



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4th October 2023
at the Pavilion, Fownhope**

Page
Number:

Present:

Cllrs Kevin Braybrook (in the Chair), Tim Jones, Gareth Williams, Mike Simmons, Frank Hemming, Will Morris, Lavinia Smith, Michael Short and Claire Patel; with Alison Martin and Tony Kelk joining following their co-option.

In attendance:

1 member of the public; Clerk Helen Tinson

- 1) **Apologies for Absence:** Ward Cllr Graham Biggs; Claire Patel had sent apologies for her late arrival.
- 2) **To co-opt new Councillors to fill current vacancies:**
It was RESOLVED: to elect Alison Martin and Tony Kelk onto the Parish Council. Cllrs Martin and Kelk duly signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms and joined members at the council table.
- 3) **To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Written Requests for Dispensation:**
To receive any declarations of interest: Cllrs Kevin Braybrook and Will Morris declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10e, Reimbursement of Expenses; Cllr Mike Simmons declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10e, FRFA fees; and Cllr Michael Short declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 14b (FWD5 Diversion Order). The Declarations of Interest book was signed accordingly.
To consider any written requests for dispensations: there were none.
- 4) **Open Session:**
 - a) **Report from Ward Councillor:** The Ward Councillor was not present and had not sent a report. Members wished to minute their disappointment at his absence.
 - b) **Representation from the Public:** The Clerk had received three items of correspondence from members of the public:
 - 1) A further letter of objection to Planning Application 232195;
 - 2) An enquiry into whether the Parish Council will be providing a Warm Space at Faulkner House again this winter;
 - 3) A request for volunteer Poppy Organisers in the Parish.
- 5) **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**
Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 6th September 2023.
It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair.
- 6) **To Comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:**
 - a) 232836: Tan Brook, Fownhope. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Members considered the application noting all works were identified on the annual tree survey.
It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application.
 - b) 232774: Beechcroft, Fownhope, HR1 4PA. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Members considered the application noting there were no objections from the Parish Tree Warden.

	It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application.	HT
c)	232840: Fownhope House, Fownhope, HR1 4PE. LBC. Proposed replacement of the windows to the front elevation and the re-building of the upper section of the northern chimney. Members considered the application noting all works represented necessary maintenance. It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application.	HT
7)	To Consider Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council – Comments not being accepted: It was noted:	
a)	232608/XA2: Land at Tump Farm. Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3, 4 and 6 attached to planning permission 221961.	
b)	23259/XA2: 43 and 44 Court Orchard. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 attached to planning permission 221903.	
8)	To Note Report on Planning Decisions Made by Herefordshire Council: It was noted:	
a)	230181/XA2: Land at Old Potato Store. Approval of details reserved by condition 2 (203353). Approved.	
9)	To Consider Other Matters related to Planning:	
a)	To consider further options concerning Planning Consultation 232195: Land adjacent to Fownhope Medical Centre: Members were informed that the Case Officer had confirmed that access to the site via Common Hill Lane had been determined in 2020 and could not be revisited. The Ward Councillor has confirmed that, given the community interest, he would be willing to ask for a referral to Committee for decision, but noted that community interest would need to be demonstrated by responses to the consultation. Members repeated their preference for smaller two or three bed homes priced within the means of local families that would meet the criteria set within the NDP and identified local need; and considered council representation if the application was referred to committee and the committee meeting was set before the date of the next scheduled meeting. It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Kevin Braybrook would represent the Parish Council at a committee meeting; and that his representation would be approved by a quorum of members via email between meetings if necessary.	KB
b)	To consider voluntary registration of Tan Brook Land Ownership: Members were informed that no formal documentation of ownership of the land at Tan Brook could be located when it had been requested during a recent legal process. The solicitor had suggested the Parish Council might like to consider a voluntary registration of the land. It was RESOLVED: to approve the proposal to progress an application to voluntarily register the land. The Clerk will assemble the evidence and share with Cllr Michael Short, who will prepare the application.	HT/MS
c)	To note response to Wye Valley AONB Consultation on Planning and Position Statements: Members noted the responses submitted on behalf of the Parish Council to the Wye Valley AONB Consultation. A query was raised concerning the Housing Needs Survey; it was noted that, as Herefordshire Council are no longer conducting Housing Needs Surveys, the Fownhope Community Land Trust had published an informal questionnaire earlier in the year. Four responses had been received. It was agreed that the survey should be promoted once more with a deadline for responses of 30 th November 2023.	HT
10)	Finance and Policy:	
a)	Finance Report: Members received a financial report as attached to these minutes as Appendix A, and considered a number of questions raised by the Responsible Financial Officer. It was reported that the bus service provider had indicated that they may need to review both services but they have yet to prepare a proposal for the Parish Council to consider. Bus usage figures were discussed. It was RESOLVED: to approve the report It was RESOLVED: to cancel the subscription to Zoom It was RESOLVED: to reallocate the reserves assigned to Machinery (£3000) to Special Projects	HT 294/10 /2324 2 of 5

