



ANNUAL MEETING

7.30pm 17th MAY 2023

STOKE PRIOR 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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Herefordshire HR7 4RL

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Councillors are summoned to the Annual Meeting of the Group Parish Council to be held on

**Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7.30pm
in Stoke Prior Village Hall**

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

10th May 2023

Allan M Drew
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

First business

42/23 Election of Chairman

- (a) *To elect:* a Chairman for 2023-24.
- (b) *To receive:* the elected Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

43/23 Election of vice-chairman

To elect: a vice-chairman for 2023-24

44/23 Apologies for absence

To receive: any apologies for absence.

45/23 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.

46/23 Minutes of the last meeting

- (a) *To approve:* the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th March 2023
- (b) *To note:* any matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

47/23 Chairman's Announcements

To note: any announcements from the Chairman.

48/23 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

49/23 Annual reports 2022-23

- (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.

50/23 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for 2022-23

- (a) *To consider:* a report from the Responsible Financial Officer
 - (b) *To approve:* the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023
 - (c) *To approve:* the Bank Reconciliation Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023
 - (d) *To consider:* the Internal Audit Report and checklist
 - (e) *To approve:* the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31 March 2023
 - (f) *To approve:* the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023
 - (g) *To note:* the accounts for 2022-23 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

51/23 Review of Standing Orders

To report: the Standing Orders (2013) have been kept under review and amendments adopted in March 2014, December 2014, July 2017, July 2018, March 2019 and July 2021.

52/23 Review of Financial Regulations

To report: the Financial Regulations (2016) have been reviewed by the Responsible Financial Officer and no amendments are proposed.

53/23 Review of Council procedures and policies

To report: the Clerk has reviewed Council's policies

Annual business – forthcoming year

54/23 Allocation of portfolios to Councillors

Each Councillor to take a lead role in an aspect of the Council's business. Suggested roles are-

Finance
Community engagement
Planning, Stoke Prior
Planning, Humber
Drainage, Stoke Prior
Drainage, Humber
PROWs Stoke Prior

PROWs Humber
Pump liaison
Road Safety
Technology

55/23 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

56/23 Committees and membership 2023-24

- (a) Planning Committee
To consider: the appointment of members (Chairman and vice-Chairman ex-officio and four other councillors) to the Planning Committee for 2023-24, 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 2023-24, 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

57/23 Membership of other bodies, representatives and portfolios 2023-24

- (a) *To review:* subscriptions to other bodies (HALC, CPRE and Parish Online).
- (b) *To appoint:* representatives to Risbury and Stoke Prior Village Hall Committees.
- (c) *To appoint:* a Police Liaison Officer.
- (d) *To appoint:* a Humber Close Liaison Officer.
- (e) *To appoint:* a Public Rights of Way Officer and deputies.
- (f) *To appoint:* a nominated person for Safeguarding under the Council's Safeguarding policy.

58/23 Dates of meetings for 2023-24

To receive and approve: meeting dates for the following year:
Wednesday 19 July 2023, Wednesday 20 September 2023, Wednesday 15 November 2023,
Wednesday 17 January 2024, Wednesday 20 March 2024, Wednesday 15 May 2024 (Annual Meeting) all at 7.30pm.

Ordinary business

59/23 District Councillor

To receive: a report from Cllr Baker.

60/23 Planning Committee and Planning updates

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

Ford & Stoke Prior

230934, Stoke Haven, Normans Lane, Stoke Prior
a proposed single storey side extension.

Proposed Certificate of Lawfulness for
Comments not required.

230829, Land at Heath Farm Stoke Prior Proposed non-material amendment to planning permission 181844 (proposed new dwelling) - to change cladding of garage/workshop walls from timber shiplap to the same brick as house.
Approved with Conditions (Comments not required)

Humber

There are no new applications

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

Ford & Stoke Prior

230076 Ashwood House, Stoke Prior. Proposed detached garage to include garden room with home office above.
Approved with Conditions.

224117 Wood Park, Stoke Prior Erection of new 4 bedroom dormer bungalow to replace existing bungalow and annexe.
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.

221781 Highfield Cottage, Stoke Prior, HR6 0LW Proposed two storey extension and detached cart shed (3 bay garaging). Access track and entrance to road to C1055.
Undecided.

