



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th December 2022
at the Pavilion, Fownhope

Page
Number:

Present:

Cllr Kevin Braybrook (in the Chair), Cllrs Stuart Eames, Frank Hemming, Lavinia Smith, Mike Cohn and Jackie Bevan.

In attendance:

2 members of the public; Ward Cllr John Hardwick; Clerk Helen Tinson

- 1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Dorothy Quayle, Gareth Williams, Tim Jones, Mike Simmons, Will Morris. Cllr Phil Bream absent no apologies.

2) **To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Written Requests for Dispensation:**

To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Stuart Eames declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 7d. The Declarations of Interest book was signed accordingly.

To consider any written requests for dispensations: there were none.

3) **Open Session:**

- a) **Representation from the Public:** A member of the public asked if Faulkner House could be used as a Warm Space and made available for longer and more frequently throughout the week. It was agreed that the Chairman would contact Connexus to ask if this is possible and if so, the Clerk will promote accordingly. In the meantime, the Clerk will send an online survey to try and establish the level of local need.

A member of the public had submitted a request on behalf of the Local History Group seeking to obtain memorabilia or memories of the death of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. Any information can be directed to the Local History Group or via the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that four dead swans have been found in the River Wye in the last week, one and then three together. All four have been reported to DEFRA. Any further sightings can be reported on 0345 9335577.

- b) **Report from Ward Councillor:** Ward Cllr Hardwick's reported that Herefordshire Council are in the process of launching the 2023/2024 budget consultation and encouraged councillors and parishioners to engage with the consultation. A booth will be sited in High Town on the 8th and 15th December and the consultation will be available online. There is a lot of pressure on the council budget and cuts are anticipated. Ward Cllr Hardwick also encouraged engagement with HC's Transport Hub Consultation. The charity Farming Minds are organising a Christmas Tractor Run on Saturday 10th December, anticipated to come through Fownhope between 4.30-5pm.

4) **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

- a) Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 2nd November 2022. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

5) **Environment:**

- a) Members received a report from the Clerk, as noted in Appendix A.

