



Hello,

The launch of the new Coronation Walk on the 8th October was a great success and much enjoyed by all who came along. I believe the plan is to put the photos on the back page so do have a look – great company, lovely walking with refreshments afterwards and fabulous weather - many thanks to everyone who came along, to the landowners for supporting the walk and of course to Cllr Will Morris for putting it together. We are already talking about accessing further grant funding to replace more stiles with gates next year.

New Parish Councillors:

Following hot on the heels of new councillor Claire Patel, we were delighted to welcome two more members to the Parish Council, Alison Martin and Tony Kelk, who were both co-opted at the October meeting. All three new members have sent a short bio and photograph which has been uploaded onto the 'Meet the Council' page on the website so please do have a look and get to know them.

This means that we now have only the **one vacancy remaining** which we are really keen to fill to enable the PC to run at full capacity. If you are interested at all, please do get in touch, we're building a great team!

Missing Car Keys:



This key was found on the riverside footpath near Fownhope on the 1st October.

Following advice from our Community Policing Team, they have been handed into the Police Station in Hereford and can be collected from there if they are yours!

Warm Spaces:

Although we are experiencing some unseasonably warm weather at the moment, we are inexorably heading towards winter and will no doubt experience some much colder weather before too long. Last year with the support of a number of volunteers, we opened the Community Room at Faulkner House as a designated 'Warm Space'.

The Parish Council will be discussing plans at the next PC meeting for this coming winter and it would be really useful to know if you would welcome the opportunity to come along and spend some time there this year, or if you would be interested in volunteering to help support it. I understand WiFi is now available which may help those who work from home

and who would welcome some warm working space this year. Please do get in touch – contact details are at the end of the article.

Poppy Appeal:



The Royal British Legion is looking for a Poppy Appeal Organiser for the Fownhope, Holme Lacy and the surrounding area - an individual or a group of people - to help organise poppy activities across the area.

The role involves ordering stock, distributing poppies, and collecting donations to enable those in the local area to take part in remembrance and support the Royal British Legion.

If you might be able to help or would like more information please contact Darren Maynard, Herefordshire's Community Fundraiser on 07808 263915 or by email at: dmaynard@britishlegion.org.uk.

Finance: Draft Budget for 2024/25:

It surprises me every year how quickly this comes around but we are back in the consultation period for the draft budget for the next financial year. The Finance Working Group met at the beginning of the month to review the accounts for the current year, forecasted a year end position and from that, calculated the following budget for next year.

Financial year	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

It was noted that the precept has not increased in line with inflation, and 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. Whilst this had been an intentional decision due to additional reserves having accrued, particularly as a result of a slowdown in expenditure during the pandemic, it was the recommendation of the Finance Working Group that we should now look to balance the budget. Therefore, it is proposed to increase the precept accordingly for 24/25 from £33,500 to £38,000.

Using last year's Band D equivalent property figures (whilst we are waiting for the release of the 24/25 figures from Herefordshire Council), the precept will increase from £77.45 to £87.86 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 24/25.

If you have any feedback on the draft budget, please get in touch before the end of November. The draft budget will be presented to the Parish Council at the meeting on 6th December for approval, after which the precept request will be submitted to Herefordshire Council.

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: 1st November, 7pm, Pavilion**

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