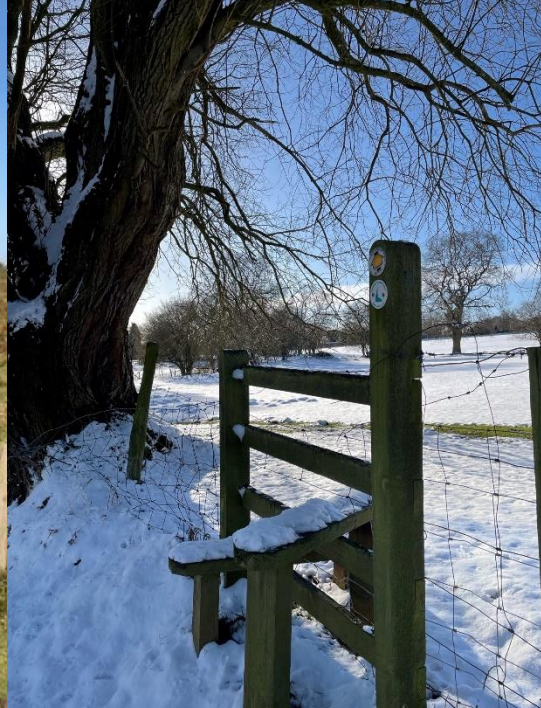


**Hopton Wafers**  
Community Led  
Plan Review 2021





## HOPTON WAFERS

### Community Led Plan Review 2021

A Community Led Parish Plan reflects the opinions of residents who wish to have a say on what they really want for the future. The first Community Led Parish Plan was adopted in 2012. There are still a small number of hard copies available from the Parish Clerk or the Plan can be viewed on the Parish Council website [www.hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk). This document has not only been produced to provide information on opinions in the parish but also provides action points for landowners, local community groups such as the Parish Council and utility and service providers such as Royal Mail, Severn Trent and the County Council.

Since 2012 the Parish Council has used the adopted Community Led Plan to guide them on community consultations and decisions especially in regard to planning, highways and environmental issues. In 2017 the Parish Council felt it was time to formally update the Community Led Parish Plan and as part of Shropshire Council's request to undertake a Housing Needs Survey (HNS). A Working Group got together in May 2017 and arranged the delivery of an updated Parish Plan Questionnaire at the same time as the Housing Needs Survey to every household in September. Shropshire Council received the HNS directly and have utilized the information to aid them with planning policy and decisions and the Working Group has formulated this updated Plan from the questionnaires.

The Parish Council confirmed its commitment to updating the Parish Plan and has funded the process. This Review document is a stand-alone document but will have more meaning if read in conjunction with the 2012 Plan.

It is important that the Plan expresses the views of the community. Not everyone responded to the questionnaire, but everyone was given the opportunity with 125 questionnaires returned representing 262 residents. The Working Group analysed the responses to formulate a report which enabled the preparation of a draft Plan. The draft Plan included a presentation of the data and a set of actions for the future and was presented to the Parish Council for consideration in March 2021.

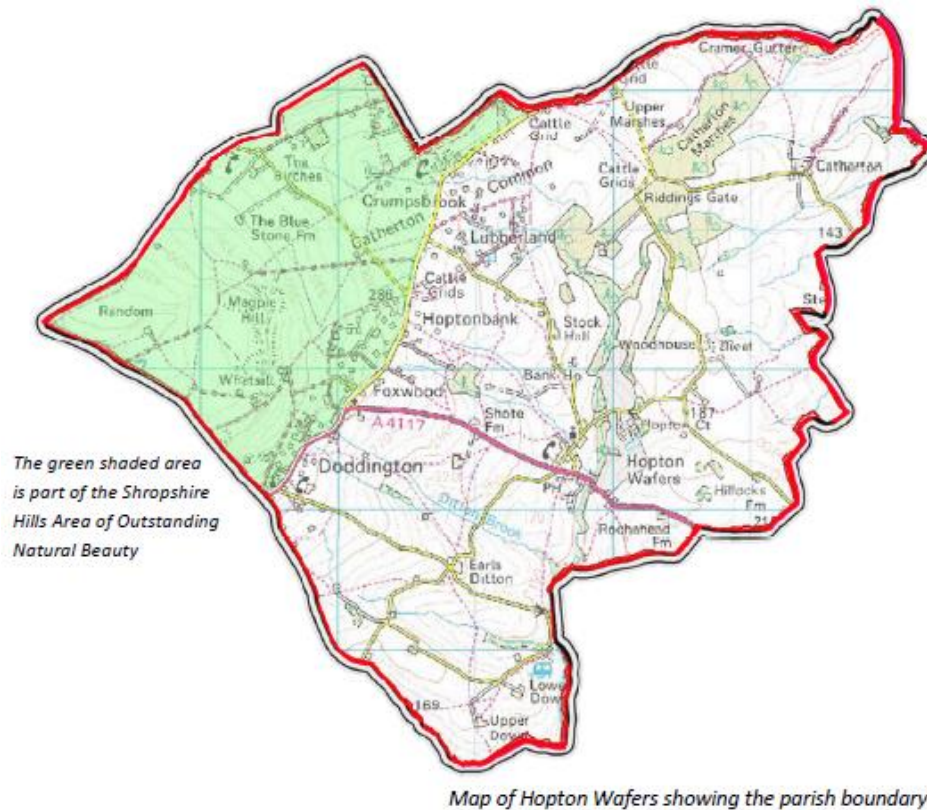
This final version of the Community Led Plan review was published by the Working Group in April 2021 and adopted by the Parish Council at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The Parish Council will continue to take responsibility for monitoring the actions in the Plan and will report progress to residents through the Council's website and social media. It is important to stress that this is a living document. Further reviews will be necessary to ensure that the proposed actions and projects take account of changing circumstances and continue to meet the needs of the community.