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	<p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the required funding for room hire and refreshment costs for the first three events (January, February, March) and to review further funding at the April meeting.</p> <p>b) Environmental Stewardship Scheme: It was RESOLVED: to ratify the decision made between meetings to extend the existing Environmental Stewardship Scheme for a further 5 years. It was noted that a decision had been needed between meetings to meet the tight deadline for response.</p> <p>c) Wye Valley AONB DEFRA Access Improvement Funding: Members considered communication received from Wye Valley AONB inviting suggestions for access improvement funding. It was RESOLVED: to submit several options for consideration: developing a circular accessible walk in the parish; replacing stiles with gates; metaling the path to the river (if acceptable to the landowner); creating an accessible path around the recreation field; and/or upgrading the existing toilet facilities to improve accessibility.</p> <p>d) Tree Works: Members considered a further update concerning the tree works identified on the annual tree survey, as discussed at the last meeting and following emailed communication from the surveyor in relation to T7. The Clerk has sought further clarification from HALC though this has not yet been received. It was noted that the works have been scheduled for Tuesday 20th December 2022. It was RESOLVED: to follow up a response from HALC and follow their advice accordingly. If it is not possible to obtain a response from HALC before the 20th December, Council would proceed with the removal of T7 in accordance with the surveyor’s recommendations. Wood from T7 is to be left for habitat.</p> <p>Members were informed that part of the wood would be left in manageable pieces for residents of Common Hill to collect, and the remainder of the wood would be removed to the Recreation Field for other parishioners to collect. It was RESOLVED: to approve costs of up to £150 if necessary to cut wood and remove to the Recreation Field.</p> <p>e) Tan Brook: Members were informed that the new fencing has been erected across the top section of Tan Brook to secure the area above the sinkhole. Cllr Eames proposed that one further ‘Danger, Deep Water’ sign is erected to warn of the sinkhole below. It was RESOLVED: to approve costs of up to £15 for one further ‘Danger Deep Water’ sign.</p> <p>f) Biggs Lane: Members considered a request from Fownhope New Memorial Hall to erect new lighting in the Memorial Hall car park for safety reasons. It was noted the lighting would be on a timer set to a maximum of 40 minutes. It was RESOLVED: to approve the proposal, noting a request for dark sky compliant fittings and for the lighting to point downwards and away from neighbouring properties.</p> <p>6) Footpaths: a) A member of the public reported that plans showing the footpath between Scotch Firs and the Millfield development show that a stile is to be installed here, and expressed concerns about restricting accessibility. It was RESOLVED: that the Clerk would contact MF Freemans to confirm that the Parish Council do not want a stile or gate to be installed in this location.</p> <p>It was noted that a grit bin on the footpath in the same location has been moved at some point but is now causing an obstruction on the footpath and should be returned to its original position. It was RESOLVED: to contact the Locality Steward.</p> <p>b) Public Path Diversion Order:</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT/SE 253/12 /2223 2 of 6</p>
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	<p>Members considered Public Path Diversion Order PROW/TCPA101 in relation to FWD5. Members of the council raised no concerns. It was RESOLVED: to support the proposed diversion.</p>	HT
7)	<p>Finance and Policy:</p>	
a)	<p>Members received a financial report as noted in Appendix B. It was RESOLVED: to approve the report. It was RESOLVED: to stop interim internal audits with immediate effect, but to consider reinstating in the future if necessary. It was RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of the .gov.uk domain name ‘fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk’ at a cost of £110 plus VAT every two years; and up to 25 associated email addresses at a cost of £49.99 plus VAT per year.</p>	HT HT
b)	<p>Draft Budget 2023/2024: Members considered the draft budget published after the October Parish Council meeting, carefully considering the impact of proposed cuts as reported by Ward Cllr Hardwick and the increase in the cost of living. Members considered increasing the precept by £2,000. It was RESOLVED: to approve the budget for 2023/24 as noted in Appendix C and increase the precept by £1,500 to £33,500 in view of HC’s budget and feedback from the Ward Councillor.</p>	HT
c)	<p>It was RESOLVED: to ratify the following payment made between meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suzi Bruce, Lengthsman/P3, £110.00 • Suzi Bruce, Grass Cutting, £25.00 • FRFA, Meeting Room Hire Oct, £20.00 	
d)	<p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Maddy Coaches, Ross Bus Oct & Nov, £180.00 • FRFA, Meeting Room Hire November, £40.00 • Suzi Bruce, Tan Brook Fencing, £420.70 including £28.45 VAT on materials • Stuart Eames, Reimburse Expenses Winter Grit, £21.67 plus £4.33 VAT • Helen Tinson, Reimbursement of Expenses, Grit Bins, £215.47 plus £43.09 VAT • Helen Tinson, Reimbursement of Expenses, Danger Deep Water Sign, £9.56 plus £1.92 VAT • Helen Tinson, Reimbursement of Expenses, Farm Animals Signs, £64.83 plus £12.96 VAT • Helen Tinson, Clerk Salary (November), £804.64 	
e)	<p>Policies: Members considered renewing a number of policies: It was RESOLVED: to amend all policies to add ‘Volunteers’ to any reference to ‘Employees’. It was RESOLVED: to remove Section 4 relating to Ex-Employees in the Disciplinary and Grievance policy. It was RESOLVED: to adopt the following policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Community Engagement Policy ii. Complaints Procedure iii. Dignity and Work Policy iv. Disciplinary and Grievance Policy v. Equality Policy vi. Grants and Donations Policy vii. Health and Safety Policy viii. Publication Scheme ix. Training and Development Policy 	HT HT HT
8)	<p>Highways:</p>	
a)	<p>Members were informed that four new grit bins have replaced the last four open bins, and all bins have been topped up with grit where necessary.</p> <p>No major changes have been observed in the SID data, though speeds were recorded 4% lower entering the village at the church end.</p>	
