
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Council Meeting, November 2019

Report from the Clerk

1. Recruitment of new Clerk/RFO and transition arrangements

- 1.1 As announced at the last meeting, the current Clerk/RFO will leave post from 1 October 2020. In preparation for Council to consider the process for recruitment of a new Clerk/RFO, a paper has been prepared analysing the current role and time spent on each area. The paper also outlines proposals for developing a revised job description and covering some areas of work which may not fall within this.
- 1.2 It is suggested that the Council meeting consider the broad remit of a revised job description and authorise the current Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to finalise this and advertise for a new Clerk/RFO from February 2020.

2. *We Don't Buy Crime Smartwater initiative*

- 2.1 By Christmas 2019 a total of 210 Smartwater kits had been registered, meeting the target for the Police & Crime Commissioner to provide free signage for the parishes. The location of signs has been agreed by the Clerk with the police, and these will be provided early in 2020.
- 2.2 Smartwater kits are still available for properties in the parishes who have not claimed one, and email reminders and articles in the Pump have been circulated, asking residents to make an appointment. Letters are also being delivered to remaining properties.

3. Road Safety

- 3.1 A response is still awaited to the Council's proposals for other speed limits and road safety measures in the parishes, sent in August 2019, and the request for a site meeting following the petition from Steens Bridge residents in September 2019.

4. The Lamb Inn

- 4.1 The valuation report commissioned from Sidney Phillips agents to inform an offer, is still awaited because of the personal circumstances of the property's owner.

5. Flooding and roads

- 5.1 Following the flooding in October and November, there was further heavy rain and flooding from 12 December, peaking on 20 December 2019. This affected some properties in Risbury and Stoke Prior, and made roads impassable in several places, notably the C1110 near Risbury Bridge and near Cross Cottage, and also the C1112 in central Stoke Prior and near Leominster Golf Club. Other roads were passable with difficulty, notably the C1110 at The Heath and the C1055 near Broadstone.
- 5.2 The Lengthsman was called out on 18 and 20 December to try to alleviate the flooding near Wheelbarrow Castle, including clearing some of the ditch there and sandbagging Cross Cottage. The Clerk inspected and photographed the flooding here on 20 December. A stream draining the high ground above the road flows into a drain at the bottom of footpath SP32A; these drains are functioning, but were overwhelmed by the recent intense rainfall, and the obstructions in the ditch and culvert near Cross Cottage prevented

floodwater escaping down the lane to the Lugg. The remainder of the ditch there and the culvert under the entrance to Cross Cottage has subsequently been cleared by the owner, and this will be monitored to check how this improves floodwater clearance.

- 5.3 The Clerk also inspected and photographed flooding locations elsewhere in the parishes, and was able to clear the flooding near Risbury Bridge: the drain here was again working but was overwhelmed with the volume of water and debris covering the drain. The drains in the centre of Stoke Prior were working, but were also overwhelmed with the volume of water; the floodwater subsided after several hours. The flooding at Leominster Golf Club was from the Lugg overtopping its banks, and persisted for some days. The flooding at The Heath and near Broadstone are, apparently, because the soakaways here are now fully silted up, and need re-building. Floodwater from adjacent land in Risbury also threatened some properties, and the Lengthsman and Clerk have investigated the ditch and drains near Holly Barn as it appears that there may be one more old culverts blocked. The Clerk is asking the adjacent landowner to deepen the ditch and open up any blocked culverts here.
- 5.4 The Clerk and Cllr Stovold are meeting an officer from Herefordshire Council on 9 January to discuss the Natural Flooding defence approach , and will report back to Council on this.

6. Lengthsman Work

- 6.1 £1065 has been spent so far on minor highways maintenance, including clearing drain tops, strimming around signs, benches and salt-grit bins, and ditch-clearance near Cross Cottage. £1235 remains in the budget for 2019-20.
- 6.2 £307.58 has been spent so far on PROW maintenance, including repairing gates and strimming. £192.42 remains in the budget for 2019-20.

7. Verge-cutting schedule

- 7.1 Balfour Beatty asked parishes in December 2019 whether they wished to omit the first verge-cut (in May/June) , and if so which locations should still be cut for safety reasons. This matter is on the agenda for this meeting.

Philip Brown

Clerk to the Council

8 January 2020