### The Working Group

There were four volunteers, four councillors plus the Parish Clerk who have worked on various stages of the process: Mr Paul Barratt, Cllr Barry Buffery, Cllr Linda Clayton, Cllr Peter Cuthbert, Miss Cath Donaldson, Mrs Natalie Edwards, Cllr Mark Humpage, Mrs Dorothy McBride and Mrs Tracey Wood.

### Introduction to the parish and its people

Hopton Wafers parish covers 3,830 acres. The north-western third of the parish (1120 acres) lies within the boundary of the protected landscape of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are two main settlements - Hopton Wafers village and Doddington, with the rest of the population in dispersed settlements from Foxwood across to Catherton. The parish is almost entirely rural in nature, with a population density of about one eighth of the national average.



There is a small shop at the service and petrol station at Foxwood; one inn with rooms and holiday cottages at the Hopton Crown. Other than these there are a few local businesses which provide minimal employment ie Turners Gates, Augernik Fruit Farm, Doddington Lodge Care Home, Ditton Mill, Dippers Bank and Doddington Heights Park Homes.

The parish has the luxury of three village halls at Doddington, Hopton Wafers and Cleeton St Mary, all of which are seen as key centres for the community. There are still regular services at the churches at Hopton Wafers and Doddington as well as the Methodist chapel at Hopton Bank.

Hopton Court is a popular venue for weddings and hosts a number of festivals. Game shooting and horse-riding are important country pursuits that help to provide employment and local income.

## People

At the last Census in 2011 there were 753 residents. More details can be found at [https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/10308/hopton\\_wafers.pdf](https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/10308/hopton_wafers.pdf)

As with the previous Plan the parish was divided into four areas: Doddington (including Doddington Heights, Whatsill, Hopton Bank and Cleeton); Ditton; Hopton Wafers Village; and Catherton and Crumpsbrook.

As at January 2021 there are 649 adults on the electoral register. A rough breakdown is: Doddington – 331, Ditton – 71, Hopton Wafers – 129, Catherton and Crumpsbrook – 118.

The demographic and employment status data has not changed very much in five years since the last questionnaire although some views have changed slightly.

## TRANSPORT AND ROADS

The nucleus settlements of Doddington and Hopton Wafers village both sit astride the busy A4117 which provides convenient links to Ludlow (and on to Shrewsbury) and Cleobury Mortimer (and onward to Kidderminster, Birmingham and the national motorway network).



Good road connections are absolutely essential. The rural location, with the lack of facilities in the parish, means that residents either rely on a car for day-to-day activities or are heavily dependent on public transport provision.

Most residents have use of one or more cars, however, 42% said that the local bus service was important to them. There is a good deal of concern about the service with only 19% of those respondents expressing an opinion finding the hours of operation suitable, 14% being happy with the frequency and 13% with the reliability of the service.

Opinion is split on the condition of the roads themselves. Only 32% said that the main roads were good with 68% rating them only fair or poor.

Traffic speed and road safety are clearly the areas in the survey that respondents felt the most strongly about as the following data from those expressing an opinion illustrates.

