



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
At 7pm at the Pavilion, Fownhope**

**Present:**

Cllrs Tim Jones (in the Chair), Kevin Braybrook, Sue Eames, Gareth Williams, Mike Simmons, Frank Hemming, Will Morris, Lavinia Smith, Michael Short, Claire Patel, Tony Kelk and Peter Neale following his co-option.

**In attendance:**

15 members of the public; Ward Councillor Graham Biggs; Clerk Helen Tinson.

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

There were no apologies for absence as all members were present.

**2. To Co-opt a New Councillor and accept their Declarations of Interest:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to co-opt Peter Neale onto the Parish Council. Cllr Neale took a seat at the table and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Cllr Neale received a Register of Interests form and was asked to return it within 28 days.

**3. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Written Requests for Dispensation:**

**3.1.** To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Mike Simmons declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7.9.2 (FRFA fees); Cllrs Tony Kelk and Tim Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6.2.2 (Storage Units Ferry Lane); and Cllr Sue Eames declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 7.9.5 (reimbursement expenses Stuart Eames). The Declarations of Interest book was not present and will be signed at the next meeting.

**3.2.** To consider any written requests for dispensations: there were none.

**4. Open Session:**

**4.1. Report from Ward Councillor:**

Ward Councillor Biggs reported:

**4.1.1.** Herefordshire Council now has a full complement of Planning Officers who are working through the backlog of applications;

**4.1.2.** Herefordshire Council are gathering data to better understand the reasons for recent flooding and asking anyone affected to report it via the website;

**4.1.3.** Herefordshire Council have commissioned a best practice report to set their approach to the provision of affordable housing within Herefordshire, due to come before the Scrutiny Committee later in November.

**4.2. Representation from the Public:**

There were no representations from members of the public. The Chairman confirmed that he would accept comments during agenda items.

**5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. Members considered a correction to minute 7.2 to change the words 'planning permission' to 'permitted development'.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the proposed change and subsequently approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair. 5 in favour, 3 against, 4 abstained (as not present).

## **6. Planning:**

### **6.1. To comment on the following planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:**

#### **6.1.1.242542: The Court Lodge, Fownhope. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area.**

Members considered the application. The Parish Tree Warden questioned the decision to remove the tree as being possibly premature but conceded that the tree was not of significant value to the parish. **It was RESOLVED:** to MAKE A COMMENT noting the comments of the Parish Tree Warden.

### **6.2. To Consider Other Matters related to Planning**

#### **6.2.1. To note report of Planning Decisions taken by Herefordshire Council:**

Noted as appended (Appendix A)

Cllrs Tim Jones and Tony Kelk did not take part in the following discussion in accordance with their Declarations of Interest

#### **6.2.2. To receive an update on planning concerns about the new storage facility at Ferry Lane:**

Members noted parishioner concerns about the development of a new storage facility on Ferry Lane. Subsequent investigation included communicating at length with the Agent, Planning Team, Enforcement Officer and a neighbouring Ward Councillor. During discussions, the agent repeated his position that work was progressing under Permitted Development. Herefordshire Council Officers had concluded that there were no further requirements from a planning perspective. The agent was asked to clarify the opening hours. The answer was inconclusive. It was confirmed that any external lighting would comply with the Parish Dark Skies Policy.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

#### **6.2.3. To consider flooding at Church Croft following recent heavy rainfall:**

Members were informed that a garden at Church Croft had flooded after recent heavy rainfall. The homeowner believes the flooding had been exacerbated by the new development on Common Hill Lane. The developer has been in communication with the homeowner and a drainage engineer, and a solution has been agreed.

Two further members of the public left the meeting.

#### **6.2.4. To receive update on plans to review the Fownhope Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP):**

Members were advised that Herefordshire Council have delayed publishing the amended draft Local Plan pending clarification on revised housing targets being imposed by Central Government. The Parish Council have received advice to wait until the publication of the amended Local Plan before starting the process to review the FNDP.

**It was RESOLVED:** to defer the process to review the FNDP until the amended Local Plan has been published.

Six further members of the public and Ward Councillor Biggs left the meeting.

## **7. Finance:**

### **7.1. Finance Report:**

Members received the financial report, as appended (Appendix B). There were no questions raised.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the report. The Chairman approved and signed the Bank Reconciliation to 31.10.24.

