



Hello,

Well, I'm genuinely not sure where to start this month! We reconvened after the summer break with a bang, welcoming approximately 25 members of the public to the September meeting, our Ward Councillor and co-opting a new member onto the parish council.

Local Council Award Scheme: Quality Gold Status Achieved!



We were delighted to announce that over the summer we have been awarded the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Quality Gold Award - with the assessment panel noting *"that this was an exceptional submission"*.

We were further delighted to be advised that we are the first 'Quality Gold' local council in Herefordshire. The formal award will be presented at the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils AGM on 23rd November, so I'll likely be sharing more photos and publicity then.

The Local Council Quality Gold Award Scheme demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

You can find more information on the Award Scheme, the Parish Council's 5-year Forward Plan and associated Action Plan on the website, together with a range of statements showing how the Council:

- ✓ ensures that it delivers value for money;
- ✓ meets its duties in relation to bio-diversity and crime and disorder;
- ✓ provides leadership in planning for the future;
- ✓ manages its performance as a corporate body

all of which demonstrate the breadth of work and services that the Parish Council undertakes for the benefit of parish residents.

We shall be arranging a celebratory event on Sunday 8th October combining the launch and inaugural walk of the new Coronation Walk, and celebrating this award, so please look out for more information on this via the usual channels.

New Parish Councillor:



We were also delighted to welcome a new member to the Parish Council, Claire Patel who was co-opted to fill one of the four current vacancies. I shall be asking Claire to send a short bio and photograph which will be uploaded onto the 'Meet the Council' page on the website, but briefly Claire moved to the village two years ago, has a young family and is keen to support the community however she can. We are delighted she chose to join the Parish Council and look forward to working with her.

It's obviously not rocket science then to work out that we still have **three vacancies remaining** and we are really keen to fill these to enable the PC to run at full capacity. If you are interested at all, please do get in touch. There's some truly good stuff going on!

Planning Consultations:

The large public attendance was, in the main, related to the planning consultation under consideration for the approval of reserved matters following the outline planning approval for the development of up to ten dwellings on the Land adjacent to the Medical Centre (granted in November 2020).



The main part of the meeting was dedicated to discussing the detail of the application and listening to the many concerns raised.

The Parish Council subsequently submitted an objection which I have uploaded onto the Planning page (under the Parish Council section) of the website if you wish to read it in more detail.

This of course meant that we had to attend to the remainder of the agenda in a very short amount of time and consequently some items were deferred to the next meeting in October. However, proving the saying that there is nothing like a deadline to focus the mind, we rattled through the following:

Traffic Calming Scheme:

Cllr Kevin Braybrook and Stuart Eames attended a meeting with Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty early in September to discuss progression of the traffic calming scheme.

Several visits have been made to Fownhope and detailed plans have been drawn up for the following programme of works:

- Road Narrowing lines, 30mph roundels and tan blocks at junctions to be implemented as originally discussed. The new white lines which were painted over the summer were

done by a road marking team who were not aware of plans to remove the centre line and will be removed without cost impact to the £175,000 grant.

- Plans **include** widening the pavement at the west end bus stop to 1.5m with associated narrowing of the road

The above will be covered by the £175,000 grant which must be spent this financial year, so the project should be complete by March 2024.

- A location to re-site the start of the 30mph limit and install the village gateways has been identified between Mill Farm and The Granary. This work will be covered by the S106 money from the Mill Field development and will require a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order), which could take 12 months to process so is unlikely to be completed at the same time as the road narrowing programme. The road narrowing linings will be extended to the gateways when they are installed.
- Repair of potholes and resurfacing will not be included in the grant funded programme as Highways are responsible for funding ongoing road maintenance. It is possible that the narrowing lines will be put in place before resurfacing is completed, however, once in place, they will be repainted (at no cost to the grant or to Fownhope) by the surfacing team.
- The 20mph Pembridge trial has not demonstrated measurable reduction in traffic speed. This, together with a change in approach to traffic calming by the new HC administration, means that 20mph zones will not be implemented in villages throughout the county.

Playground Improvements:



Cllr Lavinia Smith and myself attended another successful meeting with Herefordshire Council in early September to discuss the S106 money allocated to improve the play area on the Recreation Field. A sum of £19,750.41 has been allocated and HC confirmed that we are able to deliver the project ourselves, whilst receiving support and assistance where needed from HC.

The next step is for the working group to create a costed design to be presented for consideration by full council and then published for public consultation. We are hopeful that this project can also be delivered before the end of the current financial year.

Finance: Welsh Water:

I was pleased to advise that Welsh Water have finally settled the additional fees incurred carrying out the tarmac repairs to the Recreation Field Access Road which were delayed as a result of a water leak. It had taken a long time to establish the source of the problem and material costs had increased by the time we were given the all clear to proceed. A sum of £1677.75 was received, and members wished to thank Stuart Eames for his tenacity in following this through.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23:

The Annual Return has now been concluded with no recommendations noted; the Notice of Conclusion of Audit can be found on the noticeboard outside West End Stores and on the website.

Budget for 2024/25:

During September, the Parish Council will begin to look at the budget for 2024/25 and a draft budget will be presented to the October meeting ahead of the usual public consultation. If you have any projects that you would like the PC to consider, please do get in touch.

We were also pleased to announce the success of a Parish Resident's ongoing commitment to clarifying the legality of Parish Councils offering financial support for Churchyard Maintenance - they know who they are - and the Parish Council wished to recognise their efforts on behalf of churches countrywide! An amendment to the Local Government Act 1894 has been accepted by Government and will be passed through the House of Lords and House of Commons presumably sometime later this year or early next year. This means that the Parish Council can once again budget to support the maintenance of the Churchyard for 2024/25.

Asian Hornet:

We have been asked to publicise the imminent threat of the Asian Hornet to the Wye Valley. Asian hornets pose a particular threat to honeybees, which are already in decline.

Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!



As the Flag prints in black and white, you won't be able to see its distinguishing features – striking yellow 'socks', a distinct orange face and an orange-yellow band towards the tail end of its abdomen.

They are darker and slightly smaller than our native European hornet but larger than common wasp.

“This hornet is a reportable, highly invasive pest that poses a serious threat to all pollinators, the ecological system and to humans.

Experience in Europe has shown that the Asian Hornet will spread exponentially at an alarming rate, and despite earlier preventative measures, established Asian Hornet nests have been found and destroyed this summer so far in Kent, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall. Sightings of individuals have occurred in Northumberland, Suffolk, Hampshire.”

There are very specific instructions on what you can do if you see an Asian Hornet.

“At the end of summer wasps die off naturally but can be a nuisance to beekeepers. It is beneficial to set up bait - using a simple wick station model, or a wasp trap, with attractant. A hornet will feed from this, allowing you to take a photograph, observe which direction it flies off to and return.



It is illegal to trap and release an alien species.

If you do trap one, please contain it (in the freezer) and alert the authorities via a free Asian Hornet Watch App or by email to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Regular Newsletters:

Finally, if you don't receive my regular emailed newsletter, please get in touch or subscribe via the website here: <https://fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk/>. It is a great tool to stay informed, is simple to subscribe and to unsubscribe if you find it isn't for you. Please give it a try and see what you think!

Dates for your diary:

- **Parish Council Meeting: Wednesday 3rd October, 7pm, Pavilion**
- **Coronation Walk Launch and Quality Gold Celebratory Event, Sunday 8th October, Pavilion (time tbc)**

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