204230 Priory Farm, Stoke Prior, HR6 0ND : Proposed alterations and development of existing equine facilities to form a new indoor arena, stabling and an essential worker's dwelling
Refused.

Humber.

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

61/23 Community Week Committee

To receive: a report from the Community Week committee

62/23 General Financial Matters

To approve: the authorisation of payments

63/23 Lengthsman

To consider: renewal of Lengthsman contract for 2023-24

64/23 To maintain the General Power of Competence by Resolution

65/23 Current projects

To receive: any updates on current projects

Environment

Cllr Yair

Website development Cllrs. Yair & Marston

Welcome Pack Cllr. Fullwood

66/23 Co-option to Council vacancies

Following the May election there are three unfilled Councillor vacancies – two in Humber and one in Stoke Prior. Council must move to fill these vacancies without delay (and within 35 days from polling day) to prevent the principal authority taking action to fill these vacancies. Under Representation of the People Act 1985 s.21 Council can now move immediately to co-option and residents may not claim the usual by-election.

Council should resolve to start the co-option process immediately.

67/23 Matters for information and future business

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

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 15th March 2023 at 7.30pm in Risbury Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Ken Bemand
Cllr. Tim Yair
Cllr. Jeanette Fulwood
Cllr. Chris Marston
Cllr. Steph Wilson
Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright (Chairman)
Cllr. Ritchard Thomas
Cllr. Gill Stovold
Cllr. Will Jackson

Ward Councillor: John Harrington
Clerk & RFO: Allan Drew

26/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Collins and Grace.

27/23 Declaration of interests and dispensations

None received

28/23 Minutes of the last meeting

Cllr. Marston raised a point on the draft minutes of 18th January where Stoke Prior school is described as Stoke Prior First School. The correct description is Stoke Prior Primary School. The Clerk would amend the draft minutes and ensure in future when checking details of Stoke Prior that it was Stoke Prior, *Leominster* and not Stoke Prior, *Bromsgrove*. The minutes of the meeting of 18th January 2023 were then agreed. The minutes of 1st February were also agreed. The Chairman signed both sets of minutes.

29/23 Matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

The Clerk noted that Risbury village hall committee had now secured a Gigaclear fibre connection for use by those hiring the hall.
David Wilkinson, Planning Enforcement stated he would be visiting the Lamb Inn on 16 March

30/23 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman reminded the meeting that Ms Paxton's funeral is on Saturday 18 March. He had sent a letter on behalf of the Council to Ms Paxton's family.

The Chairman is in touch with Ian Godding who installed the plaques for the War Memorial to obtain an estimate for repairing the damage caused recently by a large vehicle.

There is a "plague" of empty beer cans around the Stoke Prior roads. A number of Councillors had noticed the same problem over the past 3 months but there is no clear explanation on why this problem is occurring. The possibility of a sign was discussed but its effectiveness was questioned. Council resolved that-

- A notice would be placed in The Pump and that the Police had been notified.
- The Clerk would contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team and seek advice on what might be done.

31/23 Public participation

No members of the public were present

32/23 District Councillor's report

Ward Councillor John Harrington reported that-

- The first stage of "gap analysis" on the Eastern bridge has been completed and there was now a comprehensive view of the works required to build the crossing. The strategic business case for the project was also nearly completed. The cost estimate is £56m.
- The Hereford masterplan to create joined up transport in the city is progressing.
- The transport plan which is refreshed every 5 years is also in preparation. Plans for the market towns have, for the first time, also been prepared.
- The revised Core Strategy is almost in final draft stage and will be ready for inspection by end of summer. The main difference from the current plan is that many smaller settlements are likely to be excluded for development, with development concentrated on the city and market towns.
- The public realm contract with Balfour Beatty has been under significant scrutiny. The costs of bringing the operation back in-house are around £3m. A middle of road approach is being considered where Herefordshire Council takes the key technical staff back in-house to create a more performance-based scrutiny approach to the contract. Although the elections are due in May the approach has been cross party so there are hopes that these policies would move forward irrespective of the election outcome.
- 120 asylum seekers had arrived in the Three Counties though this was not a Council initiative.
- The lagoon planning application (223610) would be decided at Planning Committee since the case has passed the public interest threshold.
- Cllr. Bemand raised the question of the pedestrianisation of Corn Square, Leominster and Cllr. Harrington mentioned that the Leominster Heritage Action Plan had obtained significant funding and the question was out for consultation. The issue was important because the square is currently available as a short-term car park. The consultation is currently live and the Parish Council can comment.

