



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th September 2022
at the Pavilion, Fownhope (upstairs meeting room)**

Page
Number:

Present:

Cllr Kevin Braybrook (in the Chair) and Cllrs Stuart Eames, Dorothy Quayle, Tim Jones, Frank Hemming, Lavinia Smith and Will Morris.

In attendance:

5 members of the public; Ward Councillor John Hardwick, Clerk Helen Tinson

- 1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Mike Cohn, Mike Simmons, Gareth Williams and Phil Bream

Before the start of the meeting, the Chairman announce that the vacancy created upon the resignation of Cllr Teague has now been advertised, an election has not been called and the vacancy can now be co-opted. He also announced that Cadent are providing food at the Green Man, free of charge for residents affected by the gas shortage and that they continue to work as hard as possible to rectify the problem.

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

To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Dorothy Quayle declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 5e. The Declarations of Interest book was signed accordingly.
To consider any written requests for dispensations: there were none.

- 3) **Open Session:**

- a) **Report from Ward Councillor:** Cllr Hardwick reported that a highways safety event aimed at young people in Secondary School Year 11 is due to take place week commencing 12th September. The event includes a mock set up of a road traffic accident and re-enacts the 48 hours following an accident. Local secondary schools are invited.

- b) **Representation from the Public:**

A member of the public reported work is being carried out on the Public Right of Way at the Old Potato Barn development. Although it has been made safer, the footpath has been temporarily diverted without an official diversion order in place. It was noted that the diversion order for the permanent diversion has been submitted. It was agreed that the resident would report the matter to Herefordshire Council.

A member of the public reported a number of drains and verges filling with debris. Cllr Braybrook advised that BBLP no longer attend to blocked drains on a proactive basis, only reactive following a report made online. Residents are encouraged to report blocked drains to BBLP directly or to the Clerk. It was confirmed that the Lengthsman will be asked to clear the High Street later in the autumn once the leaves have dropped but Cllr Eames will carry out his pre-winter check in the meantime. He accepted an offer of help from the member of public.

A member of public raised concerns about the speed and volume of traffic, and the width of the pavement, on the western side of the village. Cllr Braybrook informed him of the current and ongoing traffic calming initiatives and the recent developments of the B4224 Multi Parish Group. The matter concerning the width of the pavement is to be discussed later in the meeting.

SE

	<p>A member of the public submitted an email that was read by the Clerk expressing disappointment that the bin at Common Hill Lane had again been missed for collection and had been overflowing for a number of weeks. It is understood that the bin is on the collection schedule and has now been emptied.</p>	
4)	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 6th July 2022 and the Extra Ordinary Meeting on 3rd August 2022. It was RESOLVED: to approve both sets of minutes as a true record of the meetings, which were duly signed by the Chairman.</p>	KB
5)	<p>Finance and Policy: a) Members received a financial report as noted in Appendix A. Council did not wish to consider opting out of the SAAA appointed external auditor for the period 2022/3-2026/7. It was RESOLVED: to approve the report. It was RESOLVED: to ratify the decision of the Finance Working Group to enroll the Clerk into the NEST pension scheme.</p>	HT HT
b)	<p>Investments: Members were asked to consider advice received from the Investment Advisory Group recommending the sale of 7355 shares in Starwood European Real Estate Fin Ltd and the subsequent purchase of shares in NextEnergy Solar Fund (NESF). The dividend yield is reported to be similar but a better growth profile is anticipated with NESF and its environmental and sustainable (ESG) credentials are much more robust. It was RESOLVED: to approve the recommendation to sell the Starwood European Real Estate Fin Ltd shareholding and reinvest as recommended.</p>	HT
c)	<p>Churchyards: Members were asked to consider forwarding a further letter to NALC via HALC on behalf of a Parishioner in respect of the current NALC ruling on PC contributions to churchyard maintenance. It was RESOLVED: to send the letter as requested.</p>	HT
d)	<p>Arnold-Baker Book on Local Council Administration: Members were asked to consider purchasing the latest Arnold-Baker book on Local Council Administration at a cost of £131.99 as recommended at a recent HALC training event. It was RESOLVED: to ask if we can look at HALC's copy to determine the possible benefits and discuss further at the October meeting.</p>	HT
e)	<p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Maddy Coaches, Ross & Ledbury Bus Service, July, £180.00 • FRFA, Meeting Room Hire, £10.00 • PIP Printing, Fownhope Walks, £760.57 • RS Signs and Engraving, Bench plaque, £83.15 plus VAT • Suzi Bruce, Lengthsman, £70.00 • Nick Kingsford, Reimbursement of Expenses Walk 6 Pointer, £25.00 • Kevin Braybrook, Reimbursement of Expenses, £24.27 plus VAT • Dorothy Quayle, Reimbursement of Expenses, Kaspersky, £39.99 • Helen Tinson, Clerk Salary (August), £689.76 • Helen Tinson, Reimbursement of Expenses, Squarespace, £180.00 plus VAT 	HT
6)	<p>Footpaths: a) Cllr Tim Jones reported that the Waywardens have been asked to carry out their autumn inspections. The Lengthsman will be asked to address any issues raised, along with the regular post summer work. Cllr Will Morris reported that three recent walkers had commented favourably on the condition of the walks and the six Fownhope Walks and he has thanked the waywardens accordingly.</p>	238/9 /2223 2 of 6

