



RE-SCHEDULED ANNUAL MEETING

7.30pm 29th MAY 2024

RISBURY VILLAGE HALL

MEETING PAPERS

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Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Chairman:
Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright
The Cider Mill
Humber
Herefordshire HR6 0NE

Clerk to the Council:
Allan Drew
The Coach House
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Councillors are summoned to the re-scheduled Annual Meeting of the Group Parish Council to be held on

**Wednesday 29th May 2024 at 7.30pm
in Risbury Village Hall**

which will consider the business set out in the agenda below.



Allan M Drew
Clerk to the Council

23rd May 2024

AGENDA

First business

36/24 Election of Chairman

- (a) *To elect:* a Chairman for 2024-25.
- (b) *To receive:* the elected Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

37/24 Election of vice-chairman

To elect: a vice-chairman for 2024-25

38/24 Apologies for absence

To receive: any apologies for absence.

39/24 Declaration of interests and dispensations

- (a) *To receive and record:* any declarations of interest in agenda items in accordance with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.
- (b) *To consider:* any applications for dispensations from the rules on participation by members with a disclosable pecuniary interest, in accordance with Standing Order 25.

40/24 Minutes of the last meeting

- (a) *To approve:* the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 20th March 2024
- (b) *To note:* any matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

41/24 Chairman's Announcements

To note: any announcements from the Chairman.

42/24 Bonfires in Stoke Prior

To receive & discuss: resident's complaint regarding bonfires.

43/24 Public participation

Under Standing Order 8, any member of the public may make a statement or give evidence to the meeting on any business to be transacted or any other business, and answer questions from councillors. At the discretion of the Chairman such participation may be permitted under the relevant agenda item.

Annual business – previous year

44/24 Annual reports 2023-24

- (a) *To receive:* a report from the past-Chairman.
- (b) *To receive:* a report from the Clerk
- (c) *To receive:* reports from representatives on the Village Hall Committees.
- (d) *To receive:* reports from PROW officers.
- (e) *To receive:* report from Community Week committee

45/24 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for 2023-24

- a) *To consider:* a report from the Responsible Financial Officer
 - b) *To approve:* the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024
 - c) *To approve:* the Bank Reconciliation Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024
 - d) *To consider:* the Internal Audit Report and checklist
 - e) *To approve:* the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31 March 2024
 - f) *To approve:* the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024
 - g) *To approve:* the Period for Exercise of Public Rights for the year ended 31 March 2024
 - h) *To note:* the accounts for 2023-24 will be subject to a Limited Assurance Review by the external Auditor as Council income/expenditure for the year is above the £25,000 threshold.
-

Annual business – review of current regulations and policies

46/24 Review of Standing Orders

To report: Clerk's review of Standing Orders (2013) as amended

47/24 Review of Financial Regulations

To report: Clerk's review of the Financial Regulations (2016) as amended.

48/24 Review of Council procedures and policies

To report: the Clerk's review Council's policies

Annual business – forthcoming year

49/24 Review of Councillor portfolios

Last year it was agreed that each Councillor would take a lead role in an aspect of the Council's business as follows-

Lead Role	Councillor(s)
Environment	Clrs. Yair & Hinton
Website	Clrs. Yair & Marston
Ford & Stoke Prior Drainage	Clr. Fullwood
Humber drainage	Clrs. Pugh & Bemand
Finance	Clrs. Yair & Marston
Police liaison	Clr. Fowler-Wright
Pump liaison	Clr. Fowler-Wright

Traffic & road safety	Clrs. Marston, Grace & Silk
Safeguarding	Clr. Yair
Humber Close liaison	Clr. Grace
Community Week	Clrs. Fowler-Wright & Marston
Stoke Prior VH	Clr. Fullwood
Risbury VH	Clr. Silk
Planning	
<i>Humber</i>	Clrs. Fowler-Wright & Collins
<i>Ford & Stoke Prior</i>	Clrs. Bemand, Grace & Fullwood
Public rights of way	
<i>Humber footpaths</i>	Mr Philip Brown
<i>Stoke Prior footpaths</i>	Mr Mike Hayward (resigned wef May 2024)
<i>Bridlepaths</i>	Mr Iain Cholerton

Council should review these roles and appoint/re-appoint Members as necessary. A replacement for Mr Hayward, FPO for Stoke Prior is required.

50/24 Review of assets, risk assessment and insurance

- (a) *To receive:* the list of fixed assets
- (b) *To receive and approve:* an updated Risk Assessment and Management document
- (c) *To receive and consider:* the RFO's report and recommendations on Insurance

51/24 Committees and membership 2024-25

- (a) Planning Committee
To consider: the appointment of members (Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio and four other councillors) to the Planning Committee for 2024-25, with the remit of determining the Council's comments on planning applications (see Standing Order 32).
- (b) Community Week Committee
To consider: the appointment of members to Community Week Committee, with the remit of organising Community Week.
- (c) The Lamb Working Group
To consider: membership and purpose of the Lamb working group.
- (d) War Memorial Working Group
To consider: retiring the present working group as the War Memorial has been completed
- (e) Finance Working Group
To consider: the appointment of members (RFO and two councillors) to the standing Finance Working Group for 2024-25, with the remit of advising the Council on (i) the draft budget for the following year, and (ii) the annual review of internal control procedures as required by audit regulations

52/24 Membership of other bodies, representatives and portfolios 2024-25

To review: subscriptions to other bodies (HALC, CPRE and Parish Online).

53/24 Dates of meetings for 2024-25

To receive and approve: meeting dates for the following year:

Wednesday 17 July 2024, Wednesday 18 September 2024, Wednesday 20 November 2024, Wednesday 15 January 2025, Wednesday 19 March 2025, Wednesday 21 May 2025 (Annual Meeting) all at 7.30pm.

Normally the May, July, & September meetings will normally be held in Stoke Prior Village Hall. The November, January & March are held in Risbury.

However, this year the normal cycle is broken by holding this May meeting in Risbury. Council should agree where the meetings will be held for this year.

Ordinary business

54/24 District Councillor

To receive: a report from Cllr Baker.

55/24 Planning Committee and Planning updates

(a) *To consider for comment:* new applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

240629 Grove Cottage, Ford Bridge, HR6 0LE. (Listed building consent)

Remove asbestos clad canopy roof to entrance. Replace with similar profile pitched roof with clay tiles on oak posts into existing stone post blocks.

Undecided

Humber

There are no new applications

(b) *To note:* updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

240279 Land at Hathaway, Stoke Prior, HR6 0LR

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.

Undecided

233624 Railway Meadow Bungalow Stoke Prior Leominster Herefordshire HR6 0LG

Proposed garden room extension and change of use of land from agricultural use to residential use to provide additional garden space (part retrospective).

Approved with conditions

233094 Priory Farm Stoke Prior HR6 0ND. The construction and retention of a rural worker's dwelling, seminar room and a range of eight stables with ancillary tack and hay store.

Undecided

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective).

Undecided.

200705 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm Stoke Prior. Proposed new dwelling and garage adjacent to Croft Gate farm. THIS IS A RE-CONSULTATION FROM A 2020 APPLICATION

Undecided

Humber.

240369 Great Marston Farmhouse, Farm Risbury HR6 0NJ

Proposed reconstruction of porch.

Approved with Conditions.

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG

Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).

Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG

Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648.

Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687.

Undecided

56/24 Community Week Committee

To receive: a report from the Community Week committee

57/24 General Financial Matters

To approve: the authorisation of payments

58/24 Clerk's working hours

To consider: review of hours worked by the Clerk against his contract, based on timesheet records from May 2021- April 2024

59/24 Current projects

To receive: any updates on current projects

Trails booklet	Cllr Fowler-Wright
Traffic Management Plan	Cllrs. Grace & Marston
Environment	Cllr. Yair & Hinton

60/24 Matters for information and future business

To note: any other matters for information or future decision.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 17 July 2024 in Stoke Prior Village Hall. Subject to approval at this meeting.

The chairman will close the meeting.

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Draft Minutes

of the Ordinary Meeting of the Group Parish Council

Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 7.30pm in Risbury Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright (Chairman)
Cllr. Tim Yair
Cllr. Derek Silk
Cllr. James Hinton
Cllr. Janette Fulwood
Cllr. Chris Marston
Cllr. Anne Grace

Ward Councillor: Bruce Baker
Clerk & RFO: Allan Drew

22/24 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Rob Pugh, Cllr. Richard Thomas, Cllr. Richard Collins, Cllr. Anne Grace, Cllr. Ken Bemand.
Cllr. Fulwood gave her apologies for the next meeting.

