
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Draft Minutes

of the extra ordinary Meeting of the Group Parish Council on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. Anne Grace
Cllr. Derek Silk
Cllr. James Hinton
Cllr. Richard Thomas
Cllr. Janette Fullwood

Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright (Chairman)
Cllr. Ken Bemand
Cllr. Chris Marston
Cllr. Rob Pugh
Cllr. Sarah Sneyd

Ward Councillor: Bruce Baker,

Clerk & RFO: Allan Drew

25 members of the public attended.

114/24 Apologies for absence

To receive: any apologies for absence

Cllr. Tim Yair sent his apologies.

Mr Philip Brown, Group Parishes' emergency resilience co-ordinator. Mr Brown is currently updating the plan and on Herefordshire Council's guidance, including anti-terrorism advice.

115/24 Declaration of interests and dispensations

To receive and record: any declarations of interest in agenda items in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted in July 2021.

To consider: any applications for dispensations in accordance with Standing Order 25.

116/24 Planning Committee and planning applications update

There have been no new applications since the meeting on 20 November 2024

Update

233037 Ashwood House Stoke Prior HR6 0LG

Application for the discharge of details reserved by condition 3 attached to planning permission 232181

Approved, condition 3 discharged

117/24 Ward Councillor's report

Cllr. Baker will reported that-

Herefordshire Council had been working hard to assist the County's residents with the widespread flooding following Storms Bert then Darragh. However, assistance can only be provided if residents report incidents. The quickest way for urgent reports is to telephone Herefordshire Council on 01432 261800. A reference number will be provided for follow up if necessary. Cllr. Baker explained that with such heavy rainfall drains will silt up very quickly and the only immediate relief can be provided by self help if possible. However, Herefordshire Council will prioritise its resources to alleviate these problems as soon as possible but these resources are limited so it may take some time to reach all the reports.

A Steensbridge resident reported that he had used the telephone service over two weeks ago but no action had been taken. Cllr. Baker offered to follow up on this matter and would obtain details from the resident after the meeting.

118/24 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman announced that Herefordshire Council maintained a list of vulnerable people in the County and if any resident knew of a vulnerable neighbour or relative the Parish Council would progress adding this person's details (with their consent) to the list.

Cllr. Baker mentioned that the service provided by Talk Community is invaluable in difficult and challenging situations. Further information is available at www.talkcommunitydirectory.org

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had a program of works across the Group Parishes to improve drainage services. That work would still go ahead but it might be possible to find ways of funding additional works if tonight's meeting revealed important causes of flooding which the Council's program did not include.

The Chairman then asked members of the public present to contribute their experiences.

119/24 Public participation

Residents raised the following issues-

- The Prill brook had risen very quickly and it was possible that a pond belonging to Ms Jackson had reached its limit and then spilled excess water into the Prill. There was some discussion around lower level spill pipes from the pond into the Prill but Cllr. Bemand pointed out that the volume of water was too great to manage effectively.
- The drainage around the Heath has been a problem for years but a resident suggested that the problem appeared to originate from higher up close to the Humber Woodland. It was questioned what Balfour Beatty actually did – not only around the Heath but most of the County's drains were blocked.
- Cllr. Thomas pointed out that in countries with very high rainfall the drains and sumps were sized appropriately. With the increased rainfalls now being experienced increasing the capacity of the drainage system was probably the only long term answer but was currently probably unaffordable.
- The Clerk explained the current position on Herefordshire Council grants and that, although the money sums were quite small, the Council would obtain better value from its contractors than Balfour Beatty could provide.
- The Steensbridge resident reported that his property had been used as a flood drain to remove water from the A44 in that the road had flooded badly and the easiest route for the water was to pass through his house. It flowed through for over an hour before the A44 was clear and it seemed unacceptable that a main trunk road should drain in this fashion. Cllr. Baker had visited the area and seen four flooded houses on the Steensbridge estate. Stonewater, the housing management agency had provided no help to residents and Cllr. Baker had asked Herefordshire Housing to intervene with Stonewater on behalf of these residents. Cllr. Grace mentioned that although there is a ditch along the A44 it is mostly blocked and it would not be safe for residents to try and "self help" in such situations. A44 matters are the responsibility of Herefordshire Council and the Chairman asked Cllr. Baker to arrange for the A44 drains to be cleared which he agreed to do.
- Several residents from the Bury were present and it was reported that the community's bio-digester is regularly flooded and costs a considerable sum to re-instate (£12,000 in last six months). The problem is that the bio-digester's outfall becomes blocked with silt and debris, the outfall water backs up and overwhelms the digester with expensive consequences. One of the problems is that most of the village water flows into the same ditch as the outfall and that ditch is now overflowing quite regularly. A resident observed that Bury residents are having to bear the financial consequences of poor drainage around the whole village. Cllr. Fullwood reported that these events had happened periodically during her 25 years at the Bury but there was no doubt that the violence and frequency of the storms had increased in the last few years. She emphasised that no sewage had reached the water courses. However, there was a problem with erosion under the sewage pipe which crossed the road and a claim against Herefordshire Council for remedial work is being considered. A manhole requiring repair would involve a road closure and the cost is prohibitive.
- Normans Lane created a considerable amount of debris which could wash into the drains but help from the Bemands and Evans's had prevented much of that debris reaching the system.
- A Risbury resident was greatly concerned that his property was the recipient of a significant amount of floodwater and he did not accept that although the water flowed through a pipe on his property that this was his responsibility. Cllr. Thomas explained that legally water has to be accepted from higher up and passed on without hindrance to lower down. Eventually those at the lowest level are expected and required to deal with that water. Cllr. Baker reminded everyone that should that water be discharged onto the highway that was an offence. The resident had discussed an additional pipe with the Clerk but the project would be beyond Parish Council means and would require consents from adjacent landowners. Cllr. Baker would follow up with the resident outside the meeting.

