



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd April 2024
at the Pavilion, Fownhope**

Page
Number:

Present:

Cllrs Kevin Braybrook (in the Chair), Tim Jones, Gareth Williams, Mike Simmons, Frank Hemming, Claire Patel, Lavinia Smith, Michael Short and Tony Kelk.

In attendance:

4 members of the public; Clerk Helen Tinson

1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Will Morris

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

To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Tony Kelk declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5b, Planning, 240524; Cllrs Kevin Braybrook and Frank Hemming declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11c, FCLT fees; Cllr Mike Simmons declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11e, FRFA fees. 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:** The Ward Councillor was not present and there was no written report.

b) **Report from West Mercia Police:** The Police were not present at the meeting and there was no written report.

c) **Representation from the Public:**

- A parishioner raised concerns about poor landline reception across the village. It was noted that this has been reported to BT who are due to carry out works on 11th April.
- Further concerns were raised about the flooded area at the junction of the Woolhope Road and B4224 and the dangers to pedestrians. It was noted that multiple reports had been submitted to BBLP. The Locality Steward has advised work is scheduled for 10th April, pending any emergency calls elsewhere.
- A parishioner has emailed with concerns about the installation of swift bricks at the developments at Cherry Hill Rise which are reported to have been installed upside down, and raised concerns about the installation of the same at the Common Hill Lane Development. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the developer to raise the matter and ask what remedial action can be taken at Cherry Hill Rise.
- A parishioner has emailed with concerns about the condition of Common Hill Lane and further damage as a result of the construction works. It was reported that Welsh Water will be closing Common Hill Lane for three days commencing 17th April to carry out the mains water connection for the development. It is understood that the two-week closure has been postponed until August.

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

Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 6th March 2024.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

