Notes and Actions
Market Drayton and Rural Parishes Community Covenant Meeting

Wednesday 23 September 2026, 11am – 1pm

Attendees

Charlotte Hollins – General Manager, Fordhall Community Land Initiative / We're Right Here Campaign.

Mel France – Public Health Principal Integration & Inequalities, Shropshire Council.

Tim Manton – Mayor of Market Drayton and Market Drayton Town Councillor.

Judith James – Parish Councillor, Moreton Say.

Jenny Horner – Chair, Market Drayton Patient Group.

Alan Cartwright – Chair, Market Drayton Community Enterprise and Market Drayton Town Councillor.

Paul Vigors – Chair, Market Drayton Community Amateur Sports Club.

Kerry Williams – Area Manager, All About Youth (Shropshire Youth Association).

Lee Overton – Youth worker, All About Youth (Shropshire Youth Association).

Amy Clewes – Director, Market Drayton Sports Association and Chair, Market Drayton Tigers FC (Junior Football).

Leanne Bradley – Centre Manager, Maurice Chandler.

Catherine Kerr – Community Covenant Project Officer

Apologies

Michael Dams – Parish Councillor, Chair, Sutton upon Tern.

Gary Hoggarth – Manager, Festival Drayton Centre.

Lin Sherwin – Parish Councillor, Hodnet.

Sarah Planton – Parish Councillor, Vice Chair, Stoke upon Tern.

Catherine McBride – Vicar, Market Drayton St. Mary's Church.

Catherine Westwood – Manager, Market Drayton Library.

Richard Kolbe – Deputy Chair, Parent Governors Grove School and Communities Lead.

David Strudley – Chair, Market Drayton Foodbank.

Helena Williams – Youth Support Manager, Shropshire Council.

Rosie Boardman – Children's Transformation Lead. Shropshire Council.

Samantha Wenlock – Early Help Locality, Shropshire Council.

1. Welcome, apologies and outline for session

The meeting opened with a welcome to members and apologies were noted. Lee Overtone and Leanne Bradley were welcomed as guests to this meeting.

Catherine Kerr was introduced as the new Project Officer and point of contact at the Fordhall Community Land Initiative for the Market Drayton and Rural Parishes group. Supporting Charlotte with the role of convening and administering the group.

The session focused on three key areas:

1. Reviewing the Community Covenant's progress and learning to date,
2. Introducing Shropshire Council's Local Transport Plan consultation,
3. Exploring the Youth Transformation Programme and its implications for Market Drayton and the surrounding rural parishes.

Members were also invited to consider the timing and frequency of future Covenant meetings to support wider participation.

2. Updates – review of learning

Mel France and Charlotte Hollins provided an update following their attendance at a Power to Change event in London, where they had shared the Community Covenant's progress and learning with the Power to Change Board.

A visual from Mel was presented, illustrating the evolution of the Covenant and the shift from traditional consultation processes towards community involvement in identifying local priorities and shaping decisions.

Previously, decisions often progressed through established organisational structures, with community consultation taking place once strategies or proposals were already being developed. The Covenant is testing a different approach, bringing local people, community organisations, Town and Parish Councils, Shropshire Council and other partners together earlier to identify issues and explore solutions collaboratively.

The importance of local knowledge, lived experience, trust and relationships was emphasised, alongside the professional expertise and statutory responsibilities of public sector organisations.

The Covenant's role is to facilitate listening, connection and shared problem-solving, helping community perspectives inform the organisations responsible for decisions and service delivery. Shropshire Council continues to hold its statutory responsibilities, while increasingly working as an enabler, connector and strategic partner.

Reference was made to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and opportunities to support local facilities, including the artificial sports pitch due to be installed at The Grove School, which the head teacher has stated will be a community asset for use by other sports groups, not just the school.

Measuring impact

It was noted that whilst we have case study evidence, absence of baseline measures from the outset makes some outcomes difficult to quantify. The importance of establishing appropriate baseline information was acknowledged.

Mel explained that the next phase of the Covenant's development needed to include strengthening evaluation and demonstrating impact.

Mel advised that she would be meeting with senior council leaders and public health colleagues the following week and welcomed members' feedback on the visual ahead of these discussions.

Action: Circulate the Covenant development visual to members for review and feedback (added to end of notes).

3. Local Transport Plan consultation

What does an accessible and connected transport system look like for Market Drayton and its surrounding rural parishes?

Mel introduced Shropshire Council's consultation on its proposed Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2027–2037.

The LTP will guide transport and highways policy, investment and decision-making over the next ten years. It encompasses cars, buses, coaches, rail, walking, wheeling and cycling, alongside digital connectivity and its potential to reduce the need to travel.