23/24 Declaration of interests and dispensations

None received nor requested

24/24 Minutes of the last meeting

Cllr. Marston raised a point on the Clerk's pay award item (minute 9/24). The draft minute stated the Clerk would receive £1/hour when in fact the increase was £1/hour. The Clerk will correct this minute and, assuming this correction, the minutes of the meetings held on 17th January and 7th February 2024 were approved by Council and signed by the Chairman.

25/24 Matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The Annual Parish meetings will be held on 15 May 2024 in Risbury Village Hall. The meeting will precede the Annual Parish Council Meeting on the same date but will start at 6.30pm. Refreshments will be provided and Cllr. Fulwood would arrange. A license would not be necessary since refreshments would be provided free of charge.

The content of the meeting would be a workshop style session to capture the views of residents on a number of topics (TBA) using flip charts with prompting questions.

The Clerk will promote the event in his Pump notes for May.

26/24 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman noted the success of the Cllr. training session held on 7 February and thanked those who attended.

27/24 Public participation

No members of the public were present.

28/24 District Councillor's report

Cllr. Baker reported that-

- He had visited the site of the Ford/A49 junction and had found no issues with the signage. He had however, raised the matter during a discussion with National Highways and the advice was to arrange for the landowner to cut the hedge later in the season to improve visibility.
- The funding of anti-terrorist bollards in Hereford was investigated and it appeared that this project was part funded by Government grant and the remainder came from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- Use of S106 monies was likely to change to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which would benefit smaller developments in smaller communities. With CIL all developments would attract a contribution from developers rather than when the threshold of 10 houses was reached. Further, if Parishes have an NDP they can retain 25% of the levy or 15% if they do not have an NDP.
- Planning consent had been granted to demolish The Three Counties hotel and build a Lidl supermarket.
- The Lengthsman scheme for 2024-25 will have more funding (almost double) than earlier announced.
- PROW funding would be available.
- There would be a new grant for drainage.
- There is hope that some re-surfacing of the A417 (Dinmore to Bodenham) would be undertaken in the summer using some money from a £10m road fund.

29/24 Planning Committee and planning applications update

- a) The draft minutes of the planning meeting held on 6 March 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. The Chairman explained some of the problems with the plans for Hathaway and these problems are highlighted in the Council comments.
- b) *To consider:* new applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council

Ford & Stoke Prior There were no new applications

Humber There were no new applications

(c) *To note:* updates on current planning applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

240279 Land at Hathaway, Stoke Prior, HR6 0LR

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.

Undecided

233624 Railway Meadow Bungalow Stoke Prior Leominster Herefordshire HR6 0LG

Proposed garden room extension and change of use of land from agricultural use to residential use to provide additional garden space (part retrospective).

Undecided

233094 Priory Farm Stoke Prior HR6 0ND. The construction and retention of a rural worker's dwelling, seminar room and a range of eight stables with ancillary tack and hay store.

Undecided

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and anaerobic digester storage lagoon (retrospective). **Undecided.**

Cllr. Baker was concerned that the Bowley Court farm application would require some compelling arguments if he is to speak against this application. Council remained concerned that the application contained insufficient detail to make an informed decision on support/object and no further information has been forthcoming. The public interest dimension of this case is considerable. Cllr. Fulwood raised concerns about the suitability of the liner.

Humber.

240369 Great Marston Farmhouse, Farm Risbury HR6 0NJ

Proposed reconstruction of porch.

Undecided.

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG

Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).

Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG

Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648. **Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.**

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687.

Undecided

30/24 General Financial Matters

To receive: a report from the RFO

To consider: payments for authorisation

To consider: Setting the budget for 2024-25

To consider: appointing HALC as the Council's internal auditor for 2023-24

The RFO reported that-

Bank balance on 13 March 2024 is £9794.74

Income received since last meeting -

Date	Description	Amount £	Classification
25-1-2024	RHQ Lancs	100.00	Donation
14-2-2024	Margaret Brown	20.00	Pump postage
20-2-2024	S McCamley	20.00	Advert
	TOTAL	140.00	

It was not clear what the credit of £20 from "S McCamley" was for but it looked that it might be Pump related. The RFO had asked the Pump advertising manager if he could clarify the source.

Payments made since last meeting

The following payments were agreed at the 17th November 2023 meeting (minute reference 121/23) and have been made.

Description	Cost £	VAT £	Total £	
Herefordshire Council	293.13	0.00	293.13	Recharge for elections 4 May 2023
Barrington Print	489.00	0.00	489.00	Dec./Jan. Pump printing
Clerk's salary	346.73	0.00	346.73	December 2023
Clerk's salary	346.53	0.00	346.53	Jan 2024. Pay 25 Jan 2024
HMRC PAYE	260.00	0.00	260.00	Q3 PAYE
Autela	63.58	12.71	76.29	Q3 invoice for payroll services
HALC subscriptions for 2024-25	572.88	114.58	687.46	
TOTAL	2371.85	127.29	2499.14	

Payments for Authorisation

Minute no. 30/24

Description	Cost £	VAT £	Total £	
Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	Feb 2024 Pump
Barrington Print	448.00	0.00	448.00	March 2024. Pump
Clerk's salary	346.73	0.00	346.73	Feb. 2024
Clerk's salary	346.73	0.00	346.73	March 2024. Pay 25 March 2024
HMRC PAYE	260.00	0.00	260.00	Q4 PAYE (to pay on 6 April 2024)
D C Garden Services	1740.00	348.00	2088.00	Grant works
HALC training 7 Feb. 2024	229.36	45.87	275.23	Cllr. training
Parish Noticeboard Co.	440.00	88.00	528.00	2 nd payment on noticeboard
Drain Doctor	980.00	196.00	1176.00	Drain cleaning W/Barrow, SP centre, Heath
Drain Doctor	375.00	75.00	450.00	Root cutting Heath
Gareth Higgs tree surgeon	1200.00	0.00	1200.00	Removal of willow tree at W/barrow
Clerk's mileage refund	133.20	0.00	133.20	296 miles @£0.45/mile
Clerk's office contribution	50.00	0.00	50.00	As last year
TOTAL	7009.02	752.87	7761.89	

Cllr. Fulwood reminded the RFO that the village hall is expecting an invoice for their contribution to the new noticeboard.

Council agreed these payments.

Tony Ford at HALC had raised the matter of an unpaid invoice from May 2020! It is for internal audit work carried out for 2019-20. There is no mention of payment in the previous Clerk's records and it may be the invoice was actually never sent/received. No payment appears in the cash book, which reconciles with the bank balance so no payment was ever made. The work however, was carried out so Council should pay it (£200+VAT). Council agreed the payment should be made.

Draft Budget for 2024-25

PREVIOUS YEARS				2024-25				NOTES FOR 2024-25 BUDGET
		OUTTURN 2022-23	OUTTURN 2023-24	BUDGET 2024-25	YEAR TO DATE	FORECAST OUTTURN	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET	
1	Precept	12289.00	15000.00	15344.00	0.00		-15344.00	1 As agreed at meeting 7 February 2024
2	Pump							2
	Advertising	575.00	2391.00	2500.00	0.00		-2500.00	2 With advertising rates flat prudent view holds budget as 2023-24
3	Pump Postage	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00		-40.00	3 Nominal amount
4	Grants	0.00	7729.00	2400.00	0.00		-2400.00	4 Lengthsman scheme updated to include £1200 base grant & £1200 match funded Nominated Task
5	Other Income	115.12	108.06	500.00	0.00		-500.00	5 Misc. payments. Includes £400 SPVH contribution to noticeboard
6	VAT Reclaim	0.00	2751.62	2073.00	0.00		-2073.00	6 As 2023-24 outturn
7	CW Fundraising	2070.18	300.45	300.00	0.00		-300.00	7 Estimated as last year
8	Other Projects	2080.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	8 Projects not yet defined
9	TOTAL INCOME	17169.30	28320.13	23157.00	0.00	0.00	-23157.00	9
EXPENDITURE								
10	Clerk	4403.50	4343.36	4919.00	0.00		4919.00	10 2023-24 Salary award plus arrears
11	Administration	445.88	411.66	500.00	0.00		500.00	11
12	Insurance, audit, professional	887.38	1235.32	1200.00	0.00		1200.00	12 Increased payment to internal auditor (£50 up to £200).
13	Website & IT	155.00	451.99	500.00	0.00		500.00	13 Increased cost for .GOV website
14	Hire of Halls	200.00	167.00	200.00	0.00		200.00	14
15	Training and development	0.00	229.36	0.00	0.00		0.00	15
16	Equipment	1065.22	890.50	100.00	0.00		100.00	16 Nominal amount
17	Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	17
18	HMRC	733.60	1105.24	1300.00	0.00		1300.00	18 Increased due to salary award
19	Other	86.00	579.13	100.00	0.00		100.00	19 No election costs nor National events contribution expected
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	7976.57	9413.56	8819.00	0.00	0.00	8819.00	20
PROJECTS								
21	War Memorial	5678.00	403.00	60.00	0.00		60.00	21 Engraving for S. Preece (Price)
22	Parish Pump	4260.00	5338.88	4000.00	0.00		4000.00	22 Costs have come down recently with fewer pages printed. Move towards online?
23	Lengthsman	6271.00	9095.00	5400.00	0.00		5400.00	23 £2400 grants + £3000 Parish spend
24	Community Week	1933.00	435.00	450.00	0.00		450.00	24 Estimate similar to 2023-24
25	Environment Project		0.00		0.00		0.00	25 No spend last year. Council to agree way forward on this project.
26	Website modernisation		500.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	26 Project closed
27	Welcome pack		516.40	0.00	0.00		0.00	27 Project closed
28	Project A			0.00	0.00		0.00	
29	Project B			0.00	0.00		0.00	
30	Project C			0.00	0.00		0.00	
31								
32	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	18142.00	16288.28	9910.00	0.00	0.00	9910.00	29
33	Reclaimable VAT on the above	2110	2072	1800	0.00		-1800.00	30 VAT reclaim forecast does not yet include any project work
34	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	26118.57	25701.84	18729.00	0.00	0.00	16929.00	31
35	SURPLUS	-8949.27	2618.29	4428.00	0.00	0.00	-4428.00	32