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| <p>5)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>6)</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> | <p>To Consider Comments on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:</p> <p>240569: Stone House, Fownhope, HR1 4PJ. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area. Members considered the proposal and a recommendation from the Parish Tree Warden. It was noted that both trees are to be reduced and that the work will reduce the trees to the same level as previous reductions. There were no objections though some questions were raised about the timing for the works. However, it was acknowledged that the application has been submitted by a local and respected professional tree surgeon who would be mindful of any bird nesting restrictions. It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application (7 in favour, 2 abstained).</p> <p>240524: Ferryboat Cottage, Ferry Lane, Fownhope, HR1 4NX. Proposed Balcony. Members considered the proposal noting no local objections. It was RESOLVED: to SUPPORT the application. Cllr Tony Kelk abstained from the discussion and vote in accordance with his declaration of interest.</p> <p>Other Matters relating to Planning:</p> <p>To note report of Planning Decisions taken by Herefordshire Council (HC): Members noted the report as appended (Appendix A)</p> <p>To receive report concerning Mill Field hedge planting: The Ward Councillor was not present and had not submitted an update.</p> <p>To receive feedback from Herefordshire Council’s Parish Council County Plan Consultation Event: Members were informed that Cllrs Kevin Braybrook, Frank Hemming and Lavinia Smith had attended the consultation events. It was reported that Rural Settlements have been categorised into four categories; Rural Hubs, Rural Hubs with Environmental Constraints, Service Settlements and Service Settlements with Environmental Constraints. Fownhope has been categorised as a Service Settlement with Environmental Constraints because of its position in the National Landscape, Conservation Area, SSSI and being close to a flood risk. It is understood that this provides some protection against major development, though an allocation has still been made for a further 20 new homes to be built by 2041 in addition to the three current developments. Any developments of 6 houses or above for settlements within a National Landscape would need to provide affordable housing. It was noted that the new Local Plan, once adopted, would supersede any Neighbourhood Development Plans that had not been reviewed.</p> <p>To consider NDP Consultation Event 30/31 March: Members were informed that four members of the Planning Working Group were in attendance over the two afternoons and a steady flow of parishioners attended. Information received from the County Plan Consultation Event was relayed and parishioners were asked for their views on whether the Fownhope NDP should be reviewed. Dates for further consultation events were considered. It was noted that the terms of the grant received concluded on 31.3.24 and that the Clerk has submitted the End of Grant Report. It was RESOLVED: to hold further consultation events on Sunday 21st April between 2.30 and 5.30pm at the Memorial Hall; on Wednesday 1st May between 6pm and 7pm at the Pavilion (ahead of the Parish Council Meeting); and during the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday 19th May at 6pm at the Pavilion. It was RESOLVED: to return the unspent grant payment of £818.52 to Groundwork UK, and to approve the payment of additional room hire for events held after 31.3.24.</p> <p>To consider a Works to Trees Policy: Members noted that a number of Works to Trees consultations had been considered over recent months and considered writing a policy that would assist with the deliberation during planning discussions. It was suggested that a policy could be incorporated into a new Environmental and Sustainability Policy currently being prepared by the Environment Group. It was agreed that tree applications generally fall into two categories 1) dealing with historic trees and 2) trees planted that have outgrown the space.</p> | <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT/KB</p> <p>HT</p> <p>320/04 /2425 2 of 6</p> |
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| | <p>It was RESOLVED: to put together wording to incorporate into the new Environmental and Sustainability Policy (Cllrs Frank Hemming, Tony Kelk, Clerk)</p> <p>7) Highways and Lengthsman:</p> <p>a) Highways Report: Members received a report from the Highways Working Group including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hills Ford Rally – licence granted • Traffic Calming Project – completion is still pending spell of dry weather. BBLP due to assess the spring at Nash Pitch imminently. • 20mph limit – HALC Information Corner calls for any councils interested in 20mph limits to contact Professor John Whitelegg. Concerns were raised about the safety of children on the B4224 during school drop off and pick up times. <p>It was RESOLVED: that the Clerk would contact Professor Whitelegg to express interest and establish purpose of EoI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the public raised further concerns about parking outside the shop which has continued despite the dotted white lines and suggested that an article about the white lining is published in the Flag, and that the West End Stores consider placing cones to prevent parking on the dotted line opposite Scotch Firs. <p>b) Lengthsman Contract 2024/25: Members considered two tenders received for the Lengthsman contract for 2024/25. It was RESOLVED: to appoint Suzie Bruce as the Lengthsman for 2024/25 and Leon Davies for ad hoc work to support the Lengthsman as required during the year.</p> <p>c) Annual Maintenance Plan 2024/25: Members considered the draft Annual Maintenance Plan for 2024/25 noting the Lengthsman grant funding for 24/25 is £1152.00 with a further £576.00 matched funding. It was RESOLVED: to sign the contract with Herefordshire Council It was RESOLVED: to approve the draft Annual Maintenance Plan</p> <p>d) Local Drainage Fund: Members were informed that Herefordshire Council are offering an annual grant of £450,000 to be divided between parishes across the county for local drainage improvements. Interested councils have been asked to submit an Expression of Interest by 30th April. It was RESOLVED: to submit an Expression of Interest and propose drainage works detailed on the Annual Maintenance Plan.</p> <p>8) Footpaths:</p> <p>a) Footpaths Report: Members considered the Footpaths Report, as appended (Appendix B). It was noted that the landowner responsible for FWD6 and FWD6a has refused to carry out maintenance resulting in the boardwalk being submerged in light of recent prosecutions in Herefordshire. It was RESOLVED: to contact Herefordshire Council’s PROW team to ask for support. It was RESOLVED: to ask HALC/NALC to clarify the legal position for the landowner if he was to clear the brook as required.</p> <p>In addition to the appended Footpaths Report, the Clerk presented an invitation to an information evening hosted by Ross Walkers are Welcome in connection with proposed improvements to the Wye Valley Walk in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the walk next year. Cllr Tony Kelk volunteered to attend.</p> <p>b) To consider reinstated route of FWB9: Members noted that the developer had installed the diverted path for the convenience of walkers but acknowledges the correct route is on the development side of the hedge. The chippings will be removed at some point and walkers are invited to use either path.</p> <p>9) Environment:</p> | <p>FH/TK HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT/KB HT</p> <p>HT</p> <p>HT HT</p> <p>321/04 /2425 3 of 6</p> |
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| <p>a)</p> | <p>Environment Report: The notes from the Environment Group meeting on 26th March 2024 had been circulated and were taken as read. It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fownhope Calendar is now live; • The training for dark skies monitoring took place on Tuesday 2nd April, and the monitoring will take place on an evening between the 3rd and 15th April pending suitable weather conditions; • A representative of CPRE’s county project Dark Skies Herefordshire will be speaking at the Annual Parish Meeting; • An Early Bird Walk is being organised for Sunday 5th May, followed by coffee and croissants at the Pavilion; • The Fownhope Car Club now has 12 members and is becoming self-sufficient. More members would be welcomed. • The next meeting will be held on 29th April at 7pm at the Green Man. | |
| <p>b)</p> | <p>Environmental Stewardship Agreement 24/25: Members were asked to confirm that the Parish Council is in compliance with the requirements of the stewardship agreement before the Clerk signs the agreement for 2024/25. It was noted that Cllr Gareth Williams had assessed the area in January and again in March and was of the view that work is being undertaken in accordance with the stewardship agreement. The Clerk raised concerns that health and safety documentation in relation to the working parties is being requested but not received. It was RESOLVED: to sign the agreement for 2024/25 and for Cllr Williams and the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the organiser of the working parties to agree arrangements going forwards.</p> | <p>HT</p> |
| <p>c)</p> | <p>Herefordshire Council’s Village Tree Planting Project: Members were informed that HC are offering free trees to be planted on public land. Cllr Hemming has approached Connexus to obtain an agreement in principle for planting additional trees around Faulkner House and will now proceed to consult with residents. The proposal is to plant fruit trees so that growth can be controlled. It was further proposed to consider reinstating some trees along the hedgeline of the Recreation Field. It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Hemming continue to progress and report to the next meeting.</p> | <p>FH</p> |
| <p>d)</p> | <p>Wye Valley National Landscape Winter Seminar: Members received a report from Cllrs Frank Hemming and Lavinia Smith following their attendance at the Wye Valley National Landscape Winter Seminar in March. It was noted that the transition from an AONB to a National Landscape makes policies more enforceable.</p> | |
| <p>10)</p> | <p>FRFA/Recreation Field:</p> | |
| <p>a)</p> | <p>Members were invited to the FRFA AGM on 17th April at 6pm at the Pavilion. It was noted that by constitution, every resident of the parish is a member of the FRFA and therefore entitled to vote at the AGM. The FRFA are beginning to promote the Pavilion as a bookable space as they are keen to achieve a higher footfall per week.</p> | |
| <p>b)</p> | <p>RoSPA Safety Inspection Reports: Members considered the RoSPA Safety Inspection reports for the play area, skateboard ramp and BMX track noting that some maintenance actions have been identified. A question was raised about the ownership of the swing at Tan Brook. It was noted that this has not been erected by the Parish Council and is not on the Parish Council Asset Register, however it was agreed that an agenda item would be tabled for the next meeting to discuss further. It was RESOLVED: to obtain quotes for the maintenance work identified. It was RESOLVED: to consider the future of the BMX track at the May or June meeting.</p> | <p>HT ALL</p> |
| <p>11)</p> | <p>Finance:</p> | |
| <p>a)</p> | <p>Finance Report: Members received a financial report as appended (Appendix C). It was RESOLVED: to approve the report.</p> | |
| <p>b)</p> | <p>Internal Auditor: Members considered appointing an internal auditor for the 23/24 accounts. It was RESOLVED: to appoint HALC’s internal audit service at a cost of £250.00.</p> | <p>HT 322/04 /2425 4 of 6</p> |