The five principal objectives were outlined as:

- Improving health and wellbeing.
- Connecting people to opportunities.
- Reducing carbon emissions.
- Protecting the environment.
- Supporting economic growth.

The consultation closes at **midnight on 16 November 2026**.

Engagement opportunities include:

- Online webinar: 20 October, 12.00pm.
- Online webinar: 2 November, 6.00pm.
- Market Drayton consultation event: Monday 9 November, 12.00–5.00pm, Festival Drayton Centre.
- Online questionnaire and opportunities to respond by email or post.
- A summary of the draft plan available at the local library.

Concerns were raised about the accessibility of consultation opportunities, particularly for working residents and for Parish Councils who may not have a meeting within the period of consultation.

Members discussed opportunities for safe walking and cycling routes, especially for young people.

Members were encouraged to respond individually and through their respective organisations, while also contributing to a collective Covenant response. Members were asked to consider:

1. What is working well? What do we want to build on?
2. Where are there difficulties?
3. Whose voice are we missing?

4. What practical changes would make the biggest difference?
5. If we give one message to Shropshire Council to understand the needs of our area – what would that be?

Actions:

- Mel and Charlotte circulate consultation links, supporting information, event details and discussion questions.
- Members to gather feedback and practical examples from their networks ahead of the next meeting.
- Collective Covenant response to be developed at the next meeting, ahead of the 16 November deadline.

4. Youth Transformation Programme

Market Drayton and surrounding rural parishes have been identified as one of three pilot areas for the development of Local Youth Partnerships (LYPs), alongside Shrewsbury and Highley.

The programme aims to strengthen the local Youth Offer through collaboration, improved understanding of needs, greater youth participation and more coordinated use of existing community assets and resources.

The proposed approach includes:

- Understanding existing youth provision.
- Listening to and working alongside young people.
- Identifying local strengths, assets, needs and gaps.
- Connecting organisations and reducing duplication.
- Linking provision with the Place Universal Offer.
- Attracting and aligning resources around shared priorities.

Developing a sustainable approach

Members were introduced to the proposed longer-term infrastructure, including Local Youth Partnerships, an emerging Young People's Foundation for Shropshire, and the Shropshire Youth Endowment being developed in partnership with Community Resource to channel funds into communities, decided by and applied for by the Local Youth Partnerships.

A Local Youth Partnership is **a place-based, multi-agency partnership that brings together everyone working with young people in a local area** to coordinate what's on offer, identify gaps, and make better use of shared resources. The membership of Local Youth Partnerships is to be co-designed with the community and can include young people, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary and community organisations, schools, youth workers, health services, Early Help and other partners. Funding arrangements for Local Youth Partnerships remain unclear. There is no fixed timeline for completing the process, with an emphasis on developing arrangements that are appropriate and sustainable.

The next steps are:

- to review baseline data,
- invite Town and Parish Councils and the Community Covenant to help shape the Local Youth Partnerships framework - **19 November, 3.00–5.00pm**
- share the youth consultation/survey through our networks (when released) during November and December.

Action: CH to confirm with Helena Williams opportunities for Covenant representation at the 19 November discussion.

Review of the Market Drayton youth community profile / baseline data

Members reviewed selected findings from the 2023–2024 youth survey and associated community profile. It was acknowledged that the document contains outdated information, inaccuracies and omissions. A list was gathered of inaccurate data.

Members highlighted the importance of establishing a current and comprehensive evidence base, which is missing from the document. Such as numbers of:

- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Young people with disabilities or additional needs.
- Young parents.

Existing youth provision and capacity

Members recognised the range and quality of existing youth provision in Market Drayton, including activities delivered through The Zone, Phoenix Centre, Methodist Church and other local organisations. The needs of different age groups were discussed, including the challenges of engaging older teenagers and providing activities that reflect their interests.

It was reported that some junior and senior youth sessions at the Phoenix Centre are operating at capacity and there is demand for more services, but no funding to support them. Popular seniors youth club provides opportunities for mentoring of younger attendees. The popularity of existing provision was acknowledged.

The Zone can be seen as exclusive to members of the Fairfields community. Young people and adults living elsewhere in Market Drayton and Rural Parishes do not always feel comfortable accessing services at The Zone.

The potential for expanding provision for young parents was raised, with some currently having to travel outside Market Drayton to access support.

A number of alternative curriculum services were not noted in the document. The document also has extensive missing pieces for all the services that exist within the town for example Maurice Chandler Sports Centre, more of the All About Youth provision, CASC, Fordhall Organic Farm and more.

