



Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at the Pavilion on 15th May 2022

Present:

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

Also Present:

Approximately 22 members of the public; Clerk Helen Tinson; Ward Councillor John Hardwick; Speaker Martin Williams.

1) **Chairman's Welcome:**

Cllr Kevin Braybrook welcomed members of the public and thanked everyone for attending.

2) **Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received for Cllrs Mike Cohn and Mike Simmons, and, Reverend Chris Moore. Cllr Phil Bream absent no apologies.

3) **Minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting:**

Members considered the minutes of the Annual Meeting on 4th May 2021.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

4) **Speaker: Martin Williams, Farming and Phosphates in the River Wye:**

Local farmer, Martin Williams, gave a presentation about the problems of phosphates in the River Wye, the history of local farming and how it has changed to contribute to the current problem, and the practical solutions now being actioned by the farming community. The composition of local farming has changed over the last 50 years from livestock to arable and the resulting loss of grass, manure to fertilise and disturbance of soil has increased phosphate pollution of the river.

Farm Herefordshire started a few years ago to bring farmers together and are now focused on phosphates. They have been working to promote the solutions currently in place and continue to work with local food manufacturers, Avara Foods (chickens), Noble Foods and Stonegate Foods (eggs), the big supermarket chains, as well as Natural England, the Environment Agency, NFU and more. Herefordshire have applied for funding from the Landscape Recovery Bid primarily to reimburse farmers to return arable fields to grassland and put in areas of wetland, ponds and alternative schemes. Mr. Williams urged parishioners to write to our local MP to push for the funding to be allocated to Herefordshire.

As legislation generally drives what happens in farming, Herefordshire Council are keen to pursue a Water Protection Zone for the Wye. Martin Williams has met with Rebecca Pow MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, though the Government are not keen to put a WPZ in place at this time.

In summary, it was accepted that the problems remain and are significant. Mr. Williams took questions from members of the public.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Williams for attending the meeting and for his presentation.

5)

Chairman's Report:

Cllr Kevin Braybrook delivered his report firstly thanking members of the council, in particular Cllr Mike Cohn for his Vice Chairmanship over the last year and Stuart Eames for taking Vice Chair this year. He summarised the year:

- Face to face meetings were reinstated in May 2021. We have been running hybrid meetings for the past few months. There have been 9 Ordinary meetings and one Extra Ordinary meeting in the last year, with an average of 9 Councillors per meeting and 5 members of the public.
- Cllr Ed White left due to relocation and was replaced in September by Cllr Will Morris.
- Cllr Paul McGuire left due to work commitments and was replaced in November by Cllr Lavinia Smith.
- Adopted NDP's once again carry full weight with Herefordshire Council.
- MF Freeman have consulted about modifying the B4224 crossing for the development at the Old Potato Store. A donation to the PC for Highways works in lieu of savings made was offered.
- The Fownhope Car Club launched in December and was used during the second Christmas Singalong.
- Herefordshire Council have launched their consultation process for the new Local Plan. FPC have submitted responses based on the NDP.
- We are working towards the Quality Gold status in the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Cllr Morris has relaunched the Waywarden programme to maintain our public rights of way.
- Planning began for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations on 3rd June 2022, following the success of the Community Event in September 2021.
- Disappointingly, ADL (HC Consultants) recommended rejecting the TRO though Cllr Harrington has said he will take into account the wishes of the parishes along the road when making the final decision.
- Comments were submitted to the Wye Valley AONB in response to the Glover report, in connection with awarding AONBs additional protection.
- The FRFA have initiated a poster campaign with the school to tackle the increasing problem of dog poo.
- Ongoing programmes were noted as:
 - Churchyard Maintenance – continuing to be driven forwards by Parishioner
 - B4224 Multi Parish Traffic Calming Scheme – hoping to sign MoU shortly
 - BBLP Social Value Project – asking to extend the patio at the Pavilion

Finally, the Chairman thanked our Ward Councillor, Parish Councillors, Volunteers, Parish Organisations and other members of the public who help make Fownhope the community it is.