	<p>It was RESOLVED: to promote the community grants more widely and create a page for the website</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to transfer funds from the current account to the reserve account to take advantage of higher interest rates, maintaining a balance of between £5000-£8000 in the current account.</p>	HT
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b)	<p>Draft Budget 2024/25: Members considered the draft budget as detailed in Appendix B.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the proposed increase in precept to £38,000 and to publish the draft budget for public consultation.</p>	HT
c)	<p>RoSPA Weekly Playground Inspection Reports: Members considered purchasing a playground inspection report from RoSPA. It was noted that the report cost £30 plus VAT and would be based on the annual inspection. The volunteer playground inspector has confirmed that he carries out weekly inspections but only records them monthly.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of an inspection report at a cost of £30 plus VAT.</p>	HT
d)	<p>Quotations for work identified on H&S Assessment of Assets: Members were informed that the Clerk has requested quotations for the maintenance works identified on the H&S Inspection of Assets and anticipates presenting them for consideration at the next meeting. Members were asked to consider a quotation of £75.00 plus VAT to service the Parish Council laptop (used by the Clerk).</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the cost of £75.00 plus VAT to service the laptop.</p>	HT
e)	<p>Payments: It was RESOLVED: to ratify the following payments made between meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Morris, Reimbursement of Expenses (Poster Case – covered by FiPL grant), £124.20 	
f)	<p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Maddy Coaches, Bus Service September, £90.00 • FRFA, Meeting Room Hire September, £75.00 • Suzi Bruce, P3, £976.40 (two invoices) including £4.40 VAT • Open Spaces Society, Annual Membership, £45.00 • Helen Tinson, Salary September, £852.10 • HMRC, PAYE/NIC Q2, £771.37 • Phil Oakley, Tree clearance FWA6, £125.00 • Kevin Braybrook, Reimbursement of Expenses Training & Event 8/10/23, £50.75 • Kevin Braybrook, Reimbursement of Expenses Postage, £3.35 • Helen Tinson, Clerk Work from Home Allowance Q2, £78.00 • Helen Tinson, Reimbursement of Expenses Q2, £235.49 including £17.20 VAT 	HT
11)	<p>Policies and Procedures:</p>	
a)	<p>Risk Management Policy and Risk Register: Members considered the annual renewal of the Risk Management Policy and Risk Register. It was noted that the Clerk is currently working through amendments to the Risk Register identified by the Finance Working Group.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the renewal of the Risk Management Policy</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to defer approval of the Risk Register until all amendments have been updated.</p>	HT HT
b)	<p>Process concerning publication of Councillor Register of Interests: Members considered correspondence received from Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) concerning a change in the process of publishing Councillor Register of Interests (RoI's).</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to write to Herefordshire Council and clarify that in publishing the RoI's, the Parish Council is not accepting that publication is their responsibility but that they are happy to take a pragmatic approach to resolve the matter.</p>	HT 295/10 /2324 3 of 5