<p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>7)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p>Members considered recent communication from local landowners detailing instances of gates being left open and struts being removed from stiles, which had resulted in livestock being let out. Cllr Jones reminded the meeting that the public right of way does not apply to dogs and that access for dogs is a courtesy granted by landowners. It was recognised that the majority of walkers are responsible walkers and that landowners have helped to make walks more accessible by working with the PC to replace stiles with gates, where feasible. It is very likely a small minority of people causing the current difficulties. As such, it was felt that council should show support for the landowners by undertaking an awareness campaign to remind walkers of the Countryside Code, specifically, to close gates, keep dogs on leads and stay on the footpaths. The PC hopes to continue to work with landowners towards our goal of creating an accessible circular walk around the village.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve an awareness campaign and for Cllr Morris to prepare a proposal for the October meeting.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Morris will identify gates with specific access for dogs and thank landowners accordingly.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to replace approximately 40-50 Wye Valley Walk markers.</p> <p>Trees FWD5: Members were informed that two trees have fallen across the footpath at FWD5. The Clerk has so far been unsuccessful in establishing the owner of this piece of land. The name of a possible owner was suggested and the Clerk was asked to make contact and if unsuccessful bring back to the October meeting for further consideration.</p> <p>Tan Brook: Members were asked to consider further signage to warn of the plunge pool along Tan Brook. A sign is currently in position at the edge of the plunge pool and on the top path on the side of the tree. Cllr Eames has assessed the area and recommends urgent action.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to erect a sign to warn of the danger/deep water ahead</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: for a working party to assess any further action required and report to the next meeting. Cllrs Stuart Eames, Will Morris, Lavinia Smith and Kevin Braybrook have volunteered.</p> <p>Environment:</p> <p>The Clerk gave a brief report noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flicks in the Sticks have agreed to show a short film promoting The Great Collaboration ahead of each showing; • The Fownhope Medical Centre wish to become members of the Fownhope Car Club; • The Wild Flower Project is now live on the website and the first month's information sheet is available to download; • The Environment Group proposes to hold an event in October focusing on cost saving advice around energy usage, food waste, community larder and more. <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve a small budget of up to £200 for room hire and refreshments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment Group wished to seek support for a one-off prize of £50 to help stimulate take up of The Great Collaboration. It was reported that a private donor had offered to put forward the prize money if the PC felt it could not do so. <p>It was RESOLVED: to accept the offer from the private donor and pass on thanks from the PC.</p> <p>The Great Collaboration Portal: Members received the first TGC Parish Council report providing local data and were asked to provide feedback.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to report there was generally insufficient information, particularly regarding the total number of respondents which would provide context to the data; suggest TGC consider a percentage rather than a number; and recommend that any Parish Council members are excluded from the data.</p>	<p>WM</p> <p>WM</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT/SE SE/WM LS/KB</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>239/9 /2223 3 of 6</p>
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<p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>8)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>9)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>10)</p> <p>a)</p>	<p>Tree Survey: Members considered the tree survey noting it is now carried out on an annual basis due to the risk of Ash Dieback. It has been recommended to fell six Ash trees and one Thorn at Sheershill Common, and to remove major dead wood from the canopy of a Sycamore at Tan Brook, within six months for safety reasons. Quotations have been received from two contractors with a third pending. It was RESOLVED: to correspond with any residents living near to the affected trees and establish whether any Commoners' have Rights to felled wood. The Clerk was asked to seek a third quote and inquire whether contractors will fell the trees in exchange for the wood. It was RESOLVED: to table an agenda item for the October meeting to consider further.</p> <p>Volunteer Tree Warden: Members were informed that Daniel Teague has resigned his position as the current Tree Warden. The Clerk was asked to advertise the position in the next Flag article.</p> <p>Dog Poo Signage: Members were informed that a resident had asked council to consider similar signage to those attached to a social media post from Dormington and Mordiford PC and assumed to be in use in the parish. The Clerk informed members that the images were being used to accompany a social media post only. No further action was recommended at this time.</p> <p>To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council: 222674: Fownhope House, Fownhope. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Members were informed that this application had been submitted without prior discussion or knowledge of the owner of Fownhope House. The owner has advised the Clerk that they have attempted to contact the applicant to understand and agree the extent of work proposed but has been unable to do so. It was noted that the property is Grade II listed and the tree is in the curtilage of the garden and conservation area. It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to the application for the reasons noted above.</p> <p>222338: Land at Old Potato Store, Fownhope. Application for variation of condition 4 of planning permission 203345. Minor amendments to list of approved plans to reflect the addition of PV panels, minor elevational changes, Plot 1 house type substitution and changes to garage of Plot 9. Members considered the application raising concerns about the changes to the garage on Plot 9 which were considered out of keeping with the other garages on the estate, the roof is higher to accommodate a first floor and includes two roof lights and a dormer window raising concerns of increased light pollution in an AONB Area of Dark Skies. It was RESOLVED: to OBJECT to the application for the reasons noted above. 