The RFO explained the detail behind this draft budget. Potential projects were discussed and the Chairman requested £500 for the trails booklet. A further project related to road safety involved data collection from sites which might be suitable for a speed indication device (SID). A budget of £2800 was suggested by Cllr. Marston (in the absence of Cllr. Grace) and there was some uncertainty about the contributions other Councils involved in the A44 would be making. The Traffic Management Plan project would be supported in principle but some Councillors felt that more information was required to finalise the budget allocated.

The Environment project is continuing and £1000 should be allocated.

For the present the budget was agreed with the additions for projects as described above.

Appointing HALC as the Council internal auditor.

The RFO asked if any Member knew a suitable candidate to become the internal auditor.

In the absence of any alternative Council must appoint HALC. The RFO will wait until 31 March for a candidate to come forward otherwise he will engage HALC

31/24 Lengthsman & PROW

At the January meeting Council discussed the chronic lack of maintenance to the drainage system and the Clerk received delegated authority to progress the projects Council had previously agreed. The major project was Wheelbarrow Castle but other more routine work arose which would also qualify for grant funding. Significant work (for a small Council) has been undertaken and a recent inspection shows it to be (so far) successful.

Following is a summary of work done and the associated costs.

Site	Work Done	Contractor	Price (ex-VAT)	Cost to Council	Cost to Herefordshire
Group Parishes	Annual Maintenance Plan	D C Garden Services	£1740		£1740
	Ditch digging Wheelbarrow	D C Garden Services	£550		£550
Blackwardine Crossroads	Cut back vegetation , replace rotten woodwork	D C Garden Services	£300	£150	£150
Wheelbarrow	Remove fallen willow tree blocking ditch	Gareth Higgs	£1200	£600	£600
	Suck silt from drains. Jet through.	Turnwater	£330	£165	£165
	Clear ditch at Cross Cottage	D C Garden Services	£760	£380	£380
Stoke Prior village centre	Suck and jet drains around War Memorial	Turnwater	£330	£165	£165
	Suck and jet drains around The Bury & church	Turnwater	£330	£165	£165
The Heath	Suck and jet 5 drains plus cross road drain and soakaway silt trap	Turnwater	£320		£320
	Root cut in cross road pipe	Turnwater	£375		£375
TOTAL			£6235.00	£1625.00	£4610.00
Funded by base grant				£213.00	£2772.00
Funded by matched grant				£1625.00	£1625.00

(Note Table amended on 21 March 2024 to include work at Blackwardine and ditching at Wheelbarrow. This is now the final statement which will submitted to Herefordshire Council for payment of grant monies).)

Renewal of Lengthsman contract with D C Garden Services for 2024-25

Council agreed that the contract should be renewed for 2024-25 and a future Council meeting will discuss whether re-tendering should be undertaken.

There was some discussion about the state of Normans Lane and a resident has asked if the Council could undertake any repair work. The position is however, that the landowners have responsibility for the upkeep.

32/24 The Lamb Inn

Council had received the copy of the letter signed by the Chairman and the Clerk reported that the auctioneers had immediately amended the details of the sale. At the auction the pub did not sell and has been re-listed for sale at the reserve price of £540k.

33/24 Traffic Management Plan

Cllr Marston updated Council that a meeting with Callum Bush (responsible for traffic management improvements in Herefordshire) is happening in the next few days. They following areas will be inspected-

- Turn off A49 and Ford junction.
- Traffic management around Stoke Prior school
- A44 traffic around the Steensbridge.

Cllr. Grace had written to the Police & Crime Commissioner seeking grant funding to support this project but it was difficult to secure funding without support from other specialist bodies.

A few months ago, Ian Connolly, a Police representative had promised to supply useful forms for data recording but nothing had so far been received. However, Mr Connolly is now moving to a new role so the group is awaiting his replacement to raise the matter again.

Additionally, Cllr. Marston mentioned the new Local Plan for Leominster which included 2500 new houses and provision of a Greenway between Leominster and Bromyard.

34/24 Projects

To consider: projects to be undertaken during 2024-25.
These projects had already been discussed under the Finance report.

35/24 Matters for information and future business

To note: any other matters for information or future decision.

Date of next meeting

To note: the next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7.30pm in Risbury village hall

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed (Chairman) Date

Agenda item 42/24 Bonfires in Stoke Prior

An email has been received from a Stoke Prior resident-

Dear Hugh,

my name is [REDACTED], I am a resident [REDACTED] in Stoke Prior. I am writing to you as part of the parish council to raise my concerns/ complain regarding the bonfires in the village.

In the 5 years that I have lived here each spring/ summer is ruined when the sun is shining or on a nice day as someone in the community lights a bonfire. Washing spoilt that is on the lines and unable to sit in the garden and air polluted.

I appreciate that there is no set laws making this illegal but it is highlighted by the Herefordshire council that. " You have a responsibility that the bonfire is not causing a nuisance to your neighbours".

Sadly, this has now become a nuisance for my husband and I. I have asthma and today it has been triggered by having my windows open on a relatively sunny day, as someone in the village has lit a bonfire on, what I would say the windiest day so far and this has come into my property.

I would like this to be raised at the next parish meeting and I am happy to attend to raise my concerns. All I ask for consideration regarding time of day and weather conditions so that my own home is not polluted by having my windows open.

Please find attached some photos from todays bonfire smoke which has blown into the close and my home.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

The guidance on Herefordshire Council's website is-

Bonfires

Domestic bonfires

In cases where smoke is causing an immediate danger, for example to people or a hazard to traffic, please call the emergency services.

Having a bonfire in your garden can cause disturbance to neighbours from the smoke, smell and ash. You have a responsibility to ensure that the bonfire is not causing a nuisance to your neighbours. In most cases you can sort out issues with bonfires by talking to your neighbours. If you cannot resolve the matter, we can investigate bonfire complaints.

Council can discuss this complaint but should note that the first step is for the complainant to discuss the problem with their neighbours causing the problem.

Agenda item 44/24 Annual Reports 2023-24

(a) *To receive:* a report from the past-Chairman.

The number and complexity of planning applications have remain subdued, probably still due to the phosphate issues in the Wye, the cost of building materials and overall financial climate. Herefordshire Council's as yet undecided emerging Core Strategy adds to the uncertainty of future planning and has led to a PC decision to await this crystallising before possibly revisiting our NDP.

The PC strongly supports the production of The Pump and I hope continues to do so going forward.

Positive drainage improvements at The Heath and Wheelbarrow Castle continue to be tested and the overall state of parish drains, challenged by climate change, means funding whether from Herefordshire Council or the PC is likely to a regular significant topic and require significant ongoing financial expenditure. Cllrs Fullwood, Bemand, Thomas and Pugh have provided generous time along with practical and astute insight in tackling drainage issues.

Projects to re-build the Parish website and create a Welcome Pack for new residents have both been completed with express gratitude to Cllrs Yair & Marston and Fullwood, respectively. These projects are important 'shop windows' for the community and PC and both have required much time, thought and skill to achieve such successful outcomes.

A further ongoing project is the Traffic Safety Group which has already become well established and set excellent goals through sterling work by Cllrs Grace and Marston and must become a permanently vigilant active group within the PC. Traffic not only on the A44 but around the school and lanes will always be at times challenging and will surely only increase. Collecting and analysing traffic data is central to both understanding the issues and achieving funding and signage permissions from outside authorities.