	<p>It was RESOLVED: to publish all Councillor Register of Interests on the Parish Council website.</p> <p>12) Highways:</p> <p>a) Members received the following report from the Highways Working Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual survey of grit bins will be carried out during October; • One of the SID batteries is not holding its charge as long as it should and it was suggested that an additional battery is purchased at a cost of £114.00 plus VAT to hold in stock to use as needed. Members recalled considering this at a previous meeting and questioned whether a back-up battery has already been purchased. Members also noted that the batteries are charged by a member of the public using his own electricity. <p>It was RESOLVED: to check whether a previous purchase has been made, and if not, to approve the purchase of a back-up battery at a cost of £114.00 plus VAT</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to offer a sum of £30 for the power used to charge the battery</p> <p>b) Traffic Calming Scheme: No update has been received and it is understood that the scheme is still being costed. A query was raised about roadside parking outside the West End Stores and the impact this has on vehicles exiting Scotch Firs. It was noted that this is not included in the current approved scheme, and that roadside parking has a positive impact on traffic calming, but that an agenda item would be raised to discuss further at the next meeting.</p> <p>c) Biggs Lane: Members considered a quote of £85.00 to cut back the hedging along Biggs Lane from the pedestrian barrier by the Memorial Hall to the end of the hedge by the entrance to St. Mary's School. The Clerk asked members to consider the height and depth proposed to be cut back, and reported that work could be carried out during October half term if the quotation is accepted.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to accept the quotation of £85.00 (no VAT) to the height and depth specified. It was understood that there may be an overhang.</p> <p>13) Environment:</p> <p>a) Members received a report from the Environment Working Group (EWG):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EWG met last on the 18th September and will meet again at 7pm on the 30th October at the Green Man; • The Fownhope Car Club has transitioned from a satellite of Malvern Hills Car Club to an entity in its own right with an elected Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. New members are required to enable the club to become more economically viable; • The Clerk is continuing to look for grant funding for electric vehicle charger points; • The Climate Declaration document will be reviewed in the next couple of months; • The last Fownhope Community Saturday event was held on the 23rd September. The next event will be held in March 2024. <p>14) Footpaths:</p> <p>a) Members received a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A landowner has confirmed that two gates pending installation will be installed during the autumn when stock is being moved; • The Lengthsman has installed the final gate on the Coronation Walk and has carried out some clearing work; • There are no further opportunities to install gates unless further permissions are received from landowners; • HALC training confirmed that the landowner remains responsible for maintaining stiles and gates, regardless of whether the Parish Council supplied and installed them. <p>b) FWD5: Members noted that the Notice of Confirmation, Confirmed and Order Plan in relation to the Public Path Diversion Order for FWD5 (part) has been received.</p> <p>c) Slow Ways National Walking Network: Members considered engaging with the national network that seeks to connect villages and settlements via footpaths.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to engage with the network.</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>296/10 /2324 4 of 5</p>
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<p>15)</p> <p>a)</p>	<p>FRFA:</p> <p>Members received a report from the FRFA Representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complaints procedure is now in place; • Wifi has been installed and the password will be made known to users; • CCTV has been installed to monitor the Pavilion and the car park. The policy is being finetuned and the final policy will be presented to the Parish Council and published on the FRFA website, www.frfa.org.uk; • The hot water system has recently been overhauled and is now working extremely well. <p>A query was raised concerning possible improvements to the untidy area around the walks noticeboard. Cllr Simmons will take the query back to the FRFA and report further in due course.</p>	<p>MS</p>
<p>b)</p>	<p>Patio Extension: Members were informed that the full-scale proposal has been costed but materials alone would cost in the region of £39,000. A grant application has been unsuccessful and therefore the FRFA are revisiting the original plan. Cllr Simmons will present plans to the next meeting.</p>	<p>MS</p>
<p>16)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>	<p>Parish Matters:</p> <p>Coronation Booklet: Members considered concerns raised about the Neighbourhood Development Plan text published in the Coronation-to-Coronation Booklet. A meeting between representatives of the History Group and the Parish Council resulted in an agreement to print an amendment in the Fownhope Flag. The PC representatives considered the amendment but did not feel that it addressed all of the concerns raised. The History Group proposed to publish their text and suggested that the PC submit a response. It was RESOLVED: to approve a draft response to the text proposed by the History Group to be published in the Fownhope Flag.</p> <p>Parish Celebration: Members were reminded of the Parish Celebration on 8th October (10am) to launch the Coronation Walk and to celebrate achieving the Quality Gold Award in the Local Council Award Scheme. An unfortunate clash with the Harvest Festival Service and Lunch was noted.</p> <p>Second Village Walkaround: Members considered dates for a second village walkaround to identify general village maintenance and areas for improvement. It was RESOLVED: to meet at 2pm on Wednesday 11th October outside the Memorial Hall.</p> <p>Amendments to Bus Service: It was agreed this had been covered under the Finance Report.</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>17)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p>Next Meetings:</p> <p>Parish Council Meeting: 7pm, Wednesday 1st November 2023.</p> <p>HALC AGM: Thursday 23rd November 2023, 7pm, Venue TBC</p>	<p>HT</p>
<p>18)</p>	<p>Agenda Items Raised for Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider a new Planning Policy • To consider and approve the updated Risk Register • To receive and consider update on Playground S106 • To receive and consider update on voluntary registration of Tan Brook Land Ownership • To consider provision of Warm Space at Faulkner House this winter • To consider plans for the Pavilion patio improvements • To consider roadside parking outside the West End Stores <p>Meeting closed.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Chairman</p>	<p>HT</p> <p>297/10 /2324 5 of 5</p>

Appendix A: Finance Report

Fownhope Parish Council

Serving the community



REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 4th October 2023

REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO

AGENDA ITEM: 10a

Bank Balances:

Lloyds: £18,057.89 (excludes payments to be approved 4.10.23)

Lloyds Reserve: £24,748.99

Hargreaves Lansdown: £21,950.34 (at 3.10.23)

Total funds held across all banks and investments at 3.10.23 = £64,757.22

The Finance Working Group met on the 2nd October to review actual vs budget income and expenditure at the end of Q2 23/24, and to consider the draft budget for 24/25. A year end position was forecast based either on year-to-date figures (ie actual expenditure for the first six months anticipated as being similar to the second half of the year); a monthly average based on the budget; or flexed forecasting based on known expenditure expected during the second half of the year.