6)

Highways Working Group Report:

Cllr Stuart Eames presented the report on behalf of the Highways Working Group. Speed, potholes and drainage were identified as the main issues.

- Speed: The new SIDs have definitely impacted the speed of vehicles entering the village, though the problem of speed exiting the village remains.
- Community Speed Watch sessions have dropped off during the year. Helen Phillips is standing down as co-ordinator and Cllr Eames is taking over leadership of the group. A new location at the west side of the village has been agreed and hoped will slow drivers. Superintendent Edd Williams has been approached with the SID data and has promised to arrange new speed checks in the village – the one previous check this year was in the wrong place on the wrong day.
- TRO: as mentioned in Chairman's report.
- Potholes: A short stretch of road has been tarmacked during the year and is noticeably quieter. A new scheme for road markings is under discussion so the new section has been left blank for the time being.
- Drains: A mixed performance during the year. Cllr Eames will carry out a pre-winter survey of drains before the onset of winter.

- General maintenance has been carried out.
- Litter pickers continue to do an excellent job.
- Grit bins were surveyed last September and will be done again this year ready for winter.
- Cllr Eames is trying to have the Stop sign moved at the bottom of Woolhope Road, and the Stop line remarked.
- The Lengthsman, Suzi Bruce, has been contracted for a further 24-month period.

7) **Planning Working Group Report, to include Annual Report on Neighbourhood Plan**

Monitoring:

Cllr Dorothy Quayle presented a report on behalf of the Planning Working Group. Please refer to Appendix A.

8) **Environment Working Group Report:**

Cllr Gareth Williams presented a report on behalf of the Environment Working Group. The Environment Group has continued to work towards meaningful actions following the declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019. Council use this declaration as a base line for decisions.

Cllr Williams gave an update on The Great Collaboration discussing the benefits of the online tool that encourages choices for individuals, households and businesses to reduce carbon. He encouraged everyone to share within their circle of friends and family. Useful data is generated by the software to inform what is already being done, what is of interest and any barriers to actions. It was noted that a lot of carbon reduction actions also has economic benefits, being largely cost saving. Concerns of energy security is driving interest in renewable energy.

The Fownhope Car Club was launched, funded by Herefordshire Council collaborating with Malvern Hills Car Club. Two group members have been trained to sign up new members and the car club was highlighted as an ideal opportunity to save both carbon and costs.

The Environment Working Group meet monthly and open meetings to anyone in the Parish who wishes to attend.

9) **Footpaths Working Group Report:**

Cllrs Tim Jones and Will Morris presented a report on behalf of the Footpaths Working Group. The Footpaths team are slowly but surely improving the network of paths. The Parish has approximately 56km of footpaths and bridleways to keep clear. Wet, warm weather during the year has increased growth and the Lengthsman attended three times to cut back along the footpaths rather than the usual two. A programme of replacing stiles and gates has been identified, stiles are being repaired and a steady development of footpaths is underway.

From April 2022, footpath issues are reported directly to Herefordshire Council rather than BBLP, via the Report a Problem website. Local issues can also be reported to the Clerk via the footpaths email address. Cllr Morris has taken the role of revitalising the Waywarden programme and has recruited new volunteers, each assigned to one manageable region. A uniform system of reporting has been introduced. Landowners are encouraged to carry out work themselves to alleviate responsibility on the Lengthsman.

Plans for the forthcoming year are to create a circular, accessible path; keep improving signage; and promote the network of footpaths.

10) **Investment Strategy Group Report:**

The meeting received a report prepared by Peter Davis on the Investment Advisory Group. Please refer to Appendix B. Council wished to thank Peter for his guidance on the IAG.

11) **Report from Fownhope Recreation Field Association (FRFA):**

Cllr Kevin Braybrook presented the report on behalf of Mike Simmons and the FRFA who manage the 11.5acre Recreation Field and the Pavilion on behalf of the people of Fownhope and the Parish Council. Please refer to Appendix C for the full report.