The planned trails booklet has got delayed due to an expansion in its content (now 12 walks and rides) and some contributors on over lapping holidays. However, it will be an excellent added ingredient to the Welcome Pack and ties in well with the two relatively new village hall map cabinets.

The Lamb Inn remains a facility that the PC would like to see as a functioning and thriving pub and the PC continues to monitor the situation and request that HC ensure planning regulations are adhered to. Mean-times the entertainment group set up to support Stoke Prior Village Hall has run several Village Inn evenings amply demonstrating the considerable appetite for a local pub and the resultant social benefit for many members of the community who have attended these.

As ever the contribution and importance of a wide number of volunteers should be fully acknowledged, not least Parish Councillors, so it was good to have three new Councillors (James Hinton, Derek Silk and Rob Pugh) fill three vacancies to keep the PC operating healthily at full capacity.

Volunteer Mike Hayward had recently stepped down as Foot Paths Officer for Stoke Prior & Ford and like all volunteers deserves our gratitude.

Other greatly valued voluntary staffed activities include The Pump with its editor, advertising manager many distributors; those running the village halls; the Community Week committee; church wardens for the three churches; the tree warden; foot path officers ... The Chair greatly appreciates all who give time, labour and expertise for the communities benefit.

(b) *To receive:* a report from the Clerk

The year 2023-24 has been the busiest year so far in my time at the Parish Council. From a more detached standpoint it looks like the Localism agenda, first placed in legislation back in 2011, is really starting to have an effect. The aim of the Localism legislation was to devolve more power to local communities. One of the most obvious steps was the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and the Group Parishes' 2016 NDP was an early exemplar of how such plans could mobilise local opinion to help create the sort of paces people wanted to live in. It is worth mentioning that since that NDP became law (yes, an NDP is a legal document) there have been no planning decisions which did not accord with the policies of the Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior NDP.

Fast forward now to 2024. Increasingly Herefordshire Council is loosening its hold on areas of operation which are important to local residents. I'm thinking of activities such as footpaths, simple highway maintenance and, from this year, the right to work on the drainage system. This is devolvement to local level where we have long maintained that we can do such work faster, cheaper and more effectively than Herefordshire's public realm contractor, Balfour Beatty. Crucially this devolvement does come with funding and this year there was about £5,400 available from Herefordshire. Add to that the budget of about £3,000 which the Parish Council normally allocates to such work and there is a fair-sized pot available to at least start tackling some of the problems.

So, during 2023-24 Council focussed on three main areas-

- The normal extensive program of cleaning drain tops, maintaining highway grips and ditch headwalls, cutting vegetation where required (e.g. around traffic signs etc.).
- Completing the work at Wheelbarrow Castle which had been started by Balfour Beatty a year ago but never completed. The work involved removing a large, fallen willow tree which straddled the key drainage ditch close to Cross Cottage. This tree obstructed the water flow in the ditch and was a big part of the cause of frequent flooding at Wheelbarrow. The drains and the ditch were then cleaned out and we hope that the problems in this area are now resolved.
- Drain jetting and cleaning around Stoke Prior centre and the Heath. We managed to get water flowing through these drains including resolving a problem with the cross road drain at the Heath which was full of roots.

In other areas the Council commissioned a completely new website complete with a .GOV.UK domain name which brings some security benefits. This project was under the leadership of Councillors Tim Yair and Chris Marston and skilfully avoided the problems which often beset local Government IT projects! The new site is much simpler than its predecessor and hopefully residents will find it much improved.

Councillor Fulwood embraced the Welcome Pack project and produced a great result in record time. She finished the project by the September Council meeting and since then all new residents in the Parishes have been greeted by an interesting and useful Welcome Pack of information to help them settle in.

As for last year all this activity has been reflected in the finances which, again, exceeded the £25,000 threshold on expenditure and so have to be examined by the External Auditor.

(b) *To receive:* report from representatives on the Village Hall Committees

REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCIL : STOKE PRIOR VILLAGE HALL 2023 - 2024

The year 2023/2024 has seen a year of significant changes for Stoke Prior Village Hall.

During early 2023 and following the Covid restrictions it became apparent that the number of active trustees was no longer sufficient for the amount of work running the hall entailed. Following a meeting chaired by the Parish Council, well attended by parishioners it was clear that the over riding issue was use it or lose it.

This successful meeting resulted in lively debate. The outcome was not only the appointment of new trustees but also the formation of an events committee. Since that time the Village Hall has enjoyed a new lease of life thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of this committee.

Stoke Prior Village Hall now has a licence to sell alcohol, it s holding a fortnightly indoor bowls tournament. A monthly Pub Night, a quiz night, plus the resurrected music quiz and the popular horse racing night, complete with tote. This year the Race Night resulted in 60 tickets and all 48 horses being sold and a profit of £1300. Well done events committee enjoyed by all who attended.

Flicks in the Sticks continues to be well attended with a food option for those who enjoy a night off in the kitchen. The variety of films could be described as eclectic, some block busters, some thought provokers, and a few of a more romantic nature - in essence something for everyone.

Thank you to Gill Stovold who has retired from the board of trustees. During her time as a trustee she has worked tirelessly to bring the Village Hall up to the required standard to comply with so many statutory regulations.

Also a huge thank you to Molly Firth who in March 2024 retired, following an unmentionable number of dedicated years of service to the Village Hall. Molly your regular raffle will be missed!! Molly's replacement is Cheryl Poole so the Church is still represented on the board of trustees.

Stoke Prior Village Hall strives to be a valuable community space for all our residents and will remain that with all your support.

Janette Fullwood
Representative on hall committee for HFSP Group Parish.

Risbury Village Hall

This has been a relatively quiet year for us with no major building works. However, at the request of residents, we have installed dimmable lights in the hall and movement sensor lights outside.

In the autumn Gene Clark became our secretary, replacing Chris Lawley who had held the post for forty years. We are most grateful to both of them.

We have held our usual events: Barbecue in the summer, Oktoberfest, Christmas carols around the village, ending with drinks at the Village Hall Bar and our traditional piped Burns Night. In addition, we hosted three events for Community Week and held several pub nights.

We are delighted that the hall is also being used more by other users: tuition, Stoke Prior WI, Humber church events and of course elections.

Margaret Brown

To receive: reports from the PROW officers.

Bridleways report. As ever Iain Cholerton has produced a comprehensive report. It is too large for inclusion here but it is included with the papers for this meeting on the Council website. Iain has particularly highlighted three issues in need of attention-

- Gate HU 10.3 needs completely replacing (gate and post). *I have asked PROW if they can supply a new gate. Hopefully the landowner (?) will fit it and resolve a problem with the post.*
- Fallen tree clearing from SP 28. *The fallen tree looks like a landowner's (?) responsibility.*

- Metal shed adjacent to SP 28 removed from Bemand's field (if he agrees – or he does it himself).
The metal shed could perhaps be removed and I have asked Cllr. Bemand if that is possible.

Stoke Prior footpaths

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 7

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228369

Path reference: SP7

From: C.rd. opposite Croft Gate

To: C.rd. 40 yds. SSE of Church House

This path runs alongside Midsummer House and crosses the garden of 'Silkwood'. Both of these owners are very helpful and help maintain the path. It is therefore in very good order. In summary SP7 Short and sweet

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 1 (CLOSED)

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228311

Path reference: SP1

From: C.rd. opposite The Lamb Inn

To: F.P 4, 250 yds. NNW of Shuttocks Field

I would suggest some signs are put up that indicate the footpath is suspended due to earth slippage, etc. At present it is still shown on the OS map, so will only add to confusion when people try and find it. **(No Change – Ongoing)**

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 9

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228373

Path reference: SP9

From: C.rd. 110 yds. ENE of Bury Farm

To: BR28, at P.bdy. 370 yds. W of Little Wickton

This path begins in the centre of the village passing around the back of the village hall, crossing Bemand's field and is generally well maintained and signed. The only problem being the height of the stiles which are very awkward and almost impossible if you have anything larger than a medium sized dog. The path then runs parallel to SP10 near a wooded area that belongs to Jenny Jackson. It then continues up to the bridleway 3 The

stiles were very overgrown and impassable in the winter. I cleared these as best I could, so they are now improved.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 10

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228313

Path reference: SP10

From: Acc Rd. 40 yds. S of railway bridge 280 yds W of Old Hill To: C.rd. 360 yds. NE of Lower Wickton

This route begins at Normans lane in Jenny Jackson's field and goes into a wooded area which has not been cleared for many years. I have chopped back as much as I can but there are a number of fallen trees which were too large for me to cut. These would probably require a small chainsaw. The stiles are in generally good order.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 8

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228371

Path reference: SP8

From: C.rd. 330 yds. WSW of St. Luke's Church

To: Acc. Rd. at Bryn Hyfryd

This starts at Bury Farm, crossing the field. The wooden footbridge has become overgrown and impassable. (Just behind the church, near the pond) ***(See separate document for images)***

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 21

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228333

Path reference: SP21

From: C.rd. 220 yds. ESE of Causeway Cottage

To: C.rd. at railway bridge 130 yds. NNW of Old Hall

No real issues with this path that passes through an orchard behind Eastmead before meeting up with Hilltop Farm apart from a broken wooden fingerpost ***(Still outstanding)*** at the road next to Spring cottage and a wobbly stile / fence when you leave the orchard and climb uphill towards Hilltop. I have already mentioned the broken sign to the Clerk. This will need replacing as it has rotted at the bottom.