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	<p>The Parish Council submitted a letter of complaint to Welsh Water following the October meeting, and a team attended to the leak between the entrance and the first speed bumps on the 5th December. It was confirmed that there are now no leaks and we can proceed with planned tarmac repairs. Welsh Water are expecting to test the leak near to the treatment works before the end of the week. If no leaks are detected, we can also proceed with planned tarmac repairs at that location. The Clerk was asked to contact the contractor and ask when would be the best time to carry out the repair and proceed with the work accordingly, pending confirmation from WW.</p> <p>No further water has been observed at Nupend and it was assumed that this leak has also now been resolved.</p> <p>BBLP are seeking to clarify ownership of the land outside Fairfield Green before re-siting the bin they had removed from outside the Old Salon.</p> <p>BBLP have been asked to sweep leaves at Court Gardens due to the increased flood risk. This should now be on the monthly cycle of activities.</p> <p>b) TRO: Cllr Eames presented a report on a TRO in Leintwardine, interested to note that though the TRO wasn't the same, it had been successfully amended. He has been unable to find a legal obligation to extend a 30mph to accommodate an extended settlement boundary. Ward Cllr Hardwick confirmed there is no commitment on the developers to extend the 30mph as part of the planning process and that there is no automatic process to move a 30mph zone. However, there is provision to fund a TRO once the S106 funding becomes available. It was noted S106 cannot be applied retrospectively and therefore suggested that the TRO application is considered once S106 funding becomes available.</p> <p>Cllr Braybrook reported encouraging communication with HC concerning the £175,000 Village Safety Initiative funding which confirmed we will be invited to contribute to discussions on how the money is spent. A meeting is to be set up between Herefordshire Council, BBLP, Ward Cllr Hardwick and Fownhope PC to discuss further.</p> <p>c) Pavements: Members received a report from the Pavement Working Group and considered drawings as noted in Appendix D. Cllr Eames is arranging a meeting with HC and Ward Cllr Hardwick to continue discussions and sought support from Members to continue the process. It was RESOLVED: to support the continuation of discussions.</p> <p>9) Local Council Award Scheme:</p> <p>a) Members considered the draft 5-year Forward Plan as discussed in detail at the Parish Council Strategy Meeting on the 5th December, noting quarterly reports and annual reviews. It was RESOLVED: to adopt the 5-year Forward Plan.</p> <p>b) Members considered five draft Council Statements as discussed in detail at the Parish Council Strategy Meeting on the 5th December. It was RESOLVED: to adopt Council Statements demonstrating how we:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure that the council delivers value for money; ii. Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community; iii. Engages with the community on issues relating to the environment and climate change; iv. Manages the performance of the council as a corporate body; and v. Manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business (or forward) plan. <p>c) Members considered any further outstanding requirements and submission of the application for the LCAS Quality Gold award. It was RESOLVED: to submit the application for the 4th January 2023 deadline.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>SE</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>255/12 /2223 4 of 6</p>
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<p>10) a)</p>	<p>To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council: 223474 and 223840 (LBC): 2 Fownhope Court, Fownhope, HR1 4PB. Proposed single storey home office (plus Listed Building Consent). Members considered the application and raised concerns about the extent of glass, orientation and associated heat loss, and potential light pollution of AONB dark skies. It was further noted that the applicant had not referred to the Neighbourhood Development Plan in the Design and Access Statement. It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to the application raising concerns about heat loss and light pollution.</p>	<p>HT</p>
<p>11) a) b) c)</p>	<p>To Note Planning Decisions Made by Herefordshire Council: It was noted that: 221696/L: 3 & 5 Fownhope Court. Internal alterations with intent of integrating to single dwelling. Approved with conditions. 223027: Land at Glen Ridge. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 14, 214617. Approved. 223627: Hope Springs. Application for the discharge of details reserved by condition 4, 220879. Approved.</p>	<p>HT/KB</p>
<p>12) a)</p>	<p>To Consider Other Matters Relating to Planning: Members were informed that residents will need to register with HC and submit applications for the affordable housing properties at the Millfield development. Ward Cllr Hardwick reported that residents need to register on the HomePoint system. It was RESOLVED: that the Clerk would establish the criteria and process for applications and promote as widely as possible to parishioners.</p>	<p>HT/KB</p>
<p>13) a)</p>	<p>FRFA Members considered items for the West Mercia Police Community Charter for the first quarter of 2023. It was RESOLVED: to include speeding and vandalism and littering at the Pavilion Car Park, as reported last month.</p>	<p>HT</p>
<p>b)</p>	<p>BBLP Social Value Project: Members were informed that the BBLP Social Value Project offer is for four workmen for up to one and a half days. Members considered: 1) Tidy the Tan Brook area to create a place for children to have fun and play safely. Work could include clearing overgrowth, planting wild flowers, repairing the bridge. 2) Repoint the kerbs along the B4224 to minimise future weed growth; 3) Improve the roadside area at the bottom of Nash Pitch near to the gateways following the recent clearance of brambles and overgrowth. Consider seeding as a wild flower or planted area. It was RESOLVED: that Cllrs Eames and Bevan would make a list of requirements for Tan Brook, then arrange to meet the representative of BBLP to agree the parameters of the project.</p>	<p>SE/JB</p>
<p>14) a)</p>	<p>Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 1st February 2023. Agenda items to include: 1) Warm Spaces 2) Consider plans to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III 3) Consider purchase of Arnold Baker PC Reference Book</p>	
	<p><i>The Chairman passed a resolution to exclude members of the public and press for the following confidential matter:</i></p>	
<p>15) a)</p>	<p>Employment: Clerk's Salary: Members considered the LGA agreed National Salary Award for 2022-2023 backdated to 1st April 2022. It was RESOLVED: to approve the agreed National Salary Award for 2022-2023 and to backdate it to 1st April 2022.</p>	<p>HT/KB</p>
	<p>Meeting closed.</p>	<p>255/12 /2223 5 of 6</p>

