

Fownhope Parish Council

Serving the community



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd December 2025 at the Pavilion, Fownhope

Present:

Cllrs Sue Eames (in the Chair), Gareth Williams, Mike Simmons, Frank Hemming, Michael Short, Peter Neale, Kevin Braybrook, Claire Patel, Lavinia Smith, Will Morris

In attendance:

4 members of the public; Ward Cllr Graham Biggs; Clerk Tanya Walshe

1. To accept Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Tim Jones

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

2.1. To receive any declarations of interest: Cllr Mike Simmons declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11.2.4. Cllr Peter Neale acknowledged his omission to declare a pecuniary interest in item 7.2.2 (reimbursement of SID batteries) at the November Parish Council Meeting

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

3. Open Session:

3.1 Ward Cllr Graham Biggs reported on the following matters:

3.1.1 Nash Pitch Traffic Lights. It was reported that these lights should be removed soon.

3.1.2 It was reported that the Parish Council should hear with regards to the drainage grant in the next few days

3.1.3 It was reported that there is no update on the white lining. Cllr Sue Eames questioned what the Parish Council can do to expedite the matter. **ACTION:** Cllr Eames to email Ward Councillor Graham Biggs requesting a breakdown of costs for the road traffic safety scheme

3.2 Representations from the Public:

3.2.1 A question was raised regarding advertising contraventions in the village. **ACTION:** A list to be provided from member of the public raising the concern regarding advertising that is thought to be contraventions **ACTION:** The Planning Working Group will then assess the situation and report back in the New Year

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

4.1 Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 5th November 2025. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by Vice Chair Cllr Sue Eames

5. Traffic Lights at Nash Pitch

5.1. It was reported in item 3.1.1 that these lights will be removed in the next few days

6. Tan Brook Swing

6.1. Previous resolution revisited. Cllr Sue Eames reported that further advice from the Parish Council's insurance brokers contradicted previous guidance. The brokers advised that erection of signage would constitute the Parish Council accepting responsibility for the swing.

The Parish Council was advised that the available options were to accept responsibility for the swing, requiring ROSPA inspection, tree inspection by a qualified arborist, and ongoing maintenance; or, to remove the swing. It was noted that the ROSPA inspection would require access equipment, which may not be practicable at the site. Members expressed concern that failure to follow insurer advice could invalidate insurance cover.

ACTION: the Clerk to seek urgent written advice regarding liability and insurance implications, requirements to retain swing, any risk of personal liability for councillors, the wider management of informal play equipment on Parish land from the Parish Council's insurance broker and relevant sector bodies HALC and NALC

7. GDPR:

7.1. ACTION: Clerk to work with Cllrs to amend the GDPR policy

8. Awards wording

8.1. Cllr Mike Simmons proposed to introduce two Community Service Awards, rather than the current one award, to distinguish between outstanding service and exceptional long-term service to the community. **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt two Community Service Awards categories 1) Outstanding Service 2) Exceptional Service over many years

9. Coronation Pump House:

9.1. Concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding the condition of the Coronation Pump and Pump House were addressed. Cllr Eames gave a report that a site visit was undertaken, with a qualified civil engineer, who provided a brief report identifying concerns regarding the stability of the pump and the concrete floor spanning the underlying well shaft, with no clear evidence of adequate structural support. As a precaution, the Pump House has been closed to public access. **ACTION:** Cllr Eames to circulate the engineer's report to councillors and obtain quotations for the recommended remedial works based on the agreed specification. **It was RESOLVED:** to circulate the report, a list of potential contractors to be sent to the clerk and quotations sought, with matter to be brought back to the February meeting for further consideration

10. Councillor Vacancy:

10.1. ACTION: Cllr Eames to put advert for councillor vacancy out on Facebook, Village Website, West End Stores, Memorial Hall, Drs Surgery and noticeboards

11. Finance Report

11.1 To receive and approve the finance report

Current account £8,956.49; Reserve account £40,433.81; Hargreaves Lansdown £25,407.48 Total funds at 30.11.25 = £74,797.78

A bank reconciliation has been carried out to 30th November 2025

11.2 Payments: To ratify the following payments made between meetings:

It was RESOLVED: to ratify the following payments made between meetings:

11.2.1. SM Bruce (Lengthsman) £335.00

11.2.2. Nick Maddy Coaches (458 Bus) £240.00

11.2.3. Acer Trees (for works carried out following tree survey report) £475.00 plus £95.00 VAT

11.2.4. FRFA Room Hire £38.50

11.2.5. Terry Griffiths £900.00 plus £180.00 VAT

11.3 Draft Budget 26/27

11.3.1. The members considered the draft budget for the forthcoming financial year, prepared by the Finance Working Group. Two draft budgets were presented, based either on a 3% or 5% increase in the parish precept. The Finance Working Group was evenly split in its recommendation.