Are there problems with speeding?	Yes	No
Hopton Bank	74%	26%
Hopton Wafers	65%	35%
Catherton Common	66%	34%
Doddington	79%	21%

How can Road Safety be improved?	Yes	No
Speed Limits	82%	18%
Road Maintenance	72%	28%
Hedge Cutting	67%	33%
Road Restrictions	59%	41%
Signs Maintenance	51%	49%

The Parish Council is seeking funding that could be used to alleviate some of the winter problems through improved highways maintenance and will continue to work with Shropshire Council to ensure standards of road maintenance are acceptable. The Parish Council will work with landowners and the County Council to improve roadside maintenance of hedges, verges and ditches to improve visibility.

The speed limit through both settlements is 40mph but it is regularly exceeded. The Parish Council has been successful in undertaking Community Speed Watch in Doddington and a site has been approved in Hopton Wafers village. The Parish Council is working with Shropshire Council and the police for further funding for vehicle activated signs in Doddington and Hopton Wafers to help reduce speed. As

of November 2020, Shropshire Council is undertaking a feasibility study on Earls Ditton Lane junction in Doddington with regards to drainage, signage and traffic calming measures along the A4117.

Issues and actions	What can be done	By whom	When
Speeding concerns along A4117, on minor roads including across the Common where livestock roam freely.	Work with Highways to improve signage. Lobby police for more monitoring and funding towards Vehicle Activated Signs.	Parish Council	On-going
Speeding through Doddington and Hopton Wafers Villages.	Lobby Shropshire Council & Highways for reduced speed limits, install Vehicle Activated Signs and increase Community Speed Watch sessions.	Parish Council	On-going
Poor condition of road surface, potholes and drainage issues.	Encourage everyone to report problems to Shropshire Council and Highways.	Community and Parish Council	On-going
Earls Ditton junction with A4117 at Doddington.	Lobby Highways to make improvements to this junction.	Parish Council	On-going
Safety concerns for pedestrians in Doddington with narrow pavement and no specified crossing points. Overgrown pavements.	Lobby Highways for infrastructure options. Encourage local landowners to tidy up their boundaries.	Parish Council & Community	3 – 12 months
Volume of lorries and HGV's on road affecting pedestrians and condition of roads.	Lobby Shropshire Council and Highways to reduce speeds and promote alternative routes.	Parish Council	3 - 12 months
Poor frequency of bus service.	Discuss with bus operator and Shropshire Council who subsidize service.	Parish Council	3 – 12 months

## HOUSING AND PLANNING

The rules around Housing and Planning continue to change and in August 2020 the Government launched a Planning for the Future white paper which set out proposed changes and revised requirements for Local Plans which are produced by Shropshire Council.

The questionnaire sought residents' views on housing and planning, giving a clear opportunity for people to have their say on whether there should be any development in the parish.



The questions were designed to ensure that people living in each of the four key areas of the parish could have their say on their own area as well as on the parish overall.

Generally, there is no desire for substantial housing development in the parish though 41% of those expressing an opinion would support some limited development in the parish.

*How do you feel about houses being built in your area?*

Housebuilding in your area	Do Not Build	Limited Development	Substantial Development	No Opinion	No Answer
<b>If you live in Doddington</b>	60%	30%	2%	4%	4%
<b>If you live in Ditton</b>	14%	57%	0%	29%	0%
<b>If you live in Hopton Wafers</b>	41%	31%	0%	4%	24%
<b>If you live in Crumpsbrook/Catherton</b>	21%	36%	0%	7%	36%

Residents were asked what kind of housing they would support if development actually took place. There was a mix of opinions expressed here as follows:

*What types of housing would you support? (tick all that apply)*

Type of Housing Supported	Number of Responses
<b>Affordable Homes for people with local connections</b>	45
<b>Starter Homes</b>	27
<b>Family Homes</b>	27
<b>Homes for Elderly</b>	24
<b>None (No housing)</b>	35
<b>No opinion</b>	21

### Planning

Overall, residents were generally satisfied with the planning process, and the majority were satisfied that planning preserved the character of the Parish. There was also broad support for an increased role in the planning process for the Parish Council.

Responses to Planning application questions as follows:

Planning Applications	Yes	No	No Opinion
Are you satisfied with planning applications?	38%	29%	33%
Are you satisfied with planning applications re your own property?	7%	62%	31%
Are you satisfied with planning re the character of the parish?	44%	22%	34%
Do you support a more significant role for the Parish Council?	55%	15%	30%

### Issues and actions

### What can be done

### By whom

### When

No general desire for significant development in any area but some limited development is supported especially affordable homes for people with local connections.