33/23 Planning Committee and planning applications update

(a) *To consider:* new applications

Ford & Stoke Prior

230615, The Slough, Stoke Prior Proposed cover to feed range and general agricultural storage
Application for "prior approval not required". **Comments not required.**

Risbury There are no new applications

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

Ford & Stoke Prior

230076 Ashwood House, Stoke Prior. Proposed detached garage to include garden room with home office above. **Undecided.**

224117 Wood Park, Stoke Prior Erection of new 4 bedroom dormer bungalow to replace existing bungalow and annexe. **Undecided.**

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Risbury.

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

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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**

34/23 General Financial Matters

Bank balance on 9 March 2023 is £10757.03

Income received since last meeting as at 9 March 2023-

Date	Description	Amount	Classification
19/01/2023	Thomas RG	£73.00	Adverts

Payments made since last meeting

The following payments were agreed at the January 2023 meeting (minute reference 11/23) and have been made.

Description	Cost	VAT	Total	
Clerk's December 2022 salary	£318.58		£318.58	Clerk's December salary
Clerk's January 2023 salary	£318.78		£318.78	Clerk's January salary (pay 25 th January)
Autela	£45.00	£9.00	£54.00	Payroll Q3
D C Garden Services	£487.50	£97.50	£585.00	WO 6 & 7 (new stiles on PG12 & HU11)
Postage Stamps	£14.50		£14.50	Refund to Clerk
HALC	£523.94	£104.79	£628.73	Subscriptions 2023-24

Total payments made - £1919.59

Payments for Authorisation

Description	Cost	VAT	Total	
Clerk's February salary	£624.03		£624.03	Clerk's February salary. Includes salary arrears from 1 April
Clerk's March 2023 salary	£346.53		£346.53	Clerk's March salary (pay 25 th March)
HMRC	£325.44		£325.44	PAYE Q4 (pay 6 th April)
Barrington Print	£398.00		£398.00	February Pump
Barrington Print	£438.00		£438.00	March Pump
Risbury VH	£21.00		£21.00	Hall hire – wildlife cafe
Risbury VH	£20.00		£20.00	Hall hire – 1 Feb meeting
Gwent web design	£155.00	£31.00	£186.00	Website hosting & domain names
Margaret Brown	£18.32		£18.32	Pump postage refund
D C Gardening Services	£3807.50	£761.50	£4569.00	Scraping drain tops, reinstatement of grippers, digging out some ditches
Society of Local Council Clerks	£146.00		£146.00	Membership of SLCC. Rotates, Clerk, Pencombe then HFSP. Pay 1 April
Clerk's mileage	£129.60		£129.60	288 miles @£0.45/mile. July 2022 minute 61/22. See mileage record following.
Clerk's office	£50.00		£50.00	Contribution to office heating and lighting. July 2022 minute. 61/22

Total payments for authorisation – £6434.42 + £792.50=£7226.92

Council resolved that these payments should be made. The RFO also mentioned that the payment to CPRE at renewal date had been raised as agreed at the last Annual meeting and would be in the authorisation queue along with the above payments.

Allan Drew	Clerk Mileage	2022-23		
Date	Journey	Purpose	Car	Mileage
13-May	Home-Risbury-Stoke Prior-Home	Agenda posting	PX65 VOB	13
18-May	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Council meeting	PX65 VOB	13
26-May	Home-Risbury-Home	PROW officers meeting	PX65 VOB	7
31-May	Home-Steens Bridge-Home	Lengthsman & f/path officer meeting	PX65 VOB	18
20-Jun	Home-Risbury-Stoke Prior-Home	Posting Public Rights Notice	PX65 VOB	13
14-Jul	Home-The Drum-Home	Agenda posting+High Fields	PX65 VOB	14
20-Jul	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Council meeting	PX65 VOB	13
09-Aug	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Briefing Mike Hayward	PX65 VOB	13
10-Sep	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Posting changes to meetings	PX65 VOB	13
28-Sep	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	The Lamb Inn meeting	PX65 VOB	13
14-Oct	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Posting agendas	PX65 VOB	13
16-Oct	Home-Stoke Prior-Home	Council meeting	PX65 VOB	13
08-Nov	Home -Humber-Stoke Prior-A44-Home	Meeting with Chairman, debris on ro	PX65 VOB	20
16/11/2022	Home Risbury - Home	Council meeting	PX65 VOB	7
06-Jan	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Lamb meeting with Chairman	PX65 VOB	13
12-Jan	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Agenda posting	PX65 VOB	13
15-Jan	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	lengthsman Steve Smith & The Heath	PX65 VOB	13
18-Jan	Home - Risbury - Home	January meeting	PX65 VOB	7
27-Jan	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Posting agendas for 1 Feb meeting	V88 AMD	13
01-Feb	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Meeting attendance	V88 AMD	13
06-Mar	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Posting election notices	PF72 UFM	13
10-Mar	Home - Stoke Prior - Home	Posting agendas	PF72 UFM	13
15-Mar	Home - Risbury - Home	Attending meeting	PF72 UFM	7
				288
				"@£0.45/mile"
				£129.60