(See separate document for images)

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 19

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228325

Path reference: SP19

From: C.rd. 120 yds. SW of Humber Bridge To: C.rd. at The Heath

This path runs through the Humber burial ground and is always well maintained, so no issues to report.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 20

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228331

Path reference: SP20

From: C.rd. junction, 100 yds. E of Ash Croft To: P.bdy. 300 yds. ENE of The Heath

No issues to report.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 4

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228359

Path reference: SP4

From: End of Acc. Rd. at The Rectory

To: P.bdy. 600 yds. SSW of Stretford Bury

Route passes The Old Rectory where the owners have put in a dog friendly gate (very helpful) the path then continues uphill towards Rock Cottage. You are then met by a locked gate which you have to climb over. This needs to be either unlocked or a stile put in. It was also overgrown which I trimmed back in the winter. I believe the land owner is a Mr Thomas, but not sure. This will need checking. **(See separate document for images)**

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 3

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228347

Path reference: **SP3**

From: F.P.1, 250 yds. NNW of Grovefield Cottage To: C.rd. at Broadstone Farm

No real issues with this path, but it is worth noting that the owner of the derelict cottage, Broadstone? Has applied for planning permission to turn this into vehicular access.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 5

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228361

Path reference: **SP5**

From: C.rd. 140 yds. S of Rectory

To: P.bdy. 260 yds. W of Jubilee Cottage

The footpath passes Rectory Gate then works its way through part of the garden of The Old Rectory. This is well signed and maintained before crossing fields to reach the A44. The last time I walked this part the path was well kept.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 13

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228317

Path reference: **SP13**

From: BR17, 250 yds. NW of Witssets Farm **To:** BR28, 60 yds. E of Brierymere

A short stretch across a field of crops that has been clearly marked by the landowner.

STOKE PRIOR Footpath 31

Town: STOKE PRIOR

Street id: 23228349

Path reference: SP31

From: C.rd. 250 yds. ENE of Lower Wickton

To: P.bdy. 550 yds. WNW of Lower Wickton

The start of the path is very well kept and maintained by the lady who lives in the bungalow, Mary. It then crosses a couple of stiles. One of which has been repaired where it crosses a ditch. This was in very poor condition, but it is now fine. The path is difficult to find when the crops are in full height. This then meets FD4 and continues to the golf course where this section is easier to follow with better signs, etc.

Humber footpaths

Humber Parish

Footpaths Officer Annual Report

May 2024

The full report is available on the Council website www.hfspgroupparishcouncil.gov.uk under papers for meeting. Following is a defect summary

Current list of defects. Humber Parish footpaths, May 2024

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PROW	Location	Date of defect	Work needed	Landowner	Progress
HU3	Bridge 2	May 2021	Plank on bridge rotten.	Humber Court Farm	
HU3	Stile 6	May 2021	Stile completely broken but by-passable.	Buckland Farm	
HU3	Stile 6 to Stile 7 along bank of Humber Brook at Humber Close.	May 2021	Path obstructed by fallen trees and vegetation: DANGER to users by brook.	Stonewater Housing	Diversion requested 2022 – no progress since.
HU5	Stile 2	May 2023	Minor repairs to stile and remove vegetation.	Buckland Farm	
HU6	Stile 1	May 2023	Stile broken	Buckland/Stirbridge Farms	Lengthsman to replace?
HU6	Stile 4	May 2023	Stile overgrown but gate available.	Buckland Farm	
HU6	Stile 6	Aug 2018	Stile fallen May 2021. By-passable with difficulty though old gate.	Buckland Farm	Emailed Landowner 2018, 2019, 2022
HU6	Between Stile 9 and Humber Close	May 2021	Route overcropped.	Buckland Farm	
HU7	Gate 2	Pre 2018	Gate doesn't open fully and overgrown	Hennerwood	Open access available nearby
HU7	Route from Gate 2 to Gate 4	May 2021	Route often overcropped	Hennerwood	Monitor
PG12	Stile 4 to Stile 5	Pre 2007	Route obstructed by woodland	Great Marston Farm	Landowner agreed to work, 2018 and 2023.

Philip Brown

Footpaths Officer, Humber Parish

12 May 2024

Community Week report

Margaret Brown has supplied the following report-

Community Week

COMMUNITY WEEK IS MOVING TO THE END OF THE SUMMER HOLIDAY IN 2024 AND WILL TAKE PLACE FROM **25 AUGUST TO 1 SEPTEMBER.**

There are also some changes to the habitual pattern, notably the **TREASURE HUNT AND BARBECUE** will be on **TUESDAY** 27 August and the **BARN DANCE** on **FRIDAY** 30 August – both at Eaton Heritage Barn.

The full timetable (as at present) is therefore:

Sunday 25 August 12.30 Hog Roast & parish fete at St Luke's Church, Stoke Prior

Monday 26 August 11am (Dog) Walk & byo picnic, Great Marston Farmhouse
7 pm Quiz at Risbury Village Hall (bar open)

Tuesday 27 August 6pm Treasure Hunt & Barbecue at Eaton Heritage Barn

Wednesday 28 August 6pm Mini Golf & Bowling at The Grove

Thursday 29 August AM Open Gardens Risbury
PM Open Gardens Steens Bridge & Stoke Prior
6 pm Children's Disco at Risbury Village Hall

Friday 30 August 7pm Barn Dance at Eaton Heritage Barn

Saturday 31 August Risbury Show, Entries 9.30-11, Viewing & Tea from 3.00 at Risbury Village Hall

Sunday 1 September 11.15 Songs of Praise at St Mary's Humber.

The theme for the **scarecrows** will be **The Olympics**.

All offers of help for any part of the week are welcome. Please contact Margaret Brown via Parish WhatsApp group, 01885 400696 or migsbrown49@gmail.com.

Agenda item 45/24 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return 2023-24

(a) Report from the RFO

Key points are-

- After some discussion mainly around inflation and the rising costs of some services the precept for 2024-25 was maintained at £50.20 per household (Band D equivalent). However the number of houses had increased by 2.3% so the total precept will rise from £15000 to £15322.
- The precept accounted for almost exactly 60% of all income the Council received. Of the remaining 40% grants amounted to 15% and most commendably Pump advertising was 12%. The remaining 13% was due to the VAT reclaim received.
- There was considerable grant aided activity during the year particularly in the area of Public Realm maintenance. This activity reflects a growing understanding within Herefordshire that small Parishes are better placed to carry out minor works rather than using the main Council contractor. Better value can be obtained in this way and communities have much more say in what problems are prioritised.
- Overall, grant funding of £3852 was received. Some of this grant was used to carry out normal annual maintenance in the Public Realm (cutting vegetation, maintaining signage, clearing drainage “grips” from the highways etc.) and the remainder was used to improve drainage at Wheelbarrow Castle and in the area of the Heath.
- Due to the high expenditure in 2023-24 the VAT reclaim was significant at £2097.
- As a measure of financial activity the RFO has recorded the following number of transactions in the Council accounts over the years-

Year ended	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Transactions	72	62	74	49	82	122	121

- This level of financial activity is very similar to 2022-23 and has also resulted in Council exceeding the arbitrary threshold of £25,000 for expenditure. As such the accounts are subject to a Limited Assurance Review by the External Auditor