Parish Council note this when responding to Planning Applications and commenting on Policy consultations.

Parish Council

On-going

Lack of knowledge by community on how to get involved with planning matters.

Parish Council to publish links to Shropshire Council's Planning Portal on website and Facebook.

Parish Council

On-going

Dissatisfaction in regards to planning applications on respondents' own property.

Parish Council to publish link to Shropshire Council's Planning Guidance on website.

Parish Council

On-going



## ENVIRONMENT

The civil parish of Hopton Wafers nestles in the hills of South Shropshire, on the slopes of Clee Hill. The main reason for many people moving to the area was to enjoy the rural environment and overwhelmingly, when asked, people say that the thing they enjoy most about the living in the area is the peace and quiet and the beautiful countryside.



Almost one third of the area is taken up by Catherton Common and the rest is mainly farmland, criss-crossed by a seemingly endless series of narrow roads, tracks and footpaths. Some of Catherton Common is now owned and managed by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust with whom the Parish Council maintains a close relationship. The common is one of the most enchanting and botanically rich places in the county and parts are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest by Natural England although the overgrown gorse can impede walking. There is also much evidence of historical mining activities ie a drift mine, pits, spoil heaps and tramways.



Since the last survey residents' responses to the condition of verges, hedges and streams have improved considerably although there are still some localised issues.

There are many opportunities to walk footpaths in the area with waymarked routes maintained by Cleobury Mortimer Footpath Association. Just over half of respondents walk the footpaths, with around 80% rating the condition of paths, stiles, gates and signposts as either good or fair.

The environmental concerns which attracted the most concern amongst respondents expressing an opinion were:

Environmental Concern	Percentage of concern
<b>Fly Tipping</b>	67%
<b>Litter</b>	60%
<b>Wildlife</b>	60%
<b>Care for the Commons</b>	55%

Renewable energy is a major talking point today and residents were asked for their views. Of those expressing an opinion 37% were in support of wind turbines and 68% in support of solar power generation although comments suggested carefully sited domestic installations not solar farms.

Issues and actions	What can be done	By whom	When
Lack of environmental awareness and wildlife concerns.	Raise awareness with support of landowners and publicise through website and social media.	Parish Council & Community	On-going
Some roadside hedges, verges and ditches are not maintained in an acceptable condition.  Concerns regarding maintenance of streams.	Encourage residents to report issues. Publish contact details for reporting issues on Parish Council website. Work with landowners and Shropshire Council to action deficiencies.	Parish Council	On-going
Litter on paths and road verges.	Arrange litter picking events and encourage community involvement.	Parish Council	On-going
Encourage more care for the Common.  Improve signage to deter fly tipping, ask everyone to take litter home, keep dogs on leads and pick up dog waste.	Parish Council to continue working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Clee Hill Commoners' Association, Shropshire Council and community to help maintain and improve Common environment and provide better signage.	Parish Council and partners	On-going
Churches and surrounds need practical help.	Community support required to help maintain these heritage sites.	Community and PCCs of churches and chapel	On-going
Some footpaths and bridleways not maintained in an acceptable condition and need better waymarking.	Parish Council to work with CMFA and Shropshire Council to ensure improvements.	Parish Council	3 – 6 months
Strong support for domestic solar power generation.	Parish Council will take this into account when considering future proposals.	Parish Council	On-going

## SERVICES

Due to the rural nature of the community, it is important to maintain and strive to improve the standard of services for its residents. Some issues raised in this section have been addressed under other more relevant sections in this document.

To hopefully assist in familiarising the community with details and access to further information on the local services mentioned below, there is a useful chart at the end of this document.

### Medical Services

On the whole, respondents thought access to medical services such as doctor, pharmacy, dentist and optician are very important and good, but access to these services due to transport, was considered a real problem. 50% of those who expressed an opinion, thought access to hospitals was poor, especially the distance and ambulance times to A&E, however, the Minor Injuries Clinics are perceived to be good. A Community Car Scheme is available and is a service mainly for appointments at the Medical Centre and Hospitals but also opticians and sometimes for visits to in-patients.

Concern was expressed about delays for emergency services locating and reaching some of the more remote properties. Clear signage for home-owners' properties would be a significant advantage in assisting the emergency services. Many emergency services throughout the UK now accept three word addresses from 999 callers who would otherwise struggle to say exactly where they need help. "what3words.com" app has helped find many people in need of emergency assistance quickly and easily for example "///text.idealistsimple" is the address for Hopton Wafers Village Hall.