Clerk's Mileage Record 2022-23

Setting the budget for 2023-24

With the setting of the precept at the January meeting it is now possible to finalise the budget for 2023-24.

A draft budget was prepared some weeks ago and passed to Cllrs. Marston & Yair (Finance Committee) for any comments they wished to make.

Council was satisfied with the proposed budget and it was resolved that the budget be accepted.

The budget follows-

2022-23						2023-24	NOTES
	INCOME	OUTTURN 2021-22	BUDGET 2022-23	FORECAST OUTTURN	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET	FORECAST	
1	Precept	12289.00	12289.00	12289.00	0.00	15000.00	As agreed at January 2023 meeting
2	Pump Advertising	1088.00	1500.00	1500.00	0.00	2500.00	22-23 concerning. Outturn forecast requested from advertising manager
3	Pump Postage	60.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	
4	Grants	0.00	6000.00	4300.00	-1700.00	1000.00	Additional grant for 2022-23 not (yet) received. 22-23 f/cast outturn reduced. £1000 estimated for 23-24
5	Other Income	2323.00	100.00	115.00	15.00	2000.00	Released from reserves (The Lamb)
6	VAT Reclaim	0.00	798.00	798.00	0.00	2400.00	£798 Reclaim submitted awaiting receipt.
7	CW Fundraising	863.00	850.00	2070.00	1220.00	0.00	Under control of CW committee
	Other Projects		800.00	1820.00	1020.00	0.00	22-23 War Mem. Plaques sale
8	TOTAL INCOME	16623.00	22437.00	22992.00	555.00	23000.00	
	EXPENDITURE						
9	Clerk	3758.12	3920.00	4432.80	-512.80	4500.00	Reflects April 2022 salary scales plus mileage & office contribution.
10	Administration	521.00	625.00	450.00	175.00	656.00	+5% uplift for likely inflation
11	Insurance, audit, professional	783.00	800.00	750.00	50.00	840.00	+5% uplift for likely inflation
12	Website & IT	322.00	350.00	150.00	200.00	160.00	+5% uplift for likely inflation
13	Hire of Halls	216.00	220.00	220.00	0.00	180.00	Current rates maintained
14	Training and development	175.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	New Council - 4 HALC training sessions
15	Equipment	132.99	200.00	1065.00	-865.00	200.00	Nominal amount
16	Maintenance	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	Nominal amount
17	HMRC	939.40	972.00	1055.20	-83.20	1055.00	Linked directly to Clerk's salary
18	Other	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Remembrance Day wreath
19	DAY TODAY EXPENDITURE	6897.51	7237.00	8173.00	-936.00	8241.00	Compared with 2022-23 costs are 7.70% above f/cast outturn and 13.3% above budget.
	PROJECTS						
20	War Memorial	0.00	4450.00	6000.00	-1550.00	0.00	Project completed 2022-23
21	Parish Pump	2493.06	3850.00	3850.00	0.00	4042.00	+5% uplift for inflation
22	Lengthsman	2332.06	8000.00	8000.00	0.00	3900.00	Assumes 1000 grant plus 2900 from precept
23	Community Week	643.24	2450.00	2450.00	0.00	0.00	Under control of CW committee
24	Environment Project	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2000.00	As agreed at January 2023 meeting
25	Website modernisation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3000.00	As agreed at January 2023 meeting
26	Welcome pack	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	As agreed at January 2023 meeting
27	Project D	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		TBA
28	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	5468.36	18750.00	20300.00	-1550.00	13442.00	
29	Reclaimable VAT on the above	798	800	2400.00	1600.00	2900.00	
30	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7695.51	26787.00	30873.00	-886.00	21683.00	

35/23 Lengthsman

The Clerk reported that the routine work required on ditches, grips etc had now been completed using the drainage grant.