(b) To approve the Statement of Accounts for year ended 31 March 2024

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council				
Statement of Accounts 2023-24				
		Note	Year ending	
			31 March 2023	31 March 2024
1	Precept	1	12289.00	15000.00
2	Pump Advertising	2	575.00	3061.00
3	Pump Postage	3	40.00	80.00
4	Grants	4	0.00	8191.00
5	Other Income	5	115.12	208.06
6	VAT Reclaim	6	0.00	2751.62
7	CW Fundraising	7	2070.18	300.45
8	Other Projects	8	2080.00	0.00
9	TOTAL INCOME	9	17169.30	29592.13
	EXPENDITURE			
10	Clerk	10	4403.50	4343.36
11	Administration	11	445.88	411.66
12	Insurance, audit, professional	12	887.38	1235.32
13	Website & IT	13	155.00	451.99
14	Hire of Halls	14	200.00	231.00
15	Training and development	15	0.00	229.36
16	Equipment	16	1065.22	890.50
17	Maintenance	17	0.00	0.00
18	HMRC	18	733.60	1105.24
19	Other	19	86.00	579.13
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	20	7976.57	9477.56
	PROJECTS			
21	War Memorial	21	5678.34	403.00
22	Parish Pump	22	4260.34	5338.88
23	Lengthsman	23	6270.50	9033.00
24	Community Week	24	1932.96	420.83
25	Environment Project	25	0.00	0.00
26	Website modernisation	26	0.00	500.00
27	Welcome pack	27	0.00	516.40
28	Project D	28	0.00	
29	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	29	18142.14	16212.11
30	Reclaimable VAT on the above	30	2110.66	2257.15
31	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	31	28229.37	28229.37
32	SURPLUS	32	-11060.07	1645.30

Notes to receipts and payments account summary

- 1 Precept - set in January 2023
- 2 Income has recovered strongly and now accounts for 12% of all income
- 4 Grant scheme for 2022-23 is £4339. For 2023-24 grants were £3852
- 5 Regimental donations for War Memorial Plaques
- 6 Claims for 2021-22 and 2022-23 received together during 2023-24. (£641 & £2110)
- 10 Also mileage (£133) and office expenses contribution (£50).
- 11 Bank charges, stationery, payroll, postage, Parish Online (mapping), ICO
- 12 Audit fees, Insurance, HALC subscription, SLCC subscription.
- 13 Includes cost of hosting new .GOV.UK website
- 15 Training of Councillors after 2024 election.
- 16 New shared notice board for Stoke Prior Hall & Parish Council.
- 18 PAYE payments on Clerk's salary
- 19 £200 Jubilee donation to village halls. £293 to Herefordshire for election expenses
- 21 Engraving of plaques and the finger sign post
- 22 Costs for printing and distributing the Pump
- 23 Costs include £3807 from the drainage grant
- 26 New .GOV.UK website
- 27 An information pack distributed to new residents
- 31 The VAT reclaimable shown here (£2257) does not accord with the VAT reclaim (£2097) in RFO's report. The reason is a problem with Tangled Web payments.
- 32 A small surplus has been generated

Internal controls and statement by Responsible Financial Officer

The accounting systems and internal controls operated by the Responsible Financial Officer continue to evolve with semi-automatic generation of VAT reclaim, asset register updates and transactions over £100. These improvements have made internal control better in that there is scope for fewer human errors.

Currently the RFO believes the controls are fit for purpose and have become more efficient over the past year.


The following statements have been prepared from the Council's cashbooks and records of receipts and payments, and is a true statement of the Council's receipts, payments and fixed assets for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Allan M Drew

Responsible Financial Officer

8 May 2024

(c) To approve the bank reconciliation statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council					
Financial Year 2023-24					
Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31/03/2024					
Prepared by Allan Drew (RFO)	Date:	08/05/2024			
				£	£
Balance from Bank Statements					
Unity Trust current account dated	31/03/24	Balance as at 31/03/2024			5472.85
Petty cash in hand		As at 31/03/2024			0.00
					<u>5472.85</u>
Less unrepresented items					
				0.00	
					<u>0.00</u>
Plus receipts not banked/cleared					
				0.00	
					<u>0.00</u>
		Net balance at 31/03/2024			5472.85
The net balance reconciles to the cash books for the year to 31/03/2024 as follows:					
Balance in current account cash book					
Opening balance at 01/04/2023				3827.55	
Add: receipts to 31/03/2024				29592.13	
Less: payments to 31/03/2024				27946.83	
		Net balance at 31/03/2024			<u>5472.85</u>
Balance in petty cash book					
Opening balance at 01/04/2022				0.00	
Add: receipts to 31/03/2024				0.00	
Less: payments to 31/03/2024				0.00	
		Net balance at 31/03/2024			<u>0.00</u>
All Cash Books		Net balance at 31/03/2024			5472.85
Difference					0.00
Signed:		RFO	Date	08/05/2024	
Countersigned		Councillor	Date	15/05/2024	

(d) To consider the Internal Audit Report and checklist for 2023-24

Council will recall that the previous Internal Auditor resigned recently. Efforts to obtain a replacement were not successful so the RFO had to engage the services of HALC. HALC have advised that due to demand for this service the work cannot start until June 2024. The Internal Audit report will be completed by HALC and will be available at the July Council meeting.

(e) To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes	No*	Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*			
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.					prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.					made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.					has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.					during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.					considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.					arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.					responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.					disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

WWW.HFSPGROUPPARISHCOUNCIL.GOV.UK WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

(f) To approve the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for


HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	14,887	3,827	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	12,289	15,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	4,880	9,930	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	5,137	5,448	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	23,092	22,134	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,827	5,472	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	3,827	5,472	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	16,757	17,794	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval


Date DD 09/05/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Notice of Public Rights.

When all financial aspects of last year have been completed and agreed (which should be during the Annual Meeting) a Notice of Public Rights must be posted. This Notice informs all citizens that they have the right, on reasonable notice, to inspect all the financial information from the previous year. The Notice runs for a period of 30 working days and must include the first 10 working days in July.

However, with the current lack of an Internal Audit Report the Period of Public Rights should be as late as possible to ensure the report is available from HALC. It is recommended that this year the period runs from Monday 1st July 2024 until Friday 9th August 2024 inclusive. Council should agree this recommendation.

Agenda item 46/23 Review of Standing Orders

Standing orders were comprehensively reviewed in 2023. No further changes are recommended

Agenda item 47/23 Review of Financial Regulations

The RFO has reviewed the Financial Regulations and believes they are fit for purpose. No changes are proposed

Agenda item 48/23 Review of Council policies and procedures

A full review was undertaken last year and a small number of changes and updates carried out. No further amendments are proposed for this year

Agenda item 49/23 Allocation of portfolios to Councillors

The aim this portfolio allocation is to link individual Councillors more closely with their communities by providing some individual input into Council activities which residents often view as critical to community well-being.

Currently the allocation of Councillors to portfolios is as follows-

Lead Role	Councillor(s)
Environment	Cllrs. Yair & Hinton
Website	Cllrs. Yair & Marston
Ford & Stoke Prior Drainage	Cllr. Fullwood
Humber drainage	Cllrs. Pugh & Bemand
Finance	Cllrs. Yair & Marston
Police liaison	Cllr. Fowler-Wright
Pump liaison	Cllr. Fowler-Wright
Traffic & road safety	Cllrs. Marston, Grace & Silk
Safeguarding	Cllr. Yair
Humber Close liaison	Cllr. Grace
Community Week	Cllrs. Fowler-Wright & Marston
Stoke Prior VH	Cllr. Fullwood
Risbury VH	Cllr. Silk
Planning	
<i>Humber</i>	Cllrs. Fowler-Wright & Collins
<i>Ford & Stoke Prior</i>	Cllrs. Bemand, Grace & Fullwood
Public rights of way	
<i>Humber footpaths</i>	Mr Philip Brown
<i>Stoke Prior footpaths</i>	Mr Mike Hayward (resigned wef May 2024)
<i>Bridlepaths</i>	Mr Iain Cholerton

Council should review these allocations and confirm/re-allocate as appropriate.