### Postal and Banking

Postal and banking services are diminishing rapidly with the closure of Clee Hill and Doddington Post Offices and often a limited service in Cleobury. The Parish now only has a mobile Post Office service visiting Doddington Village Hall once or twice a week. A huge number of responders (95%) considered a Post Office and village post boxes were very important. The local bank in Cleobury is considered an important service by 80-90% but unfortunately 50% of those who responded feel the service is poor.

### Shops

The service station and shop at Foxwood along with a mobile shop are considered important. Any loss of the mobile shop would be a concern, however, some residents were unaware of its existence. Council services, library, churches and pubs were considered of less importance with many expressing "no opinion". Of those who did respond, 53% thought access to hospitality, social groups and clubs was important but only 49% of responders thought access to Shropshire Council Services was.

### Bus Services and School Transport

As detailed in the Transport and Roads section local bus services are considered important to the community. School transport facilities are considered adequate by 90% of the users, although it is noted that a bus stop shelter is needed in Doddington which is being sought by the Parish Council.

### Crime and Policing

The Parish is at the very edge of the Ludlow area of West Midlands Police Force and reported crime statistics ([www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)) indicate that crime within the Parish is very low with most reported "local" incidents occurring outside the Parish in Ludlow, Clee Hill and Cleobury Mortimer. As anticipated, a majority of the Parish (96% of responders) consider crime and policing a very important issue. Many think a local police station and access to it is important but 50% consider the access is poor. The general perception within the community is of little police presence. 24 residents, representing all villages specifically commented about the lack of visible police presence. The SmartWater initiative has been welcomed and packs are available from the Parish Council. Concern has been expressed about "Nottingham Knockers" (doorstep scammers) preying on vulnerable people whilst scouting for

opportunities. Neighbourhood Watch is well established at Doddington Heights and 35% of all responders said they would like to join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. The Hopton Wafers Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page is becoming popular.

### Amenities

When asked how the amenities and tourism experience for both residents and visitors could be improved, some residents were reluctant to improve the amenities in order to encourage tourism. However, the main comments were limited parking, no picnic areas, no toilet facilities (apart from the pub) and litter was considered a big issue. Accessibility and parking were considered difficult and dangerous at Doddington Church and on the whole, Doddington should be brought up to the standard of other villages with verges and better pathways being maintained along the A4117.

### Technology

The majority of respondents agreed that access to Internet services was important and of those who expressed an opinion, 54% considered the speed good and 46% poor. There is much dissatisfaction with non-fibre broadband in Hopton Wafers and also mobile phone signal throughout the Parish.

Issues and actions	What can be done	By whom	When
Lack of physically accessible information boards and walk maps.	With permission, install information boards at public buildings and at cattle grids.	Parish Council	3 – 6 months
Enable easier access / finding properties by emergency services.	Promote 'what3words.com' and encourage residents to consider clear signage.	Parish Council and volunteers	3 – 6 months
Lack of transport for doctor/hospital appointments.	Promote Community Car Scheme & Hospital Transport for Patients.	Parish Council and partners.	3 - 12 months
Inconsistent quality of broadband and mobile phone signal.	Lobby Shropshire Council and service providers for improvements.	Parish Council and service providers.	3 – 12 months.
Lack of police presence.	Request more visible presence and encourage more attendance at Parish Council meetings and community events.	Parish Council	3 – 12 months
Lack of signage for community buildings – churches and village halls.	Work with PCCs and Hall Committees to promote their venues.	Parish Council	3 – 12 months

Lack of Neighbourhood Watch.	Provide more information to residents on local scheme, through website and social media.	Parish Council	3 – 6 months
Poor parking and access to Doddington Church.	Lobby Highways for options.	Parish Council & Doddington PCC	3 – 12 months
Lack of play facilities at Doddington.	Parish Council to look at demand, feasibility study and site availability.	Parish Council & Community	3 – 12 months
Post Box requested at Doddington Heights Park.	Requested from Royal Mail.	Parish Council	On-going

## COMMUNITY

When asked what they value most about living in the parish respondents particularly applauded the community spirit and the rural beauty, peace and tranquillity of our surroundings. We have the benefits of the beautiful countryside and stunning views but with relatively easy access to services in Tenbury, Ludlow and further afield.

People feel there is a sense of friendliness and good neighbourliness leading to a pleasant community ethos, in particular on the Ditton Park homes estates where everyone looks out for each other and they have a very active Residents Association and make good use of Doddington Village Hall.