	Signed Dated Chairman	256/12 /2223 6 of 6
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Appendix A: Environment Report

REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 7th December 2022

REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO

AGENDA ITEM: 5a: Environment Group Report

The EG held a workshop on the 24th November where we looked at our own motivations for environmental work, considered our own interests and passions and looked at what is already happening in Fownhope and what else can be done.

A list of themes emerged from the discussion and a list of actions was taken away for us to work on.

We looked at holding Fownhope Activity Saturdays – a sequence of events in the village to bring people together around particular themes. They will be held between 2 and 4pm on the fourth Saturday of each month.

The first will be on 28th January – and the theme will be food; February will be land; March will be building energy etc – a list has been prepared for the year.

Action required: can the PC please consider financial support for the events, ie room hire and refreshment costs?

Appendix B: Financial Report

REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 7th December 2022

REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO

AGENDA ITEM: 7a: Financial Report

Bank Balances:
Lloyds: £16,626.43 (excluding payments to be approved 7.12.22 £1,358.47)
Lloyds Reserve: £35,700.24
Hargreaves Lansdown: £25,158.89 (at 2.12.22)
Total funds held across all banks and investments at 2.12.22 = £74,485.56

Interim Internal Audit:

The Finance Working Group would like to propose that we stop conducting an interim internal audit. The Internal Auditor has confirmed that he does not feel it necessary to continue the interim audits on the basis that there have been no areas for improvement identified over recent audits. It is felt that the cost of the additional audit is unnecessary expenditure going forwards. The internal audit at the year-end is a statutory requirement.

Action required: full council to vote on proposal to stop interim audits with immediate effect.

.Gov.UK Website and Email Addresses:

Squarespace (web hosts) are not able to provide .gov.uk domain names. Cloud Next have been recommended by HALC. They are happy to purchase the domain name for us and to connect it to our existing Squarespace site.

Squarespace will continue to host our website at their usual annual rate (£180 plus VAT) – we can simply point the website to our new primary .gov.uk domain name. Cloud Next can host the associated .gov.uk email addresses – their minimum package is 25 email accounts.

The costs to purchase the domain name are:

- .gov.uk domain name: £110 plus VAT for two years, and every two years thereafter;
- Email hosting: 25 email accounts - £49.99 plus VAT per year.

There are strict rules about domain names and we can only choose from the following two:

- www.fownhope-pc.gov.uk
- www.fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Action required: full council to vote on 1) domain name and 2) proposal for Cloud Next to purchase the domain name, link it to our existing site and host email package at costs stated above.

Bus Usage Figures:

Nick Maddy Coaches have reported the following figures for 2022 (figures in red are based on an average for two occasions when the ticket machines went wrong):

Monthly Service to Ross (458):

	Passenger numbers	Paying passengers	Pass holders
January	23	3	20
February	25	2	23
March	22.8	-	-
April	30	0	30
May	23	3	20
June	18	0	18
July	26	5	19
August	13	0	13
September	20	0	20
October	26	0	26
November	24	0	24

Summer Service to Ledbury (455):

	Passenger numbers	Paying passengers	Pass holders
May	17	0	17
June	13	0	13

July	10	0	10
August	14	0	14

External Auditor Appointment for 2022-23 until 2026-27
SAAA have confirmed that PKF Littlejohn LLP have been reappointed to carry out external audits for Herefordshire for the five year period as noted above.

There is nothing further of note to report this month.

Appendix C: Approved Budget 2023/2024:

Financial year	22/23	23/24
	Current budget to 31.3.23	Approved budget to 31.3.24
INCOME		
Annual Precept	£32,000	£33,500
Wayleave	£45	£45
Investment Income	£1,650	£1700
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
DMGPC Ross Bus Contribution	£300	£300
Lloyds Interest (Reserve ac)	£2	£2
TOTAL INCOME	£34,336	£35,886
EXPENSES		
Clerks expenses inc travel	£200	£400
Admin expenses	£400	£500
Comms/Community Engagement	£500	£500
Insurance	£900	£975
Meeting Room Hire	£350	£450

Audit Costs	£450	£500
Website/Computer Costs	£475	£475
Training (Clerk, Councillors, Volunteers)	£650	£650
Subscriptions	£800	£1250
Clerks Salary	£9,878	£14,000
Memorial Hall PWLB Repayment	£1,100	£1,050
Youth Support	£200	£200
Play Inspection Fee	£165	£165
Community Library	£550	£550
Ross/Ledbury Buses	£1,530	£1,530
Parish Lengthsman materials	£500	£500
Parish Lengthsman labour	£2,250	£2,250
Parish Footpaths PROW labour	£2,250	£2,500
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
Grass cutting	£750	£800
Parish Maintenance & Improvements	£2,000	£2,000
Tree survey and tree remedial work	£2,500	£2,500
New Projects	£5,000	£2,000
Community Groups & Habitat Grant	£500	£500
Winter Gritting	£450	£450
Traffic Calming Measures	£1,000	£1,000
2023 Election Provision	£0	£1,500
TOTAL EXPENSES	£36,687	£39,534
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	-£2,351	-£3,648

Appendix D: Pavement Diagram (not to scale) attached as separate document.