

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FOWNHOPE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT FOWNHOPE
PAVILION ON WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 07.30 PM**

Present:

Parish Councillors:
M Williams Chairman
J Boothman
D M Clark
D Colley
A Corby
J Hardwick
F Jolley
J Jones
H Mansell
D Pascoe
G Williams

Parish Clerk:
J Bateman

Four members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for absence.

An apology for absence was accepted from Cllr Daines.

2. Declarations of interest. Cllr Colley declared a personal interest in Item 5a. Cllrs Colley and Jolley declared personal interests in Item 5b. Cllr Hardwick and the Chairman declared personal interests in Item 6b. Cllr G Williams declared a prejudicial interest in Item 6b.

3. Minutes of the last meeting.

Decision: The minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. Public Consultation Session.

Members of the public present were asked if they wished to comment on any of the agenda items but declined to do so.

5. Accounts.

a. School Boundary and Access Improvements.

This work was the final part of a joint scheme to improve the playground and Hall parking area. The project was being undertaken by the School and was due to be carried out during the half term holiday in October. A request from the school had been received for them to obtain construction materials for the work via the Parish Council's account with Tudors Building for supplies up to the value of the £1,500 agreed Council contribution.

Decision: Authorisation was approved for payments to be made up to

ACTION

Clerk

RFO

£1,500 (exc VAT) for Tudor's invoices for materials relating to the project.

Cllr Colley

b. Memorial Hall Ceiling.

The Hall Committee were seeking to raise funds for a variable height false ceiling to give improved facilities for a range of activities in the Hall. They had requested the Council to make an application on their behalf for a Lottery grant from 'Awards for All'. There was some debate over whether the project would result in the best use of space or whether the expenditure involved would provide good value for money.

Decision: A working group comprising the Chairman, Clerk and Councillors Colley and G Williams would investigate further and report back.

Chairman
Cllrs Colley &
G Williams
Clerk

c. FRFA Tractor Repairs.

Decision: Payment of up to £400, from the Recreation Field General Projects Fund, was authorised for repair of the tractor.

RFO

6. Application for a wind turbine at Caplor Farm.

As the applicant, Cllr G Williams declared a prejudicial interest and made a short statement on the application before leaving the room.

Decision: The application was recommended for approval, with the proviso that consideration should be given to painting it in a suitable colour to reduce its visibility.

Clerk

Cllr G Williams rejoined the meeting.

7. Clerk's Contract of Employment.

This item was deferred to a closed session of the full Council in the absence of the Clerk following the meeting.

8. Quality Council Status.

Decisions:

The Council would apply for Quality Status once a dossier of evidence had been compiled to demonstrate that all the requirements for the award had been met.

Clerk

A HALC training session on 'Being an Effective Councillor' would be arranged.

Clerk

9. Pavement Improvements.

There was general concern over the poor maintenance of pavements in the Parish.

Decision: Herefordshire Council would be alerted to the PC's concerns and asked for details of any pavement maintenance scheduled to take place in the Parish.

Clerk

10. West Villas Pavement Project.

A meeting with Herefordshire Council Highways Dept had taken place and their construction team were drawing up cost estimates prior to making a decision on the way forward. One of the properties fronting the pavement was being sold and the Dept had expressed concern over whether the new owners would be willing to co-operate over the project.

Decisions:

As soon as the new owners were identified the project would be discussed with them.

The Highways Dept would be given suitable reassurances and urged to act soon whilst the owners were still supportive.

Cllr Jolley

Clerk

11. Local Development Framework Consultation Exercise.

The Planning Group had contributed to the consultation. Details of their return were held by the Clerk.

12. FRFA Constitution.

A proposed draft of amended Constitution had been prepared and would be forwarded to the FRFA for discussion at their next meeting on 17 Sep 08.

13. Parking Restrictions on the Recreation Field Track.

Decision: The existing posts would be left in situ.

14. Skateboard Park.

Vandalism had resulted in fire damage to some of the woodwork on the skateboard ramp.

Decisions:

A sign warning the public of the damage would be erected.

A notice would be placed in the Flag.

An insurance claim would be instigated.

Cllr Pascoe

Clerk

Clerk

15. FRFA insurance cover.

Decision: This item would be deferred to the next meeting while the issues were clarified.

Cllr Jones

16. Speed Indicator Devices (SID).

An application for the use of a SID was being made.

17. Labour for P3 projects.

A number of local residents were willing to work on P3 projects for modest payments. External advice had advised strongly against the Council employing anyone directly to carry out work on P3 projects on insurance grounds.

However, they could carry out work as employees of Caplor Ltd, which carried the necessary insurance cover. As Caplor Ltd was owned by a member of the council, care would be needed to demonstrate that any contract placed would clearly be 'best value, for the Parish.

Decisions:

Any contract for P3 work placed with Caplor limited should be for hourly rates well below those paid to the Lengthsman.

No individual contracts should be for more than £500.

18. Representation at the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Review Group.

Decision: Cllr Jolley would represent the Council.

19. Maintenance of Recreation Field Hedges.

The working group had carried out a site inspection and determined that the hedges should be laid. A number of specimen trees could be preserved and a group of trees in the corner of the field coppiced. Some trees were in urgent need of pollarding and some gaps would need to be filled with saplings. There were a number of ways to achieve this. The AONB authority had offered to run a 2-day course at the beginning of November to train volunteers in hedge laying at a cost of £30 per head. In this case it would be essential to ensure that a sizeable length of continuous hedge was laid to a reasonable standard. The remainder of the hedges could be laid by a professional contractor, for which a grant might be available, or, possibly, by trainees from Holme Lacy Agricultural College.

Decisions:

Approval was given for the AONB training session to proceed with the Council offering to pay the fee for anyone from within the Parish completing the course.

The employment of a contractor to complete the task would be investigated together with any grants available.

The possibility of Holme Lacy Agricultural College involvement would be investigated.

20. Lengthsman.

Decisions:

Cllr Colley would take over management of the Lengthsman from Cllr Jones with immediate effect.

Cllr Colley was authorised to task work up to the limit of the Lengthsman grant. Any work in excess of this, or any tasks to be paid for from the Council's supplement, for non-highways work, to the Grant, would need to be approved in advance by the Council.

RFO
Hd Footpaths
Gp

Cllr Jolley

Cllr Corby

Clerk

Cllr Corby

Cllr Colley
Cllr Jones

Cllr Colley
RFO

21. Minor information points.

The next meeting would be re-scheduled to Thurs 2 Oct to allow attendance at the HALC training evening on the Code of Conduct.

Requests for items for the next agenda should be made before 19 Sep 08.

Chairman
2 Oct 08

Jem Bateman
Clerk
4 Sep 08