Cllr. Bemand reported that there were a number of areas needing attention, particularly for jetting. The Clerk had contacted BB about jetting and had not received a reply. Cllr. Harrington offered to progress the issue and he suggested that Cllrs. send a short note to the Clerk giving locations of problem areas.

Road closures were also discussed particularly the length of time roads remained closed when no work was being carried out. Cllr. Harrington said a scheme is now in place to time limit closures and fine companies which do not carry out work promptly.

The Clerk reported on two schemes proposed by the Lengthsman-

The ditch outside the Brambles which suffers from blockages. Cllr. Harrington would ask the Locality Steward to check what could be done to alleviate the problem. A resident, Mr Thomas was prepared to remove the waste soli etc. if the Parish was prepared to dig the ditch out.

The ditch outside Poplands Cottage was not considered to be a problem. However, Cllr. Thomas would have a look next time he was in the area.

36/23 Provision of a defibrillator for Stoke Prior

There was general agreement that a defibrillator would be a worthwhile idea, given that the nearest one is at Leominster Golf Club, 1.6 miles away.

Funding could be by a variety of means and the favoured method is often match funding. Village events for fundraising could be held and the target sum to raise would be £2000 to cover the first 5 years. The electrical installation would be additional to that. It was agreed that the definitive costs must be established and then fund-raising initiatives agreed. A Pump article could then launch the fund raising.

37/23 Speeding on the A44 in the area of Steens Bridge

Cllr. Marston reported that-

- Following the November meeting held at the Drum crossroads there is to be an extension of the 50mph speed limit on the A44.
- There had been ongoing attempts to hold a meeting with Highways to discuss the speeding around the Steens Bridge area. Cllr. Harrington would ask the relevant officer, Simon Hobbs, to get in touch.
- Cllr. Harrington also mentioned that co-operation between Parishes and villages to solve these problems would be more powerful in terms of getting assistance. Bredenbury had recently been successful in obtaining some funding. An effective grouping could be Bredenbury, Docklow, HFSP and Leominster South.

38/23 Investigating the wider aims and specific objectives of the Group PC

Wikipedia lists a large number (but not quite all) of principal local authorities which have declared a climate emergency, including Herefordshire Council.

Quite a number of Parish Councils have also followed suit but there does not appear to be a list of these Councils. However, NALC is a strong supporter of local Councils declaring a climate emergency. Council resolved, with one abstention, to declare a climate emergency. It was noted that such a declaration is meaningless unless backed up by actions.

Cllr. Yair had recently completed a paper detailing the background to the climate emergency along with possible actions and initiatives for the environmental project. This paper is appended to these minutes

The Chairman introduced his idea of developing the Parish PROWs into a number of trails which would have points of interest and wildlife observation/guidance. One aim is to draw the parts of the Parish together and to foster a shared sense of location. The names of the 15 soldiers Commemorated on the War Memorial would be incorporated into the trails and the areas where they lived and worked could be highlighted. A booklet would be produced for use by walkers and residents.

Cllr. Marston asked if he was able to progress the contract with Tangled Web for the website development and Council agreed he could do so.

Cllr. Fullwood reported that the Welcome Pack is moving forward and a meeting would be held with Barrington Print shortly

39/23 Elections May 2023 – Update and Any Questions?

The Clerk distributed Nomination Forms to all those intending to stand again. He would post forms to Cllrs. Collins and Grace. He also pointed out that there would likely be three unfilled vacancies after the election although of course there may be candidates which Council did not know about. The important point is that if the General Power of Competence is to be retained then at least two thirds (rounded up) of Councillors must be elected (not co-opted). Should there be 3 vacancies after the election then there would be 8 elected Councillors which is just sufficient to retain the General Power.