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| c) | <p>Fownhope Community Land Trust: Members considered a grant request of £180 from the FCLT for National CLT membership fees. It was RESOLVED: to approve payment of £180.00 from the Community Groups Grant budget. Cllrs Kevin Braybrook and Frank Hemming abstained from discussion and voting in accordance with their declaration of interest.</p> | HT |
| d) | <p>Payments: It was RESOLVED: to ratify the payment of the following invoices paid between meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fownhope New Memorial Hall, NDP Consultation, £93.00 (from NDP grant) <p>It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PiP Printing, NDP Banner, £320.00 plus £64.00 VAT (from NDP grant) • Helen Tinson, reimburse costs display boards, £413.49 plus £82.71 VAT (from NDP grant) • Nick Maddy Coaches, Bus Service March, £90.00 • FRFA, Meeting Room Hire, March, £22.00 • RoSPA Play Safety, Play Area Inspections, £156.00 plus £31.20 VAT • Starboard Systems, Scribe Accounting Software, £345.60 plus £69.12 VAT • Helen Tinson, Clerk Salary (March) in accordance with contract • HMRC, PAYE (Jan/Feb/March) £1089.16 • Helen Tinson, Clerk Expenses (Jan/Feb/March) £127.06 plus £6.66 VAT • Helen Tinson, Work from Home Allowance (Jan/Feb/March), £78.00 | HT |
| 12) | <p>Website and Policy:</p> | |
| a) | <p>Website: Members were asked to consider the principle of consolidating the Parish Council website and the new Fownhope calendar to one site. If members are in agreement, work will be undertaken to bring a costed proposal for consideration. It was RESOLVED: to agree the principle of consolidating the websites and explore options for future consideration.</p> | HT/MS |
| b) | <p>Social Media Policy: Members discussed a number of negative comments posted on Facebook in particular around the traffic calming updates and promotion of the NDP consultation event. Concerns were raised specifically about comments suggesting impropriety on behalf of the Parish Council. Members considered how it would be appropriate to respond to such posts and discussed adopting a template policy supplied by HALC. It was RESOLVED: to approve the principle of adopting a Social Media Policy, to be developed by Cllrs Mike Simmons and Claire Patel for consideration at the next meeting.</p> | MS/CP |
| 13) | <p>Fownhope United Charities:</p> | |
| a) | <p>Members were informed that three trustees must be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (for re-appointment every three years). Two of the current trustees will be standing down this year and two new trustees will need to be sought. It was noted that the task involves one meeting per year of approximately 60-90 minutes, plus approval of annual accounts by email, and that it may be necessary for one trustee to take on the role of secretary. It was RESOLVED: to advertise the vacancies in the Flag, newsletters, Facebook etc.</p> | HT |
| 14) | <p>Community:</p> | |
| a) | <p>West Mercia Police Community Charter 2024/25: Members considered the top three priorities for the Community Charter for 2024/25. It was RESOLVED: to submit 1) Speeding; 2) Property Theft; 3) Anti-social behaviour. It was RESOLVED: to submit these three priorities for each quarter submission during 2024/25.</p> | HT |
| b) | <p>Defibrillator Training: Members were informed that the defibrillator raining has been scheduled with Herefordshire Heartstart for Saturday 6th July 2024 at 10am at the Pavilion.</p> | 323/04 /2425 5 of 6 |