120/24 Council discussion

Council discussion then resolved to complete the following works although some are already included in whole or part in the current works schedule. (Status of initiative shown in bold).

- In the Risbury Court/Hollywall Croft/Risbury Mill area there are problems with a ditch and a drain which needs located. When located work may be required to improve drainage in that area. An area of previous work at the low point should be blocked up. **Already partly included on works schedule. Remedial work, if necessary may increase costs.**
- Drainage in the area around St Lukes church would be improved if an additional drain was created. Mr Fullwood, a Bury resident had noted how the slope of the road could be used to good effect by placing a roadside drain at a specific location. Much of the water from the road could then be diverted into a ditch or even (with landowner consent) into the adjacent field. Mr Fullwood has provided Council with pictures and precise locations to undertake this work. **Lengthsman to provide a quotation and Council to progress with landowner – Mr R. Bemand.**
- A depth marker at Ford bridge would be a worthwhile safety addition since vehicles are increasingly being stranded in unexpectedly deep water from the Lugg. **Double sided surface mount depth gauges are available at about £200 ex-VAT. Require installation on a simple concrete pad.**

- In the War Memorial area the drains need jetted through particularly around the Old Post Office area. **Included in current works program**
- Cllr. Hinton would discuss with Matthew Jackson possible approaches to achieve changes to Ms Jackson's (Wall End Farm) pond. **New initiative.**
- At Steensbridge the housing association (Stonewater) has been unresponsive so far. However, an article in the Hereford Times and action at Hope under Dinmore had produced results for residents elsewhere. With heavy rain flood water runs from the Luce farm down to the White House and Orchard Cottage and collects on the north side of the A44. There is a ditch but there is no grip to feed water into the ditch. It would be a Balfour Beatty responsibility on a main road to create a grip. **Cllr. Baker will pick up the matter with the Locality Steward. Not for resolution by Parish Council**
- The area around SPVH noticeboards has washed out and needs remedial action. After some discussion it was agreed that plastic gravel containers used in car parks could be the answer and the Clerk would discuss and instruct the Lengthsman as required. (The ECOGRID product looks suitable). **Discuss with Lengthsman and instruct as necessary.**
- Cllr. Fullwood suggested that a Councillor could accompany the Lengthsman and point out problem areas. There is grant money allocated to map drainage assets and this work could be combined with this activity. **Included in current instructions.**
- Sandbags would be purchased and available in several locations. These locations would be-
 - One third each at-
 - Great Marston (Philip Brown)
 - Stoke Prior Village Hall
 - Steensbridge (Brook House & Humber Close)
 After considerable debate it was agreed that 150 sandbags in polypropylene bags would be purchased. **Purchase in progress**
- Councillor Grace suggested that information on helping residents deal with flooding would be most useful. Cllr. Grace would draft a paper for discussion be Council. **New initiative.**
- Cllr. Marston reminded all present that when damage occurred the first step should be to contact their insurance company. **Useful advice**
- The Chairman had noted that Orleton PC had permission to erect signs of flooding and make road closures. These actions are enforceable by Police and it may be an initiative the Council could explore. **Council to consider for future action.**

121/24 Matters for discussion at the next meeting

To note: the next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.30pm in Risbury village hall

Meeting closed at 9.37pm