The Clerk told Council that this current Council remained until the fourth day after the count had been declared which by his reckoning would be Thursday 11 May. On that date the new Council would take office and the old Council would retire.

The Clerk also mentioned that with the retirement of Cllr. Jackson additional signatories on the bank account would be required and it was agreed that Cllr. Yair and Marston would be appointed as signatories.

40/23 The Annual Parish Meeting – Set the date and agree any content

The Clerk reported that the Police service would like to attend the Parish Meeting and talk about current aspects of rural crime. After some discussion it was agreed that the format would remain the same as before with the Parish Meeting held first at 7pm on 17 May followed then by the Annual Parish *Council* Meeting. (Note: since this meeting the Police have confirmed that they will attend the Parish meeting on 17 May to talk about rural crime and answer questions from residents)

41/23 Matters for information and future business

Cllr. Yair reported that the school is considering options to join a multi academy trust. No decision has yet been taken.

Date of next meeting

To note: the next scheduled meeting (the Annual Meeting) will be on Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7.30pm in Stoke Prior village hall

To note: The Annual *Parish* Meeting will be held before the Annual Parish *Council* meeting at 7 pm also in Stoke Prior Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.36pm

Signed (Chairman) Date

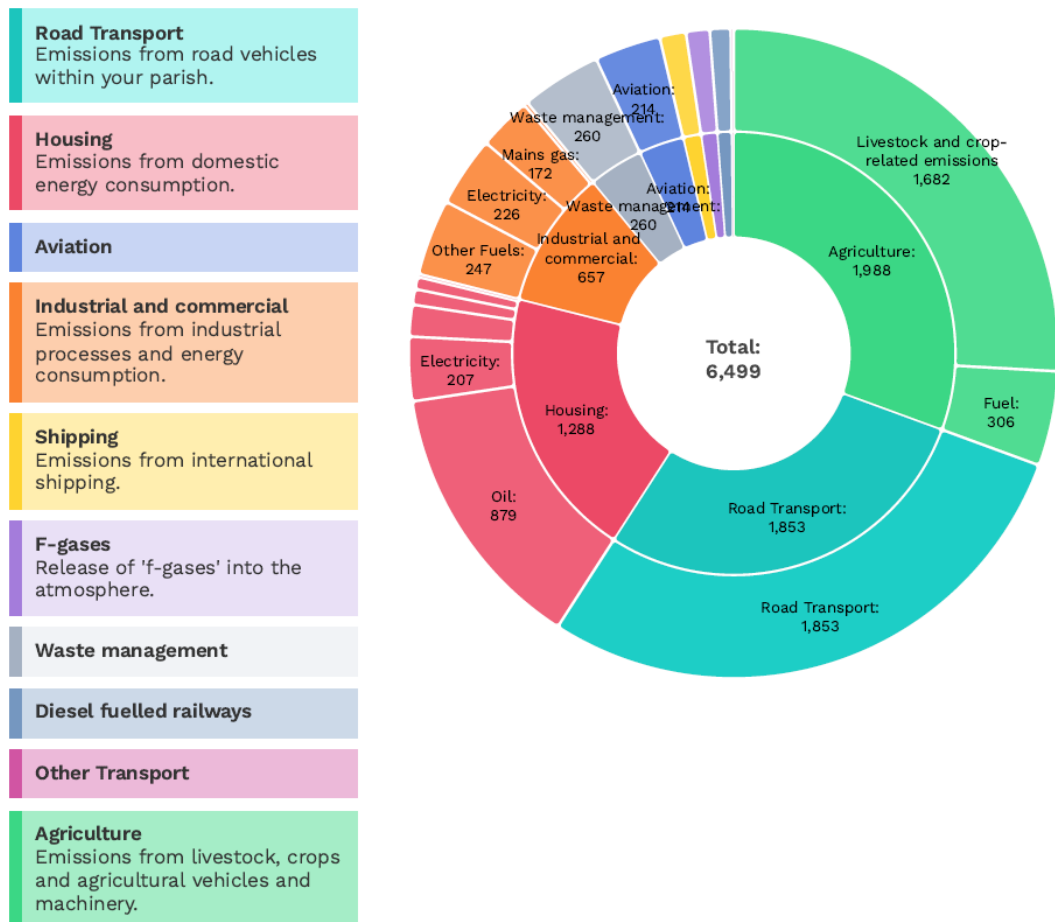
Humber, Ford and Stoke Prior Parish Council

Declaration of a Climate Emergency

1. Declaration Background

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by around 1.2°C from preindustrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm), which far exceeds the 350-ppm deemed to be safe level for humanity.