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| <p>c) Annual Parish Meeting: Members were informed that a speaker from CPRE Dark Skies Herefordshire has agreed to attend. It was RESOLVED: to hold the volunteer thank you tea at 4.30pm and the Annual Parish Meeting at 6pm.</p> <p>d) Kings Portrait: Members were informed that the portrait of King Charles III available free of charge to Town and Parish Councils has been ordered. The location for the portrait is to be agreed but suggestions were made to approach St. Mary’s Church, Fownhope Memorial Hall and St. Mary’s School to ask if they would like to display it.</p> <p>15) Clerk Report: Members noted the report as appended (Appendix D).</p> <p>16) Next Meeting: Annual Meeting of the Parish Council: 7pm, Wednesday 1st May 2024.</p> <p>17) Agenda Items Raised for Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive and consider update on voluntary registration of Tan Brook Land Ownership • To consider the swing at Tan Brook • To consider road signage – Noverwood Drive/Court Orchard • To consider the condition of the sediment pit on Common Hill Lane • To consider PC representation on the Library Committee <p>Meeting closed 9.04pm.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Chairman</p> | <p>324/04 /2425 6 of 6</p> |
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Appendix A: Planning Decisions Report

| Planning Number | Address | Application | FPC Response | HC Decision |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 212673/4 | Ladygrove Cottage Mordiford HR1 4LT | Proposed repair and renovation of Ladygrove Cottage and attached outbuilding to form an extended residential dwelling. | Support | Approved with conditions |
| 240573/XA2 | Land adjacent to Fownhope Medical Centre | Approval of details reserved by condition 13 re planning permission 171637 | No comments accepted | Approved |