6 objections, 1 abstention.</p> <p>It was reported that work on the development at Old Potato Store has been starting earlier and finishing later than the times specified on the planning consent. A member of the parish council has previously spoken with the Site Manager who had agreed to stop the extended work. A member of the public reported that a temporary relaxation had been allowed by the Government post Covid to allow builders to catch up which may explain why it had not been stopped. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the developer to raise the concerns reported.</p> <p>To Note Planning Decisions Made by Herefordshire Council: It was noted: 221903: 43 & 44 Court Orchard. Demolition and rebuild of fire damaged properties. Approved. 222130: Land at Caplor Farm west of Mount Pleasant. Installation of EE mast etc. Refused.</p> <p>To Consider Other Matters Relating to Planning: Members expressed their disappointment that Planning Officers refer to Local or National plans when applying a condition within a planning application approval but make no reference to Fownhope's NDP. It was RESOLVED: to write to Herefordshire Council's Planning Department to remind them of local concerns and ask that they reference the FNDP on future decision reports.</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</p> <p>240/9 /2223 4 of 6 HT/DQ</p>
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<p>11)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>12)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>13)</p> <p>a)</p>	<p>Highways:</p> <p>Cllr Eames reported that the original batteries supplied with the SIDs are holding approximately 40% of their charge and he is needing to top up at home using the battery charger. Holme Lacy and Hampton Bishop Parish Councils have not reported the same problem though the manufacturer only guarantees the batteries for 6 months. Each SID will require two functioning batteries during the winter months to ensure data is still collected during the off period. Cllr Eames presented two quotations for a replacement set of batteries at £147.92 plus VAT and £104.00 plus delivery and VAT but reported that he has been given contact details for a local supplier who may provide a better price.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of one pair of batteries at a cost of up to £104.00 plus delivery and VAT and proceed with the supplier offering the lowest price.</p> <p>It was reported that Herefordshire Council have agreed to consider and review their policy on periodic SID deployment if data shows that SIDs remain effective when deployed permanently. As the meeting was running late, Cllr Eames asked that the discussion on SID data is deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to defer the discussion as requested and to move Highway matters up the agenda.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Eames will put together a protocol to test the effect of keeping the SIDs on permanently.</p> <p>Cllr Eames reported that a fully detailed drawing is required to progress the road marking scheme but staff shortages in HC Highways Department are causing delays at this current time. Cllr Eames will follow up in due course.</p> <p>B4224 Multi Parish Group:</p> <p>Cllr Braybrook reported that a meeting had been held on 5th September between the Parishes along the B4224 and Cllr John Harrington, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport at Herefordshire Council. The Memorandum of Understanding between all group members was signed. The Multi Parish Group will now focus attention on specific actions to address the concerns of volume, weight and speed of traffic using the B4224.</p> <p>Pavement along the B4224:</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the width and quality of the pavement along the B4224 on the western side of the village as pedestrians are often forced into the road. Cllr Braybrook has asked Cllr Harrington to clarify the position on widening pavements following recent changes to the Highway Code giving increased weight to the safety of pedestrians.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: for a small working party to put together a proposal outlining concerns. Cllrs Stuart Eames, Lavinia Smith and Will Morris have volunteered.</p> <p>Local Council Award Scheme:</p> <p>Members were informed that the draft business plan had been prepared but cannot be completed until the budget for 2023/2024 and a draft budget for 2024/2025 has been approved.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to hold a PC Strategy meeting during September or October to assess and agree the detail of the plan prior to approval at a meeting of full council.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Parish Council Summer Newsletter printed on coloured pages in the September issue of the Flag contained all of the information required for the annual report.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve that the Summer Newsletter fulfills the requirements to publish an Annual Report. The report is available on the website.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the statements required to satisfy the LCAS Quality Gold Award have yet to be completed,</p> <p>FRFA/Recreation Field:</p> <p>There was no report other than to note that the downstairs rooms of the Pavilion had recently been flooded and is not currently available for use.</p>	<p>HT/SE</p> <p>HT</p> <p>SE</p> <p>SE</p> <p>SE/LS</p> <p>WM</p> <p>HT/LS</p> <p>241/9 /2223 5 of 6</p>
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<p>b)</p> <p>14)</p>	<p>Members received an update concerning the Social Value Project offered by BBLP following the collapse of the B4224 expressing disappointment that the request to expand the patio area at the Pavilion has been rejected as being beyond the scope of what BBLP can do. The scope has now been clarified at 1-1.5 days, though it remains unclear if this is for one operative or more. A member of the public suggested that the matter is escalated to the Chief Executive of BBLP. It was RESOLVED: that the Chairman will write to the local representative of BBLP to express disappointment at their response and to seek clarity on the scope of their offer, and report to the next meeting.</p> <p>Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 5th October 2022.</p> <p>Meeting closed.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Chairman</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>242/9 /2223 6 of 6</p>
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Appendix A: Financial Report