In order to mitigate catastrophic climate breakdown it is imperative that we act to reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than two tonnes. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation and infrastructure to make low carbon living easier and the new norm.



Carbon brief analysis has shown that those born today will need to have lifetime carbon budgets almost 90% lower than someone born in 1950. www.carbonbrief.org

Carbon emissions results from both the production and consumption of energy and fast, deep cuts in global emissions from energy, transport and food are needed: the world is on track to overshoot the Paris agreement 1.5°C limit before 2015.

The intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) special report on global warming

describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to 1.5°C rise and reported that we have 12 years to limit climate catastrophe. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and subnational authorities, civil society, a private sectors, indigenous peoples and communities. www.ipcc.ch

Local authorities have an important role in delivering carbon emission reductions, particularly in transport but also in other areas such as buildings as well as highlighting the wealth of medical benefits to public health. It is therefore easy to see that addressing climate change addresses all areas of public concern; from infrastructure, transport to health.

Councils are responding by declaring a “Climate Emergency” and committing resources to address this emergency. Herefordshire Council has declared its own climate emergency and are putting in place action plans to support their declaration. This declaration sets out how Humber Ford and Stoke Prior Group Parish can play its role.

2. The Proposal

- a. That Humber Ford and Stoke Prior Group Parish Council declares a Climate Emergency.
- b. In Declaring this climate emergency – Humber Ford and Stoke Prior Group Parish Council agrees to:
 - i. Commit to an accelerated reduction of carbon emissions with the aspiration to become a carbon neutral community by 2050 at the latest in line with the UK government’s recommendations. www.theccc.org.uk
 - ii. Establish a Climate Change Task Force to help work with local partners to develop a carbon reduction action plan for the Group Parish.
 - iii. Work with our local community to enable them to take all possible measures to match or better our efforts, and to support our community to demonstrate, inspire and share best practice – within the Group Parish and further afield.
 - iv. Work towards our community buildings only using 100% renewable energy where possible.
 - v. Focus on key local issues, including public and community transport, recycling, management of our own open spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity, and other areas where we have a positive role to play.
 - vi. Strongly encourage Herefordshire Council to act in accordance with their own climate emergency declaration. For example – planning conditions for all new developments, both residential and commercial, should be as close to zero carbon and include renewable energy provision.
 - vii. Help provide the necessary resources to deliver on this carbon reduction commitment, and to monitor and report annually on our progress.

3. Possible actions – What We Will Do

A way of working to achieve our targets is perhaps simplest to organise our actions into three categories:

- Actions that will be best achieved by the Group Parish Council;
- Actions that can be championed by local community with special interest groups;
- Actions that could be implemented by us all as individual households.

4. Considerations for Humber Ford and Stoke Prior Parish Council

4.1 Transport

- 4.1.1 Support the development of car sharing
- 4.1.2 Put in place EV charging
- 4.1.3 Help in the uptake of energy efficient vehicles generally
- 4.1.4 Press for the use of electric and carbon efficient buses.

4.2 Buildings

- 4.2.1 Push for higher standards on the current national standards for new build ideally all new homes and commercial properties should be zero carbon or even better.
- 4.2.2 Help property owners and especially households with limited income with energy efficiency and understanding the measures.
- 4.2.3 Lobby for minimum energy efficiency standards in private rented sector
- 4.2.4 Work in partnership with Herefordshire Council to enforce building standards – enforce planning/building conditions to ensure all new builds are meeting the targets they were granted permission for.

4.3 Waste

- 4.3.1 Help individuals to feel empowered to improve their own practice. Again through information sharing or by actual practical intervention, the latter could be setting up or encouraging the reduction of the use of plastic. The PC to stop using single use plastic wherever practicable.
- 4.3.2 We will be an influence where possible that there is the zero waste to landfill – ensure biodegradable waste, such as food waste and paper/cardboard is

recycled or composted and diverted to be used to generate via gas or power.