Please refer to the attached report 'Receipts and Payments Forecast'. It was noted that the two grants – Lengthsman/Matched funding (£2664) and the FiPL grant (£4502.82) would be claimed over the next couple of months.

The anticipated end position (-£2385.39) informed the draft budget for the next financial year.

It was noted that the budget for the current year (23/24) and previous years (20/21, 21/22, 22/23) had each anticipated a deficit at year end, which was an intentional decision due to additional reserves having accrued, particularly as a result of a slowdown in expenditure during the pandemic.

It was also noted that the precept has not increased in line with inflation for the last two years.

It was the view of the FWG that we should now look to balance the budget and therefore it is proposed to increase the precept accordingly for 24/25. The proposal is to increase the precept from £33,500 to £38,000.

The Parish Tax Base should become available during November, but using last year's Band D equivalent property figures, the precept will increase from £77.45 for 23/24 to £87.86 for 24/25, per Band D equivalent property, which is an increase of £10.41 per property per year. As there are additional houses being constructed, it is likely that this will increase the number of properties in the parish and therefore reduce the cost per property, but this can't be confirmed until HC release the Parish Tax Bases for 23/24.

Further proposals for consideration by full council:

1. Cancel the subception to Zoom (effective ASAP) and use the free version on occasions that an online meeting is needed;

2. We should look to increase the take up of training opportunities for Clerk, Councillors and Volunteers as this budget is not being used to its fullest;
 3. I shall be asking for usage figures for both the Ledbury and Ross Bus Service with a view to further discussions at the December meeting;
 4. The budget for traffic calming has been removed for 24/25 in view of the traffic calming project being delivered by BBLP/HC. It is proposed that the current budget (or remainder at the year-end) is allocated to reserves for any incidental purchases required for the SIDs or gateways during 24/25);
 5. It is proposed that the Machinery Reserve (£3000) is re-allocated to the Special Projects Reserve (currently £7,775.75) which was thought *could* be the PC donation towards the Patio Improvements at the Pavilion;
 6. It was agreed that the community grants (youth support £200, habitat £200, community groups £300) should be maintained but promoted more widely; and proposed that a ‘Grants’ page is created on the website;
 7. The winter gritting budget was maintained as this also covers the purchase of sandbags if required;
 8. It was noted that the Lloyds reserve account is achieving a good level of interest and it was proposed that a value of £5000-£8000 is held in the current account and any balance over this would be transferred to the reserves account until needed to maximise interest payments. Funds can be withdrawn from the reserves account immediately and without penalty.
- The FWG also verified the Bank Reconciliation at 30.9.2023.
- Next scheduled Finance Working Group Meeting is 6.00pm on Monday 15th January 2024.

Appendix B: Draft Budget for 2024/25

	23/24	24/25
	Current budget to 31.3.24	Draft budget to 31.3.25
INCOME		
Annual Precept	£33,500	£38,000
Wayleave	£45	£45
Investment Income	£1,700	£2,000
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
DMGPC Ross Bus Contribution	£300	£300
Lloyds Interest (Reserve ac)	£2	£225

TOTAL INCOME	£35,886	£40,909
EXPENSES		
Clerks expenses inc travel	£400	£400
Admin expenses	£500	£650
Comms/Community Engagement	£500	£500
Insurance	£975	£1,100
Meeting Room Hire	£450	£450
Audit Costs	£500	£500
Website/Computer Costs	£475	£500
Training (Clerk, Councillors, Volunteers)	£650	£650
Subscriptions	£1,250	£1,300
Clerks Salary	£14,000	£14,728
Memorial Hall PWLB Repayment	£1,050	£1,000
Youth Support	£200	£200
Play Inspection Fee	£165	£175
Community Library	£550	£550
Ross/Ledbury Buses	£1,530	£1,530
Parish Lengthsman materials	£500	£500
Parish Lengthsman labour	£2,250	£3,000
Parish Footpaths PROW labour	£2,500	£3,000
Common Hill Management	£339	£339
Grass cutting	£800	£800
Parish Maintenance & Improvements	£2,000	£2,000
Tree survey and tree remedial work	£2,500	£3,000
New Projects	£2,000	£2,000

Community Groups & Habitat Grant	£500	£500
Winter Gritting	£450	£450
Traffic Calming Measures	£1,000	£0
2023 Election Provision	£1,500	£0
Church Support (when allowable)	£0	£1,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	£39,534	£40,822
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	-£3,648	£87