabilities.

The group strongly opposed the idea that people could simply use the A-road for walking and cycling, due to speed, safety and congestion concerns.

Connection to Market Drayton was deemed vital, not only for service provision but also to boost the economic activity of the town.

6b. Health and Welfare

The group raised concerns about pressure on existing health services.

It is also widely proven that more populated places tend to be less prosperous and suffer higher health concerns.

Questions included: How many GPs would be needed for a development of this size? Would local doctors, dentists and hospitals cope with the additional population? What different health needs might arise depending on the age and demographics of future residents?

Will health provision be directed towards Hodnet or Market Drayton? Is there potential for provision from the site itself that could also serve the local villages?

How can we bring health and well-being into the design process?

Greenspaces, safe streets, sustainable transport, sense of community, were all vital points shared.

6c. Education

The group discussed whether a new school would be required? The current plans include provision for moving and expanding Buntingsdale Primary school.

Points raised included: The need to understand education demand for ages 0–18. Whether a new primary school would be needed? Whether existing secondary school capacity would be sufficient (currently it does have spare capacity)? The importance of looking at proper education statistics before decisions are made.

It was noted that the idea of health provision had been raised by the Community Covenant group, while the planners had originally focused more on shops and primary school.

6d. Community Facilities

The group felt that the development should not just be treated as housing, but as a new community.

Possible needs included: A community building, Health and leisure facilities, Sports and games provision, Hot desk or working spaces, Places that support entrepreneurship and local business.

Noted that existing sports provision in Market Drayton is not big enough and Maurice Chandler Centre is in need of investment. There are not enough places for young people to socialise within the town.

The group felt that the development would effectively be creating a small village, so the right services and facilities need to be planned from the start.

7. Housing and Demographics

The group discussed who the housing is likely to be for and whether there are specific groups in greater need.

Key points included:

- Local people need housing they can afford.
- Many young people leave Shropshire for work.
- Good Wi-Fi and workspaces could help people work remotely and stay in the area.
- Different housing models should be explored, including ownership and lease models that may better support younger people.
- The design of the development will need to reflect the likely demographics of residents.
- There is an expectation that by 2050 68% of Shropshire's population will be over 65 and the majority of these will be disabled.

There was concern that, based on Shropshire and national figures, the development could attract an older demographic unless active steps are taken to support younger people and families. The latter of which was a focus of the group.

The group also discussed whether the housing forecast could be better understood, challenged or influenced.

8. Priorities for Future Discussion

The group were asked to consider the key areas they should focus on.

The main priorities identified were: Services, Construction, Health and wellbeing, Education, Access, Transport, Connectivity, Local community needs, Housing mix and demographics

The group agreed that the next session should focus particularly on access, transport and connectivity.

This could include looking at a large map of the site and drawing out possible routes, pinch points and connections.

The group was keen for this project to be ambitious, all wanted it to be a flagship for the area.

9. Key Questions to Explore

1. Where are the likely pinch points?
2. What do we not want to see happen/built?
3. What positive outcomes should we be asking for?
4. How can the development positively benefit Market Drayton and the Rural Parishes?
5. What transport links are needed?
6. How can walking, cycling and sustainable transport be made realistic and safe?
7. What facilities are needed for a population of around 3,000 people?
8. How can the development encourage younger people and families to stay locally?
9. Can we integrate different housing models such as self-build, community-ownership, HMO's, tenanted with option to buy, affordable.
10. How do we create a Master Plan for the Barracks which is aspirational, attractive, creating a place where young people and families want to live and want to move to. A place which encourages a healthy approach to live, increases life-expectancy and increases quality of life for the residents.

10. Future Meeting Dates

Next three Community Covenant Meetings at Festival Drayton Centre.

- Wednesday 3 June, 1:00pm–3:00pm,
- Wednesday 24 June, 1:00pm–3:00pm
- Wednesday 15 July, 1:00pm–3:00pm

11. Actions

1. Confirm future meeting dates and venue arrangements - **Charlotte**/Group
2. Bring a large physical A1 map of the development site and curtilage to the next meeting – **Michael/Sarah**
3. Follow up with relevant case studies who may be able to offer aspiration and ideally attend a Covenant meeting:
 1. Bristol development – **Charlotte**
 2. Community Land Trust Model – **Charlotte/Tom Chance**
 3. Elmsbrook military development – **Graham Bould/Michael**

4. Ask Paul – a housing developer – to help give impartial guidance on the project - **Jenny**
5. Can we arrange access to the Barracks site? A walk-around for 6-10 people to be able to fully understand the site potential and the topography. Date and time convenient to MOD – **Catherine M** to speak to the Military Padre.
6. Can we engage directly with Planners at Shropshire Council – **Mel**

12. Agreed Objective

Our aim (by 15th July) is that the Community Covenant makes a clear request that Shropshire Council view Covenant Group as a key partner in developing a detailed Master Plan for the Tern Hill Barracks Site. By doing so we will:

- Ensure the Master Plan offers the best offer for our existing and new community with regards to health, prosperity and wellbeing.
- De-risk the process for the Shropshire Council, ensuring there is strong local buy-in to the process and less objections.
- Together we can create a plan which does not simply satisfy need, but generates demand and is a flagship for community-led development across Shropshire.

The group recognise the value in making a clear statement of what the Community would like to see, to Shropshire Council at day one of the Local Plan process. **Deadline July 15th**

13. Agenda for next session Weds 3rd June 1pm-3pm

1. Digital Display in Market Drayton – support from the Community Covenant group.
2. Tern Hill Barracks Proposal
 - a. Focus on access, transport and connectivity
 - b. Identify likely pinch points linked to traffic, parking, health, education and services
 - c. Gather local knowledge that should be fed into the planning process
 - d. Identify, what we **do want** to see and what we **do not** want to see – benefits/disadvantages to MD and Rural Parishes?
 - e. Explore examples from similar developments, including Bicester and Devon to feed into our aspirations.