Fownhope Parish Council

Serving the community



REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 7th September 2022

REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO

AGENDA ITEM: 5a: Financial Report

Bank Balances:

Lloyds: £ 7903.70
Lloyds Reserve: £35,693.59 (includes £5,592.50 from Welsh Water)
Hargreaves Lansdown: £26,173.06 (at 5.9.22)
Total funds held across all banks and investments at 05.09.22 = £69,770.35

AGAR:

PKF Littlejohn have advised they will be raising an 'except for' matters (qualifications) on our AGAR Part 3 in relation to the change in recording the short-term investments. In previous years, the investments were recorded within the asset register. In order to account within Scribe for the change in value of the investments during the year, I was advised to move them from the asset register to a new bank account set up in the name of Hargreaves Lansdown. There was some dilemma as to how this should be reported on the AGAR and having taken advice from both Scribe and PKF Littlejohn, I restated where advised. However, the person reviewing the AGAR has informed me that this was not correct and has given instructions on how he would like the figures to be restated. I have now done this and will ask Kevin to initial and resubmit to PKF Littlejohn on Thursday.

We have also received communication informing the council that it can choose to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements. The SAAA appoint the external auditor for a 5-year period (2022/3 to 2026/7). All smaller authorities are opted into the central procurement of external auditors by default but can choose to opt out, though it is not recommended as the external audit process is complex. However, if council wish to consider opting out, it can be discussed at the October meeting.

Finance Working Group:

The FWG met on 19th July and are due to meet again on 27th September to prepare the draft budget for 2023/2024. The group considered the wording of the Reserves policy following concerns raised at the July meeting. It was felt that the policy says clearly that the General Reserves can be used for any purpose with the agreement of full council and that the current projects planned will reduce the Earmarked Reserves. It was agreed that no further action was needed.

The FWG have raised one or two queries about the draft retention policy which will be clarified, re-discussed at the September FWG meeting and brought to full council at the October meeting.

Following advice that Helen must be automatically enrolled in a pension scheme, the FWG have agreed that she is enrolled in the Government scheme NEST. As Helen has confirmed she will opt out, there are no financial implications and therefore the FWG felt it was appropriate to agree the NEST scheme without the need to put it to full council.