<p>12) Report from Fownhope Libraries: Cllr Dorothy Quayle presented the report on behalf of the Fownhope Libraries. Please refer to Appendix D for the full report.</p> <p>13) Report from Fownhope United Charities: Christopher Whitmey presented the report from Fownhope United Charities. Please refer to Appendix E for the full report.</p> <p>14) Report from Fownhope Community Land Trust: Cllr Frank Hemming presented the report from Fownhope Community Land Trust. Please refer to Appendix F for the full report.</p> <p>15) To consider any need for allotments: There were none.</p> <p>16) Comments and Questions from any Elector of Fownhope Parish: A resident raised a question concerning the reduction in height of several trees behind the Fire Station. Cllr Braybrook responded.</p> <p>No other questions or comments were raised. The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 8.20pm.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Chairman</p>	
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Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring May 2022/May 22 and Planning Report

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan an annual implementation and monitoring review is done which we report to each Annual Parish meeting. This year sees the end of the fifth year.

The best news we have is that the Fownhope Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) now has full power again. The County had to identify enough land supply for their needs into the future and as that had not been reached three years ago, our plan lost some weight. The County now has a good land supply so we are back to full power. In due course the Parish Council will need to review, update and possibly change the plan to cover the following 10 years to 2041. We may be asked to add to our current design statement to be more specific and will involve consultation with the Parish. We await news on this.

Update

- As you will have noticed work has started on the Mill Field site and we have to be patient during the build period as there will be some disruption, I am sure.
- The Potato Barn site has been approved with NO effort to provide affordable housing which is a huge disappointment. There is nothing we can add to that.
- The site adjacent to the Medical Centre has an Outline Planning Permission and we understand the land has been sold. During the next phases of the planning process, we should have some input.

We participated in a number of both National and Local consultations regarding Planning issues in line with the Government's plans to change many rules and laws. Mr Johnson wants us all to have 'beautiful homes'. I ask you 'what does that mean'?

They hope to a) speed up the planning process and b), to reach the challenge of 300,000 new homes per year. When the many policies are finalised, we shall know more, but we think that with the Carbon footprint in mind, there will be stipulations regarding build quality, design, materials, etc as well as exactly where houses will be built in the future. However, following the most recent news and fall out from the Queen's Speech, there are areas that are not being accepted well, so we have to wait and see what happens. Closer to home and more importantly, we are responding to the Herefordshire Council Consultations as they work through the Core Strategy Planning for the future and, I hope that some parishioners have also participated, in that way we feel we are having a say.

Many Planning Rules will change across the majority of the Country, however, there will be considerable levels of protection of special places, which include the AONBs, this means, for this Parish that planning applications will continue to be required.

The future – wait and see!

We ask that parishioners putting in planning applications inform their architects or agents that we have the Neighbourhood Plan in place. Copies can be found on the website.

We have been delighted that some of the applications we have received recently showing that they have considered the FNP Policies and have completed full design statements.

I would like to thank the Planning Working Group members for support and diligence.

Cllr Dorothy Quayle

Appendix B: Investment Strategy Group Report

Preamble:

The Investment Advisory Group was set up in April 2014 to administer the investment of £27620 – the proceeds from the sale of a Treasury bond with the twin objectives of at least generating the income provided by the bond (£1127 p.a.) while preserving the level of the capital employed.

Strategy:

The Strategy, which may be found on the Parish Council's website as Financial Regulations Appendix 1.0, was reissued during the last financial year and reflected the increased flexibility to the Group particularly when considering the sale of investments as well as taking into account environmental and ethical considerations. No further changes are recommended at this time.

Valuation:

As at noon on 6th May 2022 the portfolio was valued at £28199 against £25853 in April 2021.

Dividends received and anticipated:

For the year ended 31st March 2022 these totalled £1485. Income projected for 2022/2023 amounts to £1432.

Comments and outlook:

The one sure thing that can be relied on is that the markets over the next year will continue to be extremely volatile. Inflation is raging, Central Banks are raising interest rates and tightening liquidity. Supply lines are impacted, Covid is still playing havoc especially in China. And we have what is now a major and likely protracted war in Europe. Consumer confidence is at a multi-year low. What is needed in the circumstances is a defensive portfolio and fortunately in the main that is precisely what we have. The improvement in the portfolio's capital position over the past year is testament to this.