Members noted key budget changes, including an increase in employment costs due to National Insurance and Pension contributions, and reductions in some other areas. Following a discussion on inflation, reserves, future expenditure pressures and value for money for residents, the Parish Council voted on the preferred option. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the draft budget for public consultation at the increased precept rate of 5%

12. FRFA/Recreation Field

12.1. To receive report on FRFA matters and agree any actions required:

12.1.1. Cllr Mike Simmons reported that the slabbing work has been completed

12.1.2. Investigations are ongoing into options for enabling voluntary small financial contributions from users of the Recreation Field and facilities

12.1.3. An update was given to members regarding screening. It was stated that while hedge planting had been previously considered, the preferred option at present is to explore use of green netting to soften and visually mute the existing fencing of the cricket nets

13. Planning:

13.1. To consider the following planning application for determination by Herefordshire Council

13.1.1. 253288: Woodhaven, Fownhope, HR1 4NN. Works to trees in a conservation area. **It was RESOLVED:** to support the application.

13.1.2. A report was given regarding TPOs within the Parish. The Planning Working Group decided that due to all trees within the conservation area require planning consideration from Hereford Council and the Parish Council that we would be alerted to any planned works, so it was deemed unnecessary to apply for TPOs

13.1.3. An update was received on Cherry Hill. Some dead trees and unsuitable deer guards were identified, and the developer has agreed remedial works

13.1.4. A question was asked with regards to the level of ground from pond to be put back to agricultural level **ACTION:** Cllr Kevin Braybrook to follow up with developer regarding returning the ground level, from the attenuation pond up to Cherry Hill Wood, back to the surrounding agricultural level as it was prior to the development of Cherry Hill Rise

14. Highways:

14.1. To receive Highways Report and agree any works to be undertaken

14.1.1. A proposal was made to spend £1268.68 to relocate the Speed Indicator Detector. **ACTION:** Clerk to contact Yvonne Coleman with regards to the spending of S106 funding and clarify the contractors who can be used. **It was RESOLVED:** for the works to be carried out to relocate the SID

14.1.2. A report was given in relation to the impaired visibility at the Common Hill Lane/B4224 junction caused by hedging in front of neighbouring properties
14.1.3. No new information has been received regarding the road subsidence outside of Wye Leisure or on the white lining

14.1.4. Sandbags need to be replaced. A local resident will remove the old ones. **It was RESOLVED:** for the clerk to purchase new sandbags

The Parish Council elected to extend the meeting by 30 minutes

15. Environment:

15.1. To receive Environment Report and agree any works to be undertaken

15.1.2. Jon Parr was invited to give an update about the Dark Skies bench installation at the Recreation Ground. This bench was funded by Wye Valley National Landscapes and a grant from The Flag. **ACTION:** Jon Parr to send clerk wording for a thank you letter to be sent to Wye Valley Landscapes

15.1.3 To note date of the next Environment Working group meeting 20th January, 6:30pm at The Pavilion.

16. Footpaths:

16.1. To receive Highways Report and agree any works to be undertaken

16.1.1. Cllr Will Morris gave an update regarding new footbridges being installed. It was identified that Fownhope needs four. One has been installed

16.1.2. Hereford Council are in the process of replacing posts that have fallen

16.1.3. Freemans will rectify the muddy verge area outside Cherry Hill Rise once the weather improves

16.1.4. Discussions around formalising an ongoing maintenance routine for the Lengthsman

17. To note date of next meeting: 4th February 2026, 7pm, Pavilion

18. To consider Agenda items for the next meeting (no discussion). No items were raised

19. 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 and exclude members of the public and press from the following discussion.

20. Legal Matters:

20.1. Members received an update on the status of the PC's submission of informal tender/s for the land sale

Meeting closed 9:34pm.

Signed

Chairman

467/12/2025

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