Amendments suggested to the document:

Other areas young people visit and socialise

- Town Park (used the least due to cameras onsite)
- All other Town Parks used a lot, all the sports centres – including CASC and Maurice Chandler Sports Centre
- Walkmill Meadows, Tern Fisheries, Phoenix Centre, Scout Hut, Buntingsdale Youth Centre, Methodist Church
- Green Fields Sports Association has 1,000 children registered across all of their offers
- Lots of inaccurate descriptions for the leisure facilities in town
- Hawkestone Follies and JCB was seen as an irrelevant reference in the document.

Places of work

- Remove JCB, ADD Palethorpes (Complete Food Group), Fordhall Event Catering, Aldi, Asda, Morrisons
- Add note that local businesses that offer Apprenticeships.

Barriers for accessing youth provision: Transport and affordability

Cost and transport were identified as significant barriers to accessing youth activities, including sports and leisure provision at Maurice Chandler Sports Centre and other locations.

Members discussed the potential to make better use of existing minibuses owned or operated by local organisations. These included The Grove School, Market Drayton Junior School, Freedom Church, Mount Lane and the Methodist Church. Salop Wheelers was also mentioned.

It was suggested that identifying available vehicles, contacts and arrangements for their collective community use could help address some transport barriers.

It is known that a number of children do walk and cycle to Maurice Chandler Sports Centre, Tern Hill. Concerns were raised about safe pedestrian and cycling access to the Centre, particularly where young people cross a busy road rather than use the underpass near the Barracks.

Transport descriptions on trains is inaccurate. No bus to Crewe. Buses do go to Wellington Train Station. Whitchurch Train Station not mentioned, but gives good access to Manchester and Birmingham.

Awareness of local activities

Members discussed the need to improve awareness of existing youth activities and community provision. Suggestions included digital noticeboards, community information displays and the use of vacant shop windows to promote local opportunities. The possibility of securing business advertising to support the cost of digital displays was also raised.

While improved communication could help more young people access existing opportunities, members recognised that additional capacity and resources would also be required in some areas.

Youth voice, wellbeing and participation

Members discussed the importance of ensuring young people feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to develop confidence, skills, creativity and positive relationships. Existing initiatives highlighted included targeted youth work at The Zone, activities at the Phoenix Centre, wellbeing provision at The Grove and community sports programmes.

The Time to Talk initiative at The Grove was mentioned as an example of targeted support, combining lunchtime engagement with individual sessions. The importance of involving young people directly in identifying priorities and developing future provision was emphasised and applauded.

Members highlighted the need for the updated community profile to reflect provision across the wider Market Drayton area and surrounding rural Parishes, rather than focusing predominantly on individual neighbourhoods.

Actions:

- Charlotte to explore Covenant representation in the next phase of Youth Transformation discussions with Helena.

- Leanne and Amy to provide Catherine with information about activities at Maurice Chandler Sports Centre and Greenfields, including rugby and tennis where available.
- Further local information and corrections to the Youth Community Profile document to be gathered to support its update. Catherine to write report and send to Helena Williams.

4. Review of meeting days and times

Members considered the current arrangements for Community Covenant meetings, including their timing and frequency.