### **7.2. To consider and agree a further bank signatory:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to add Cllr Claire Patel to the bank mandate as a full signatory.

### **7.3. To consider a Parish Council Debit Card and Policy:**

Members considered applying for a debit card for the Parish Council current account, and considered a draft policy to clarify the parameters of use. The primary use of the debit card will be for regular monthly expenditure currently paid by the Clerk.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the use of a debit card for the Parish Council current account

**It was RESOLVED:** to set the single transaction value at £500 and approve the draft policy

**7.4. To consider initial feedback from the draft budget for 2025/26 consultation:**

Members were informed that one response has been received suggesting that the precept is not increased.

**7.5. To consider costs for the road sign at Church Croft:**

Members considered costs to repair or replace the broken sign at Church Croft. It was noted that a volunteer has offered to carry out the repair.

**It was RESOLVED:** to repair the existing sign at a cost of £40.

**7.6. To consider quotations for replacement infant swing cradle seats:**

Members considered two quotations noting that a third had not been received in time for the meeting. It was noted that the volunteer Play Area Inspector had confirmed that the chains did not need to be replaced and that he would install the new seats himself.

**It was RESOLVED:** to accept the quotation for two new cradle seats from HAGS UK at a cost of £314.00 plus VAT.

**7.7. To consider a budget of £50 for the purchase of low-level planting at Court Gardens:**

Members considered a request from a volunteer for £50 for the purchase of low-level planting at Court Gardens to cover a 3m square space.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve expenditure of £50.00 for the purchase of new plants.

**7.8. Payments:**

Members were asked to ratify payments made between meetings.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payments:

**7.8.1.** Adrian Hope, Tree Work Green Lane, £255.00 plus £51.00 VAT

**7.8.2.** Helen Tinson, Reimburse Squarespace Annual Renewal (website), £204.00 plus £40.80 VAT

**7.8.3.** Amanda Roland-Smith, Reimburse Expenses (Stargazing Event), £79.99

**7.9. Members considered invoices for payment:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve payment of the following invoices:

**7.9.1.** Nick Maddy Coaches, Ross bus, October, £90.00

**7.9.2.** FRFA, Room Hire October, £55.00

**7.9.3.** Helen Tinson, Clerk Salary October, in accordance with contract

**7.9.4.** Helen Tinson, Reimburse Kaspersky Antivirus 1 year, £36.66 plus £7.33 VAT

**7.9.5.** Stuart Eames, Reimburse Expenses Bench Repairs, £84.05

**7.9.6.** Suzie Bruce, P3, £1111.40 including £9.60 VAT

**7.9.7.** Suzie Bruce, Lengthsman, £125.00 and £410.00

**8. Highways:**

**8.1. Report:**

Members received a report from the Highways Working Group:

**8.1.1** The drainage and tree work at Nash Pitch has been completed. Members of the Highways and Environment Working Groups were able to negotiate down the extent of tree reductions that were carried out. Balfour Beatty are investigating the reasons for the failed white lining and will re-do it once they understand the reasons for failure. It was noted that the STOP sign at the bottom of Woolhope Road has still not been moved.

**8.1.2** MF Freemans will be reinstating a ditch on Common Hill Lane that has disappeared as a result of the development. They have advised they need a spell of dry weather.

**8.1.3** The grant application for drainage work on Common Hill Lane, Capler Lane and Woolhope Road has been partly approved, with further discussions to take place about the remaining work.

**8.1.4** The B4224 Multi Parish Strategy Group reconvened in October and are due to meet again at the end of November. The Chair of the Highways Working Group has raised concerns about the new 1000 home development at Ross on Wye with the Leader of Herefordshire Council, both in person and in writing.

**8.1.5** Cllr Braybrook thanked the Fownhope Wheelbarrow Team for hand weeding the pavement along the B4224. The Clerk informed members that BBLP would not re-point the kerb stones to prevent future weed growth and advised the Fownhope Wheelbarrow Team that a risk assessment is required for further hand weeding sessions.

**8.2. To ratify approval granted to Openreach to carry out work on Biggs Lane:**

Members were informed that Openreach had requested, and been granted, permission to access Biggs Lane and dig a trench to rectify telephone problems at St Mary's School. The trench would be repaired on completion of work.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the permission given to carry out the repair.