HC Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been adopted on 8 March 2024. The Statement of Adoption is available from the Clerk.

Appendix B: Footpaths Report

REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 3rd April 2024

REPORT BY: Parish Footpaths Officer

AGENDA ITEM: 8a: Footpaths Report

Footpaths report April 3rd

1. New gates are awaiting installation between Rise and Tump farms. I met with Suzie this month and she has delivered the gates onto the land, but is waiting for a dry spell to install them.
2. Parishioners have complained about several stiles in capler/river walk area (see attached photos), these are in very poor condition and landowners have been contacted previously on several occasions. I have reported the issues to the PROW reporting website.
3. We are still waiting for the council to repair 4 bridges in the Parish. It's a frustrating situation that they cannot seem able to commit to a manufacturer for bridges over 5m in length.
4. Footpaths FWD6 and FWD6A are almost impassable due to a combination of excessive vehicular access and the Tan brook being blocked with debris. Please see the accompanying photos.
 - o The tyre marks are from fishing vehicles that have not been able to use the usual route due to the potato barn housing development. I don't know if there is much we can do the remedy this as hopefully it's a temporary issue
 - o The tan brook debris has been a problem for some time, but now the area has turned very ugly and swampish. It needs a lot of TLC to remove the debris and re-establish a walkable right of way. What are the council's thoughts on this? I would recommend contacting the landowner and request a complete tidy up, prior to going to the PROW officers.
5. FWB9 reinstating
 - o A short section of FWB9 has been reinstated on the incorrect side of the hedge.
 - o As per their planning documents, Freeman's should have reinstated the footpath along the inner side of the hedge, however for a short section the footpath is brought alongside the road. Please see all the attached images
 - o Freeman's have been contacted and have agreed to remedy the situation

Appendix C: Finance Report

REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 3rd April 2024
REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO
AGENDA ITEM: 11a: Finance Report

Bank Balances:

Lloyds: £4330.77 (excludes payments to be approved 3.4.24 £3789.67)

Lloyds Reserve: £26,943.31

Hargreaves Lansdown: £22,010.07 (at 31.3.24)

Total funds held across all banks and investments at 2.4.24 = £53,284.15

Bank Reconciliation:

Has been completed to 31st March 2024 and will be passed to the Chairman to approve at the PC meeting.

NDP Grant Reimbursement:

The end of grant report has been submitted to Groundwork UK and £818.52 will need to be repaid.

2023/24 Year End Accounts:

Will be presented to the next meeting.

Finance Working Group:

Will meet during April and report to the May meeting.

Appendix D: Clerk Report

REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING: 3rd April 2024
REPORT BY: Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO
AGENDA ITEM: 15: Clerk Report

Defib at West End Stores:

The defibrillator has been collected for maintenance. It may be another six weeks before it is returned but a loan has been received, installed and the Circuit updated to show current status is live.

HALC Information Corner:

Shared with councillors via email. The HALC AGM is due to be held on a Saturday morning in June and accounts for 22/23 and 23/24 will be discussed. The AGM will be preceded by a morning conference of speakers followed by a buffet lunch.

HALC Executive Committee Members:

If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the HALC Executive Committee, please let me know.

Citizen Housing:

Have confirmed that the changes to motion sensorred, dark sky compliant fittings is complete.

HC Children's Services:

The current Corporate Director for Children and Young People has stood down with immediate effect. Tina Russell will be taking the role from 1 July 2024 on a fixed term basis until 31 March 2025 and will be responsible for driving forward the Children's Services Improvement Programme at an increased pace.