Looking individually at the investments, GSK has now come into greater favour with the investment community and is approaching a three-year high. This year it will split off its consumer health business into a new company so the Council will have shares in that as well as retaining a position in the strictly pharma business. The dividend will however decrease although the precise figure is not yet known. HSBC has improved despite the headwinds- banks generally do better when interest rates rise and, despite current events, it is still wise to have a stake in the Far East because that is really where future growth lies. There are increasing calls for the Bank's Asia interests to be split off and listed separately but the Board seems reluctant to concede to this. HSBC will always be in the public eye since it has to pander to China's whims which infuriates the Western liberal elite.

CAML remains my darling commodity play- always a hedge against inflation and has actually increased its dividend this year although I suspect that will be trimmed next year. (This is taken into consideration in the dividend estimate). Regional REIT and Starwood are property plays- again will benefit from higher inflation, and Skipton is our fixed- interest stalwart. It takes a brave investor to keep the faith amidst all the current Hurley Burley but It will come as no surprise that I recommend no change for the year ahead based on current conditions.

Peter Davis
For the Investment Advisory Group
6 May 2022

Appendix C: Fownhope Recreation Field Report

This year marked the first AGM we've been able to have at the correct time of the year since 2019, and it's great to think that things **might** be returning to some something like normal. We have had AGMs though – one by Zoom and one, I think, face to face, but they've been at different times of the year to usual and they've been attended by no members of the public.

In the light of this it's maybe worth reiterating a few of the things covered by previous AGMs –

Firstly some changes in offices

- Ed White, our long-standing groundsman, left Fownhope and his role was initially taken on by William Dereham as a holding operation – which was appreciated by us all - and he subsequently handed over to Helen Phillips who has built up a team to help her keep the field in the condition you see it today.
- Mary Pearce, our secretary stood down and her role was taken over by Nic Kinch.
- Just before Covid struck Sue Sumner stood down from her role as bookings secretary and Jacqui Nicholls took on role.

Thanks to them all!

Other points to mention

- A three party agreement between the Strollers, the FRFA and the PC was thrashed out to the satisfaction of all parties and, most importantly, signed. Cricket will be being played on the recreation field for the next 20 years.
- The FRFA has now opted to “stand on it's own two feet” and is no longer asking for regular support from the Parish Council. This seems a fair arrangement and is a reflection of the sound financial footing on which the FRFA now finds itself.
- The kitchen has now been totally refurbished and re-equipped. With a large kitchen range, separate preparation and serving areas, a commercial dishwasher and so forth the pavilion has now become a viable venue for a much wider range of activities than was previously the case. Derek Colley is owed our gratitude for driving this project, along with Veronica Brooks who has been our design and colour consultant on this and a number of other projects.

So what of this year?

It has, of course, been a mixed year as the committee has had to deal with the implications of Covid. Bookings over the year have been low, though not so low as the previous year, but in very recent months they have been increasing considerably and this February we saw figures reaching – and surpassing – pre Covid levels for the first time.

Thanks to a grant from Fownhope Fringe – one of our regular customers – we now have the splendid sound system you see here today. This has proved extremely popular with a number of our users.

The exterior of the building has been redecorated and I'd like to thank Stuart Eames for making such a splendid job of the work he's done.

What you won't be able to see just yet is that we have now ordered new carpet for the ground floor of the pavilion. What's here at the moment was, we think, put in place when the pavilion was first built, and we're now in the process of replacing it with a very durable/cleanable carpet which we hope will last just as long but be easier to manage. (It's maybe worth mentioning that we've already replaced the upstairs room carpet – which was in worse condition to the downstairs one - with a high quality vinyl.)

The scouts/beavers/cubs have removed a range of equipment from that part of the machinery shed known as the "scouts store" which means we've been able to embark on a general programme of clearing out there which will ultimately mean we have more storage space. I should like to note that we didn't actually ask them to do this, we simply asked them to identify that equipment they wanted to **keep** so that we could throw away the rest, but they've chosen to take everything they want elsewhere.