**8.3. To consider report concerning the damaged wall on C1273 Capler Lane:**

Members received a report concerning the damage caused by a heavy goods vehicle to the wall on Capler Lane. The company has accepted liability. The Clerk is attempting to identify the ownership of the wall.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Clerk would update the company

**8.4. To note the reporting of the damaged barrier on C1273 Capler Lane to Herefordshire Council**

Members noted that the damaged safety barrier on Capler Lane has been reported to Herefordshire Council. Upon inspection it has been identified as a defect and scheduled for repair in line with current work priorities.

**9. Environment:**

**9.1. Report:**

Members received a report from the Clerk on behalf of the Environment Working Group including:

**9.1.1.** Forthcoming forestry works at Cherry Hill/Fownhope Park;

**9.1.2.** Reduction of tree works negotiated at Nash Pitch;

**9.1.3.** CPRE Dark Skies Herefordshire have issued a 'Thank you Certificate' for support this year;

**9.1.4.** Stargazing Event on 5<sup>th</sup> October was well attended and well received, raising £175 less costs towards future events;

**9.1.5.** The next meeting of the Environment Group will be on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm at the Green Man.

**9.2. To consider update on Marches LEP Capital Funding Project – EV Charging:**

Members noted that interest in hosting EV Charge Points had been received from two local businesses in addition to the Recreation Field car park. Members considered a report setting out the pros and cons of three options, including installation costs; ongoing servicing, maintenance and compliance requirements; and income generated.

Option 1: PC to supply and install via a local supplier utilising Marches LEP Grant funding.

Option 2: Charge Point Operator to supply and install fully funded charge points.

Option 3: Charge Point Operator to supply and install utilising Marches LEP Grant funding.

**It was RESOLVED:** to progress Option 3 and consider further at the December meeting.

**10. Footpaths:**

**10.1. Report:**

Members received a report from the Parish Footpaths Officer noting:

**10.1.1.** His thanks to parishioners for their support clearing fallen trees and sweeping leaves;

**10.1.2.** Two gates have been installed at the top of Green Lane providing stile free access from the village to Common Hill;

**10.1.3.** A further gate has been requested by a land owner to replace a stile between Lechmere Ley and Lucksall;

**10.1.4.** The team upgrading the Wye Valley Walk are making good progress – three new gates have been installed and drainage work has been completed at Lea and Pagets Wood;

**10.1.5.** Engagement with Herefordshire Council concerning the installation of gates around Capler Farm and Hawkers Lane is still awaited.

**10.2. To consider update on drainage and vehicular access at Tan Brook:**

Members considered a report summarising ongoing communication with the HC PROW Officer concerning the lower part of Tan Brook. It was noted that the HC PROW Officer has advised that there is no legal requirement for a land owner to remove debris from a watercourse that crosses their land and that their sole responsibility is to maintain their banks either side. It was further noted that the HC PROW Officer has been asked to enforce works identified to the banks, and that the land owner was open to the Parish Council/Herefordshire Council exploring a funded solution to remove debris from the watercourse. **It was RESOLVED:** to investigate possible options for funding.

**10.3. To consider volunteer improvements of FWB8 surface (Cherry Hill Rise to Scotch Firs):**

Members were informed that a 20m stretch of footpath between Cherry Hill Rise and Scotch Firs is causing access issues for parishioners with reduced mobility. The footpath turns to mud in wet conditions and is sandwiched between two sections of the footpath with a hard surface (tarmac and hoggins). Local residents have volunteered to improve the soft section of the footpath and have asked the Parish Council to consider funding the cost of the materials, estimated in the region of £900. HC PROW team have confirmed that the work can be undertaken by volunteers so long as the path remains open. It was also confirmed that HC will not improve the footpath. It was suggested that the residents of Scotch Firs and Cherry Hill Rise are asked if they would make a financial donation towards the cost of the materials. **It was RESOLVED:** that the Parish Footpaths Officer raise the question and report to the December meeting.

One member of the public left the meeting.

**11. FRFA/Recreation Field:**

**11.1. Report:**

Members were informed that the tractor shed at the Recreation Field had been broken into in the early hours of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November and equipment to the value £1700 had been stolen. The Police have been very supportive and are hopeful that the perpetrators can be identified by CCTV footage and number plate recognition further along the road. Complications with insurance was reported.