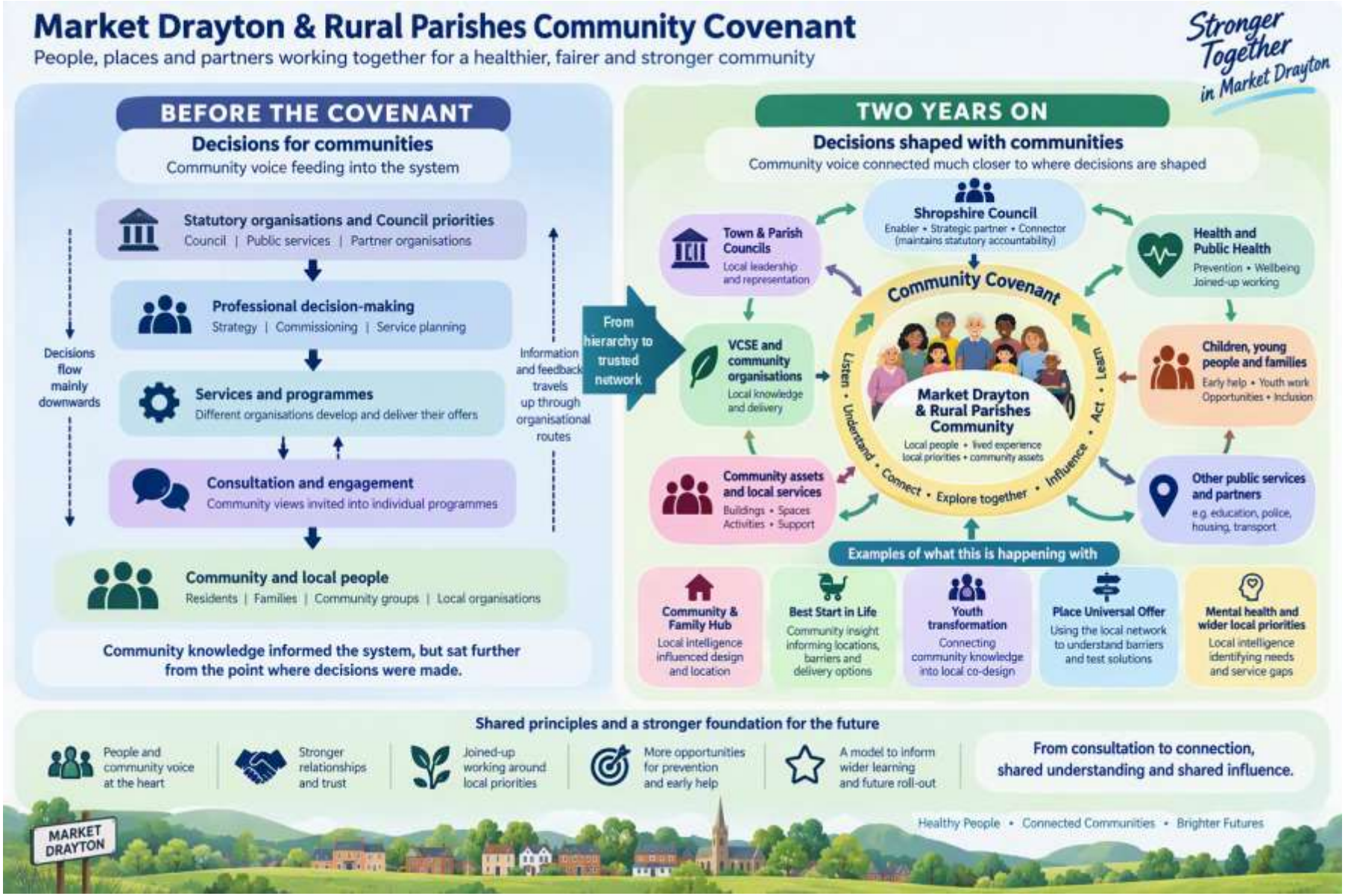
The importance of accommodating different working patterns and other commitments was recognised, while acknowledging that no single arrangement would suit everyone.

Action: Catherine to contact members to establish their preferred meeting days, times and frequency, including any periods they are unable to attend and whether they have flexibility.

5. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 4 November 2026, 3.00–5.00pm.

The next meeting will include a more detailed discussion of the Local Transport Plan consultation and the development of the Covenant's collective response.


Market Drayton & Rural Parishes Community Covenant
People, places and partners working together for a healthier, fairer and stronger community
Stronger Together in Market Drayton
BEFORE THE COVENANT
Decisions for communities
Community voice feeding into the system
Statutory organisations and Council priorities
Council | Public services | Partner organisations
Professional decision-making
Strategy | Commissioning | Service planning
Services and programmes
Different organisations develop and deliver their offers
Consultation and engagement
Community views invited into individual programmes
Community and local people
Residents | Families | Community groups | Local organisations
Decisions flow mainly downwards
Information and feedback travels up through organisational routes
Community knowledge informed the system, but sat further from the point where decisions were made.
From hierarchy to trusted network
TWO YEARS ON
Decisions shaped with communities
Community voice connected much closer to where decisions are shaped
Shropshire Council
Enabler • Strategic partner • Connector (maintains statutory accountability)
Town & Parish Councils
Local leadership and representation
Health and Public Health
Prevention • Wellbeing
Joined-up working
Community Covenant
Listen • Understand • Connect • Explore together • Influence • Act • Learn
Market Drayton & Rural Parishes Community
Local people • lived experience
local priorities • community assets
VCSE and community organisations
Local knowledge and delivery
Children, young people and families
Early help • Youth work
Opportunities • Inclusion
Community assets and local services
Buildings • Spaces
Activities • Support
Other public services and partners
e.g. education, police, housing, transport
Examples of what this is happening with
Community & Family Hub
Local intelligence influenced design and location
Best Start in Life
Community insight informing locations, barriers and delivery options
Youth transformation
Connecting community knowledge into local co-design
Place Universal Offer
Using the local network to understand barriers and test solutions
Mental health and wider local priorities
Local intelligence identifying needs and service gaps
Shared principles and a stronger foundation for the future
People and community voice at the heart
Stronger relationships and trust
Joined-up working around local priorities
More opportunities for prevention and early help
A model to inform wider learning and future roll-out
From consultation to connection, shared understanding and shared influence.
MARKET DRAYTON
Healthy People • Connected Communities • Brighter Futures