Agenda item 50/24 Review of assets, risk assessment and insurance

(a) to receive: the list of fixed assets

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council				Asset Register 2023-24		
Fixed Assets 2023-24						
Asset	Location	Notes	Date acquired	Purchase Price (Book value) (£)	Estimated current value (£)	Estimated replacement cost (£)
Bus shelter	Risbury Cross	built locally	unknown	1.00	50.00	1650.00
Noticeboard	Humber Close		unknown	1.00	1.00	250.00
Noticeboard	Risbury Bus shelter	Internal noticeboard+sign	09/06/2022	75.00	60.00	75.00
Noticeboard	Stoke Prior Post Office	bought second-hand	22/11/2012	25.00	1.00	450.00
Waste bin	Risbury bus shelter		23/11/2005	114.29	5.00	180.00
Waste bin	Stoke Prior Village Hall		23/11/2005	114.29	5.00	180.00
Bench	The Lamb Inn, Stoke Prior	On highway	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Stoke Prior Lane, near School	On highway	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	St Luke's Church, Stoke Prior	On Church land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Ford Chapel	On Church land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Verge outside Bank Cottage, Stoke Prior	On private land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Humber Woodland of Remembrance	On private land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Risbury Village Hall	On Village Hall land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Bowley Lane/Blacksmiths Lane junction	On highway	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Bench	Humber Close, children's play area	On private land	21/07/2008	273.58	100.00	450.00
Data projector	Clerk's home		04/06/2014	299.00	50.00	299.00
PROW Map cases	1 each in Risbury and Stoke Prior	Risbury village hall & o/s SPVH	10/01/2023	1125.00	1125.00	1125.00
Salt-grit bin	Marston Cottages, U94009	On verge	14/01/2015	59.95	30.00	80.00
Salt-grit bin	Upper House Farm, C1113	On verge	14/01/2015	59.95	30.00	80.00
Queen 90th commemorative medal	Cash box	Free sample	29/02/2016	1.00	2.00	2.00
Defibrillator and SADS cabinet	Risbury Village Hall		16/11/2016	500.00	250.00	1000.00
K6 telephone kiosk	Risbury Cross	Adopted from BT	11/11/2017	1.00	1500.00	1500.00
Salt-grit bin	School Hill, Risbury C1110	On verge	23/10/2018	77.49	50.00	80.00
Salt-grit bin	Near SP27 entrance C1110	On verge	23/10/2018	77.49	50.00	80.00
Lenovo Laptop computer	Clerk's home		16/01/2019	470.83	250.00	500.00
Minky gas barbecue	Great Marston Farmhouse HR6 0NJ	Community use	05/12/2019	216.65	200.00	216.65
QTX QR12PA portable PA system	Great Marston Farmhouse HR6 0NJ	Community use	31/03/2020	154.17	125.00	154.17
Parish PROW maps	In map cases.	RVH & SPVH	23/03/2022	108.00	108.00	108.00
War Memorial	Stoke Prior "roundabout"	On highways land	01/07/2022	10000.00	10000.00	10000.00
CW Marquees 3x6m 2 off plus walls and tie down	Metal shed in St Lukes Churchyard	Funded by donation from Paul Arnold	26/04/2022	1048.00	1048.00	1048.00
Metal shed for storage of marquees	In St Lukes Churchyard	Funded by donation from Paul Arnold	28/06/2022	731.00	731.00	731.00
<i>Finger post sign on War Memorial</i>	<i>Stoke Prior "roundabout"</i>	<i>Final addition to initial War Memorial design</i>	<i>26/05/2023</i>	<i>343.00</i>	<i>343.00</i>	<i>343.00</i>
<i>New shared noticeboard for SPVH & Council</i>	<i>On highway at SPVH</i>	<i>£400 donation from SPVH</i>	<i>21/03/2024</i>	<i>880.00</i>	<i>880.00</i>	<i>880.00</i>
			TOTAL:	18945.33	17794.00	25061.82
Assets disposed of in 2023-24					0.00	
Net assets at 31 March 2024			Total	18945.33	17794.00	25061.82
NB Assets added during the year are shown in bold italics						

(b) To receive & approve: updated risk management schedule

The risk register is reviewed and where necessary, updated annually. This year it would appear that no updates to the register are required so for Council's information the following is a summary of the risks within the various categories assessed-

Score	Assets	Financial	Public Liability	Employer Liability	Legal Liability	Councillor Propriety	Legal Expenses	Staffing	Total
No Risk (0)		2		1					3
Low Risk(1-2)	2	5		2	2	1			12
Medium (3-4)	1	1	2	2	1		1	2	10
High (5-6)			1			1			2

The high-risk area in Public Liability is-

Area	Likelihood (1-3)	Impact (1-3)	Risk	Notes	Control <i>(and agreed improvements)</i>
Legal liability arising from accident at events or activities	2	3	High (6)	Community Week events: Guidance provided by insurers about specific risks (eg bonfires). Voluntary activities (eg litter picking).	Confirmation obtained annually from CW Committee that proposed events covered under Council's Public Liability insurance (£10m). Assessment of any new events undertaken. Written risk assessment and plan prepared by Clerk prior to CW activities and any activity using volunteers.

And in Councillor Propriety is-

Conflicts of interest by councillors. Challenge to actions, with consequential financial loss and reputational damage	2	3	High (6)	Legal requirement for councillors to complete/submit Register of Interests to county Monitoring Officer. Code of Conduct adopted. Standing Orders specify policies and procedures in line with legislation.	Code of Conduct provided to all councillors. Clerk ensures councillors submit Register of Interests and retains copy. Agenda item at Annual Meeting reminding councillors of duty to keep Register up to date, Clerk ensures Standing Orders followed. Council reviews any changes to legislation and required changes to Standing Orders at least annually at Annual Meeting.
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Council is invited to discuss the above risk summary and either accept the assessment or alter the register, giving reasons.

(c) *To receive & consider:* the RFO's report and recommendations on insurance.

The Council has insured with Zurich Municipal from 1 June 2018

The following cover would be provided from 1 June 2024, with no change to the premium:

Property, all risks	£10,000
Money – cheques & in safe	£250,000
Money – elsewhere (in custody / not)	£5000 / £250
Employer liability	£10,000,000
Public liability	£10,000,000
Fidelity guarantee	£25,000
Libel and slander	£100,000
Officials indemnity	£10,000,000
Personal accident compensation	£20,000 /£50 per week
Legal expenses	£100,000

Since risks on balance have moved downwards somewhat these levels of cover are still considered adequate with one exception. The one area of concern is the asset cover at £10,000. This is now well below the level necessary with current value of Council assets being around £18,000. The Clerk has written again to Zurich asking for an upgrade to £20,000 and advice as to the revised premium.

The current premium of £167.44 is in the Payments for Authorisation section and should be paid so that insurance remains in place from 1 June 2024. Should an additional payment be required the RFO seeks delegated authority to pay that to increase the asset cover immediately.

Agenda item 51/24 Committees and membership 2023-24

To appoint/re-appoint Members to Committees and Working Groups

Council has two committees-

(a) Planning Committee

Remit - determining the Council's comments on planning applications under Standing Order 32:

Current Members - the Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio, Cllr Ken Bemand, Cllr Richard Collins, Cllr Janette Fullwood, Cllr. Anne Grace

(b) Community Week Committee

Remit – organising annual Community Week events and entertainment

Current Members - the Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio, Margaret Brown (Secretary and Treasurer) and any other member of the community wishing to attend.

The Council has one working group-

(c) Finance working group

Remit - advising the Council on (i) the draft budget for the following year, and (ii) the annual review of internal control procedures as required by audit regulations:

Current Members - the RFO, Cllr Tim Yair and Cllr. Chris Marston.

Since Cllrs Yair & Marston have become signatories on the bank account it is ideal to retain them on this working group.

Agenda item 52/24 Membership of other bodies etc.

To review: the Council's membership of HALC, CPRE and Parish Online.

To appoint: Councillors to the following positions-

Risbury Village Hall Committee representative: (Currently Cllr. Silk).

Stoke Prior Village Hall Committee representative:(Currently Cllr. Janette Fulwood)

Police Liaison Officer: (Currently Cllr. Fowler-Wrght).

Public Rights of Way Officers: (Currently Iain Cholerton (bridleways), Philip Brown (Humber) and one vacancy (Stoke Prior)

Safeguarding Officer: (Currently Cllr. Yair).

Humber Close Liaison Officer (Currently Cllr. Grace)

Agenda item 54/24 District Councillor's Report

The Wyescapes project launched on 8th May with its inaugural meeting held on the banks of the Wye in Hereford. The project brings together 40 land holdings covering more than 4000 hectares of land along the river corridor, spanning the county of Herefordshire from north to south.

The farmers and land managers are working to identify actions and changes they can make to restore the rivers' health such as reducing nutrient use, reverting high risk fields from arable cropping to grassland, creating new wetlands, floodplain meadows and woodlands.



The project's long term aim is to restore the Wye catchment to a healthy condition, so its rivers and their tributaries can support the unique wildlife that depends on them, provide clean and plentiful water, be resilient to climate change, mitigate flood risk, provide places for people to enjoy – all while supporting sustainable food production.

You will all be aware of the proposals in the pipeline, by a private organisation, to develop the old railway line that ran from Worcester to Leominster. Part of this old route runs across the top of the county, with most of it within Hampton Ward, hence the wide circulation. A feasibility study was carried out a couple of years ago at a cost of some £35k in this area alone. They are looking to create a footpath, cycle way and equestrian facility to run across the north of the county.

No detailed consultations were carried out with the owners of properties on these lands, or the landowners themselves, which has caused much concern and worry to those residents who could be seriously affected if these plans were to be adopted.