A small thing, but a significant one, the FRFA has always asked people renting the facilities to take away their own rubbish after a booking. Except for the Football club with whom we had a separate arrangement whereby all their rubbish went into trade waste bags. Now, just like any domestic household, we have two bins – one for recycling and one for landfill. Though we may need to educate our users a little on what needs to go where this is obviously sounder environmentally and easier for our customers.

Finally, It would be churlish not to acknowledge that our financial position would be in very poor shape were it not for the Covid support grants that we've been given over this period. The things we've done, and that we plan to do in the future, would not be possible had we not have received that support. Without doubt the last two years would have seen us steadily eating into our reserves simply to keep the operation going.

What of the future?

There are two primary ambitions on the books at the moment.

We want to extend the apron on the front of the building so that the interface between indoors and outdoors becomes an easier one. People have regularly wanted to put a marquee out there, joining up with the main building, but the available space there currently makes this very difficult. This is something we want to do, but we've been told that external funding may be available for the project so we're currently waiting to see if that's the case

We want to take water to the machinery shed. This has been a bit of an ongoing project, and rather more complicated than we expected – as witnessed by hole that's been languishing by the machinery shed – but we now have a clear plan and will be undertaking this work over the next few months.

Finally, I can't end this report without thanking the entire committee for their dedication and commitment to the FRFA. I'd specially like to thank those who hold particular offices – Derek, Helen, Nic and Jacqui - but everyone has hand a part to play and without them it would be very hard for the association to function.

Cllr Mike Simmons

Appendix D: Fownhope Libraries Report

Fownhope Community Library Annual Report 1st February 2019 to 31st January 2022
For May Annual Parish meeting 2022

Due to the covid pandemic we were only open for about 6 weeks in early 2020 before closing the service completely. We opened again in June 2021 for weekly sessions until October when we opened the doors again on Saturdays.

We were delighted to welcome back the pre school children on Wednesday afternoons again. I think it lifts all our spirits as it is lively session. Thanks to Jackie for her support.

We do have a willing group of volunteers from those who help to open up and arrange the trolleys, to those who look after the books, those who support the rota and of course, those who come along and peruse the shelves and make use of the facility. We thank them all.

At our recent Annual Meeting we discussed how we might encourage more use of the facility as numbers of users has declined. As the committee and regular users want to continue, we are looking at others ways of attracting more people. The Beavers are coming in to do their reading badges and we are opening one evening session a month on a trial basis. We shall review the situation later in the year. Closure is something we may have to consider.

We appreciate the support of the Parish Council who pay for the hire of the room, and of course the storage of the books and filing cabinets.

We welcome volunteers so if interested do contact any of the committee.

Cllr Dorothy Quayle

Appendix E: Fownhope United Charities Report

Please see separate attachment.

Appendix F: Community Land Trust Report

The Fownhope Community Land Trust (FCLT), set up under the auspices of the Parish Council and made a legal entity in 2019, has the continuing remit to monitor and acquire community assets, including affordable housing, in and around the village. The aim is to have a body without any material or vested interest to act on behalf of the village community.

The day-to-day activities of the FCLT are managed by a Board which liaises with Herefordshire County Council and neighbouring land trusts, as well as with housing associations and individuals who wish to gift land or property to the village. Such liaisons can often be commercially sensitive or exploitable by those seeking financial advantage and so the Board seldom publicises its ongoing projects. That said, the FCLT currently monitors on behalf of both the Diocese and Parish Council, the occupancy terms of the Old School site, and is in active liaison with M F Freeman developers of the Mill Field site.

Membership of the FCLT stands at 33 Life Members, and 4 Associate Members. The Board is actively encouraging a drive for new members.

Membership of Fownhope CLT is open to any person over the age of 18 who lives and/or works (or to any organisation which is based), in the civil parish of Fownhope, or in the civil parishes of Mordiford, Woolhope, Brockhampton or Holme Lacy.

Dr Bryn Caless
Honorary Secretary

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