People's dislikes are mainly related to the roads with issues of speeding vehicles, quarry traffic, motorbikes and road maintenance in the forefront. In particular Earls Ditton Lane attracted many concerns relating to flooding, road and ditch maintenance and safety.

Doddington and Hopton Wafers village halls serve 86% of the parish population. All three halls, including Cleeton St Mary, are considered important and certainly a facility to be retained. Unfortunately, apart from Doddington this is not reflected in attendance numbers. There is a desire for more participation in community events. Social events and groups need to be more inclusive, particularly encouraging young families to get involved.

Social media has increased significantly since the survey was issued and a number of community and Neighbourhood Watch social media sites are thriving. The monthly Cleobury Clarion magazine is perceived to be a very useful publication and event organisers are encouraged to use it to publicise their event calendars and contact points.

### Parish Council

94% of opinion stated that they consider it important to know who their councillors are and what the Parish Council does but only 50% felt informed and only 20% felt they have a voice in the community. Comments indicate that the Council needs more proactive visibility providing information and have an up-to-date social media presence - [Hopton Wafers Parish Council - Home | Facebook](#)  
The Parish Council website is available for information [www.hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk)

Issues and actions	What can be done	By whom	When
Useful Information Sheet sent out with questionnaire was useful.	Add Useful Information Page to Parish Council website with links from Facebook.	Parish Council	On-going
Few people feel knowledgeable about what the Parish Council do	Proactively announce parish meetings on Council Facebook and website.	Parish Council	On-going
Low usage of village halls and lack of events for families and young people.	Encourage wider diversity of functions and increase the number of events and usage of the village halls.	Village Hall Committees & Community	3-12 months

**Links to information on local services** – this will also be published on the Parish Council website.

Cleobury Mortimer Community Car Scheme	Telephone: 01299 666 119 <a href="http://www.cleoburymortimermc.co.uk/community-car-scheme">www.cleoburymortimermc.co.uk/community-car-scheme</a>
Hospital Transport for Shropshire Patients	Telephone: 03300 535695 <a href="https://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/local-services/hospitals-mius-and-walk-in-centre-information/non-emergency-patient-transport-services-in-shropshire/">https://www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk/local-services/hospitals-mius-and-walk-in-centre-information/non-emergency-patient-transport-services-in-shropshire/</a>
Cleobury Medical Centre	Telephone: 01299 270 209
Cleobury Pharmacy	Telephone: 01299 270 219
Compassionate Communities Community Care Coordinator	Telephone: 01299 270 209 Mobile: 07966 080 111
What3words	<a href="https://what3words.com">https://what3words.com</a>
Clee Hill Mobile Post Office	<a href="https://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder/709647x/clee-hill-mobile-service">https://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder/709647x/clee-hill-mobile-service</a>
Lloyds Bank Cleobury Mortimer	Telephone: 0345 602 1997 <a href="https://www.localworkingtimes.com/uk/lloyds-bank/lloyds-bank-in-cleobury-mortimer-opening-times">https://www.localworkingtimes.com/uk/lloyds-bank/lloyds-bank-in-cleobury-mortimer-opening-times</a>
Lambert Mobile Family Grocers	Telephone: 01584 810879
Diamond Buses	Telephone: 0121 322 2222 <a href="https://www.diamondbuses.com/west-midlands/">https://www.diamondbuses.com/west-midlands/</a>
Local Police	Telephone: 101 <a href="mailto:ludlow.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk">ludlow.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk</a>
Neighbourhood Watch	<a href="https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/scheme/21444/clee-hill-neighbourhood-watch-scheme">https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/scheme/21444/clee-hill-neighbourhood-watch-scheme</a>
General Enquiries	<a href="https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/general-enquiries">https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/general-enquiries</a>
SmartWater	Contact Parish Clerk: <a href="mailto:clerk@hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk">clerk@hoptonwafersparishcouncil.org.uk</a> Or SmartWater <a href="https://www.smartwater.com/contact/">https://www.smartwater.com/contact/</a>
Clee Hill Community Wildlife Group	<a href="https://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/clee-hill-wildlife-group/">https://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/clee-hill-wildlife-group/</a>
Shropshire Council Access Team for footpath issues	Tel: 0345 678 9000 <a href="mailto:outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk">outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk</a>
My Shropshire – for reporting Highways issues	Tel: 0345 678 9000 <a href="#">Welcome to MyShropshire   Shropshire Council</a>





Thanks to the Working Group for their hard work and efforts with this Review and also to Mr Nigel Haywood for some of the photographs.