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that at a meeting this morning I was informed that these proposals are purely on a wish list and have no grounding in fact. Such developments have no chance of success in this county and can be disregarded.

One or two members of the organisation have recently been seen circulating around the area spreading falsehoods and rumour and they should be discouraged from trespassing on private property and any similar such actions.

Will you circulate this information as far and wide as possible in order to reassure residents that their homes and lands are safe.

Herefordshire Council has confirmed that it will be investing a total of £38.388m in improving the highway network in 2024/25, which is an increase of nearly £12m when compared with the previous year.

This increased funding will allow the council to target investment at those roads in the county that need it most, through resurfacing and surface dressing schemes.

To identify which roads will be included, the council uses data gathered from surveys, statutory inspections and reports of defects from members of the public. This data is then used to determine the condition of the road and what intervention would be optimal to prevent further deterioration and achieve best value for money.

In previous years the council has allocated the funding it receives for roads exclusively to our Public Realm Contractor (Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP)) however this year will also see the introduction of our new Herefordshire Highways Framework, which allows the Council to use alternative contractors where appropriate to deliver additional work. BBLP will still remain responsible for the delivery of public realm services and road maintenance work as agreed in the Annual Plan.

Agenda item 55/24 Planning Committee and Planning updates

(a) *To consider for comment: new applications*

Ford & Stoke Prior

240649 Grove Cottage, Ford Bridge, HR6 0LE. (Listed building consent)

Remove asbestos clad canopy roof to entrance. Replace with similar profile pitched roof with clay tiles on oak posts into existing stone post blocks.

Undecided

Humber

There are no new applications

(b) *To note: updates on current planning applications*

Ford & Stoke Prior

240279 Land at Hathaway, Stoke Prior, HR6 0LR

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.

Undecided

233624 Railway Meadow Bungalow Stoke Prior Leominster Herefordshire HR6 0LG

Proposed garden room extension and change of use of land from agricultural use to residential use to provide additional garden space (part retrospective).

Approved with conditions

233094 Priory Farm Stoke Prior HR6 0ND. The construction and retention of a rural worker's dwelling, seminar room and a range of eight stables with ancillary tack and hay store.

Undecided

223610 Land north of Bowley Court farm

anaerobic digestate storage lagoon (retrospective).

Change of use from a water storage lagoon to a water and

Undecided.

200705 Land adjoining Croft Gate Farm Stoke Prior. Proposed new dwelling and garage adjacent to Croft Gate farm. THIS IS A RE-CONSULTATION FROM A 2020 APPLICATION

Undecided

Humber.

240369 Great Marston Farmhouse, Farm Risbury HR6 0NJ

Proposed reconstruction of porch.

Approved with Conditions.

212600 - Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage, Risbury HR6 0NG

Approval of reserved matters following outline approval 181648 (residential development of 6 houses).

Undecided - on hold due to phosphates

212473 Dev 1 Land adjacent to Risbury Cross Cottage Risbury HR6 0NG

Proposed permission for the siting of a caravan to provide accommodation on site during the construction of a dwelling on Plot 5 approved under application ref 181648.

Undecided- on hold due to phosphates.

211802 - Land at Gob's Castle Risbury Leominster Herefordshire

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 7 9 10 11 12 13 15 18 19 & 21 attached to planning permission 173687.

Undecided

Agenda item 57/24 General Financial Matters

As at 9 May 2024 the bank balance was £13,564.20.

Income received since last meeting as at 9 May 2024

Description	Classification	Receipt £	Date received
We are farming Minds	Adverts	170.00	26/03/2024
J P Ltd TP50	Adverts	400.00	27/03/2024
Francis ND TP51	Adverts	100.00	28/03/2024
Herefordshire Council	Grant refund	3852.00	09/04/2024
Oak Tree Fun TP49	Adverts	150.00	12/04/2024
Herefordshire Council	Precept	7661.00	19/04/2024
Margaret Brown	Postage	20.00	29/04/2024
Grove Golf & Bowl	Adverts	200.00	30/04/2024
Nicola Davies	Adverts	30.00	01/05/2024
Jenny Pipes Morris TP56	Adverts	20.00	02/05/2024
Services for Indep TP55	Adverts	112.50	02/05/2024
Morris MDH TP58	Adverts	40.00	07/05/2024
Price, Jamie TP33	Adverts	100.00	08/05/2024
Woolhouse K&LS	Adverts	150.00	09/05/2024
TOTAL		£13005.50	

Note that the Pump advertising revenue is £1472.50

Payments made since last meeting

Minute 30/24

Description	Cost	VAT	Total	
Barrington Print	460.00	0.00	460.00	Feb 2024 Pump
Barrington Print	448.00	0.00	448.00	March 2024. Pump
Clerk's salary	346.73	0.00	346.73	Feb. 2024
Clerk's salary	346.73	0.00	346.73	March 2024. Pay 25 March 2024
HMRC PAYE	260.00	0.00	260.00	Q4 PAYE (to pay on 6 April 2024)
D C Garden Services	1740.00	348.00	2088.00	Grant works
HALC training 7 Feb. 2024	229.36	45.87	275.23	Cllr. training
Parish Noticeboard Co.	440.00	88.00	528.00	2 nd payment on noticeboard
Drain Doctor	980.00	196.00	1176.00	Drain cleaning W/Barrow, SP centre, Heath
Drain Doctor	375.00	75.00	450.00	Root cutting Heath
Gareth Higgs tree surgeon	1200.00	0.00	1200.00	Removal of willow tree at W/barrow
Clerk's mileage refund	133.20	0.00	133.20	296 miles @£0.45/mile
Clerk's office contribution	50.00	0.00	50.00	As last year
HMRC	325.44		325.44	PAYE Q4 (pay 6 th April)
Service Charge	18.00		18.00	Applied automatically
Total	£7352.46	£752.87	£8105.33	

Payments for authorisation

The following payments require authorisation by the meeting-

Description	£ Cost	£ VAT	£ Total	
Clerk's salary April 2024	260.13		260.13	
Clerk's salary May 2024	260.13		260.13	For payment 25 th May
Autela	65.28	13.05	78.33	Quarterly Payroll charge
Barrington Print 12507	460.00		460.00	The Pump printing (April 24)
Barrington Print 12613	460.00		460.00	The Pump printing (May 24)
Parish Online	30.00	6.00	36.00	Annual invoice, mapping services
Zurich Insurance	167.44		167.44	See note below. Annual renewal premium
Risbury Village Hall	32.00		32.00	May 24 meeting
Total	1734.98	19.05	1754.03	

The RFO is in discussion with the insurance company regarding increase in the asset values above the insurance liability. The outcome may be an increased premium. If the increase is reasonable the RFO would like delegated power to pay the invoice. Renewal date is 1 June 2024.

Agenda item 58/24 Clerk's working hours

In 2021 the Clerk raised concerns about the number of hours worked compared with the contract. The contract is for 416 hours/year which when holidays are taken account of the working hours are 360 or 30 hours/month. Council at that time was prepared to consider an increase in the Clerk's contracted hours but the Clerk favoured trying to cope with the work within the contracted hours. To a large extent this has been achieved through efficiency gains, particularly in the finance area. However, it would be fair to say that compared with the previous Clerk fewer hours have been worked and inevitably less work has been done. Over the past 2 years however, the situation has changed with more work being passed down from Herefordshire of a grant aided nature. Although this is to be welcomed the inevitable consequence is that more hours are being spent preparing work plans and then supervising contractors who are now working for the Parish Council rather than Herefordshire. In 2024-25 another grant scheme (drainage) will be added to the list.

The Clerk has conscientiously kept a timesheet since April 2021. This sheet reflects the trends as follows-

Year	Hours Worked	Excess Hours/year
2021-22	380.1	20.1
2022-23	374.7	14.1
2023-24	390.7	30.7

The data shows a reducing trend between 2021 and 2023 due to improved efficiency and the effect of becoming CiLCA qualified which helped improve capability. However, the workload increased during 2023 mainly due to the work involved in administering grants, dealing with the Limited Assurance Review and preparing for the HALC internal audit

The conclusion has to be that the Clerk's contracted working hours should be increased from 360 to at least 390 and to create a margin for work already known to be on the way an increase to 400 hours/year should be considered. This would be an increase of 11%.

Making such a change would be the fair way forward given that this problem was well known prior to 2020. However, the contract offered to the current Clerk was knowingly under resourced. This situation should be rectified, most particularly for the next Clerk who should be offered a fair contract.

It is also worth noting HALC comments on salary scales for a qualified Clerk. The Chairman has already raised this with the Clerk who will provide more information when time allows.

Agenda item 59/24 Current Projects

Project leads to provide any updates or plans for this year to deliver their projects.