**11.2. To receive update on bench renovations and consider approval for a new bench at the Pavilion:**

Members were informed that the bench renovations had progressed well but have now been halted until the Spring.

Members were asked to approve the purchase of a new bench for the front of the Pavilion at a cost of £510.00 plus VAT. A parishioner would like to donate the cost of the bench in memory of her husband, and will purchase a commemorative plaque for the bench.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the purchase of the bench at a cost of £510.00 plus VAT and accept the donation and plaque from the parishioner to commemorate her husband.

**12. Consultations:**

Members noted the following consultations:

**12.1. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Open Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings**

**12.2. Environment Agency River Wye Website**

**13. Reports:**

**13.1. Clerk's report:**

The report had been circulated to members and was taken as read:

**13.1.1.** New website: meeting arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> November to review;

**13.1.2.** Playground Consultation: still with S106 Team at HC;

**13.1.3.** Parishioner Feedback on Bus Service: Noted – for further consideration in the New Year.

**13.2. Parish Council Summit 8<sup>th</sup> October:**

A summary of the summit had been circulated to members and was taken as read.

**13.3. HALC Conference and AGM 26<sup>th</sup> October:**

A summary of the conference had been circulated to members and was taken as read. Members noted the awarding of the Local Council Awards Quality Gold Certificate that had been framed and presented to the Chairman at the AGM.

**14. Next Meeting:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024, 7pm at the Pavilion

**15. Agenda Items Raised for Next Meeting:**

- 15.1.** To consider the provision of warm spaces during the winter months
- 15.2.** To receive and consider update on voluntary registration of Tan Brook Land Ownership
- 15.3.** To consider maintenance of FWD5
- 15.4.** To consider improvements to FWB8
- 15.5.** To consider next steps re EV Charge Points

**16. To consider a resolution to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to consider a confidential matter**

**It was RESOLVED:** to pass the resolution to exclude members of the press and public to consider the following employment matter:

**17. To consider the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024/25:**

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024/25 and back date it to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

Meeting closed 9.25pm.

Signed .....  
**Chairman**

Dated .....

**Appendix A: Planning Decisions Report**

**REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING:** 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**REPORT BY:** Helen Tinson, Clerk

**AGENDA ITEM:** 6.2.1: To Note Report on Planning Decisions Made by Herefordshire Council

Planning Number	Address	Application	FPC Response	HC Decision
242149	Broom Cottage Fownhope HR1 4QA	Proposed single storey extension	Support	Approved with conditions

## Appendix B: Finance Report

**REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING:** 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
**REPORT BY:** Helen Tinson, Clerk/RFO  
**AGENDA ITEM:** 7.1, Finance Report

### Bank Balances:

Lloyds: £9,035.63 (excludes payments to be approved 6.11.24)

Lloyds Reserve: £41,126.96

Hargreaves Lansdown: £22,243.45 (at 4.11.24)

Total funds held across all banks and investments at 4.11.24 = £72,406.04

**Transfer to Reserve Account:** £15,000 has been transferred to the Reserve Account to take advantage of higher interest payments.

**Bank Reconciliation:** Has been completed to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and will be passed to the Chairman to check and sign at the end of the meeting.

**National Grid:** Wayleave payment of £45.63 has been received.

**2025/26 Budget Consultation:** One response to the consultation has been received suggesting that the precept should not be increased due to other external financial demands on household budgets.

The Government announced their Autumn budget which will see an increase in the rate of Employers NICs and a reduction in the secondary threshold (the point at which employers become liable to pay NICs) to £5000 per year. It is therefore suggested that the salary budget is increased to allow for this increase.

**Instant Ink Subscription:** There are currently 747 pages rolled over still to use so I have paused the subscription for two months and can extend this to six months in total if need be.

**Bank Communications:** Lloyds Bank: Business Banking Resolution Service is closing.

### Hargreaves Lansdown:

- Summer 2024 Investment Report received
- Regional Reit Ltd Consolidation – shares consolidated 10:1 so the new total of shares held is 313 (was 3130).
- New rules to protect from Authorised Push Payment (APP) - where victims are tricked into paying money into an account controlled by fraudsters.