4.4 Energy

- 4.4.1 Ensure Parish Council funds are not invested in fossil fuel or negative carbon companies. Encourage and inform individuals to take the same stance.
- 4.4.2 Reduce energy use in Parish buildings and add renewable energy.
- 4.4.3 Explore areas suitable for individual or collective renewable energy.
- 4.4.4 Encouraged to use the green energy tariffs generally and certainly only use for our own consumption in community buildings.

4.5 Green infrastructure

- 4.5.1 Sign up to the Tree Charter.
- 4.5.2 Increase tree cover.
- 4.5.3 Create a task force to establish a green agenda in Humber Ford and Stoke Prior.
- 4.5.4 Work with the farming community and businesses as they have a significant role to play in carbon reduction. The NFU and work of others are very helpful on this to support our farming community.

5. Closing Statement

All the above are suggestions and there are many others, which the Council may wish to tackle. These can be taken forward with the Parish Council and hopefully the task force that we can set up quite quickly.

There are lots of websites and organisations offering ideas about ways we can save energy as individuals, and these ideas generally result in saving money and make your lives and homes healthier, convenient and comfortable. Many actions are simple and cost free to initiate; such as switching off plug-in appliances when not in use or switching to a green energy supplier.

Over the coming months the Parish Council Facebook page and website will include regular updates about actions we can implement in our day-to-day lives so that we can find support from friends in the local community as we all start to make changes.

Signed and agreed by Humber, Ford and Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Chairman.....Date.....

Agenda item 49/23 Annual Reports 2022-23

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

The year 2022-23 has been one of considerable change for this Council. In May 2021 at the last Annual Meeting the long-standing Chairman Cllr. Will Jackson stepped down and was succeeded by Cllr. Hugh Fowler-Wright, the vice-Chairman. Cllr. Jackson had served as Chairman since May 2013 and as a Councillor for some years before that. Cllr. Jackson will be long remembered in this Parish for his huge contribution to the community, the most significant perhaps being overseeing the creation of a most successful Neighbourhood Development Plan. He did not stand for re-election in May 2023 elections and Council will miss his wide experience and wise guidance. We wish Will all the best in his future endeavours and thank him for all he has done in and for the community.

Since May 2022 three other Councillors have retired, Cllr. Zoe Burge resigned in November 2022, and Cllrs. Gill Stovold and Stephanie Wilson decided not to stand for re-election in May 2023. All three Councillors contributed many years of their time – in Steph’s case she was on the Council for 18 years - supporting the community and the Council and we thank them all for their commitment.

Council welcomed a new Member in February 2023 – Mrs Anne Grace was co-opted to replace Cllr. Burge. Anne is no stranger to local government having been involved in local politics before she moved home into the Group parish. However, following the election there remain three vacancies which Council will have to fill by co-option within the next few weeks.

2022 was also the year that a major Council project, the War Memorial was completed. The Memorial is an important project, mostly for what it commemorates but also because it represented the Council getting back to community projects after the COVID years. Its success must have given Members an appetite for community projects because in 2023 three new projects were launched -Environmental improvement, Website re-engineering and a Welcome Pack for new arrivals in the Parishes.

All this activity has been reflected in the finances which, for the first time, exceeded the £25,000 threshold on expenditure and so have to be examined by the External Auditor.

Other successes include the award of a drainage grant from Herefordshire Council which has been used to good effect in resolving the flooding problems at The Heath. The other notorious flooding area at Wheelbarrow Castle has recently received attention from Balfour Beatty and now seems to be performing much better although the Locality Steward tells me there is still work to do in at least one drain there.

Finally, I wish to record my thanks to John Harrington, our Ward Councillor for the past four years. John supported us at our meetings and represented us well with the Herefordshire officers and was a key person in getting grant funding to enable the improvements we have been able to make. John lost his seat at the election and we wish him well for the future and look forward to working with his successor Cllr. Bruce Baker whom we know from his term during 2015-19.

- (c) *To receive:* report from representatives on the Village Hall Committees
- (d) *To receive:* reports from the PROW officers.

Agenda item 50/23 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return 2022-23

(a) Report from the RFO

After 2021-22 being declared “unremarkable” in this report the same cannot quite be said for 2022-23.

Key points are-

- The precept for 2023-24 was increased from £12289 to £15000. This was the first increase since 2019 and represents an increase in line with inflation over that period.
- Nearly every year since 2018 a surplus has been banked, amounting to £9147 over the period. That trend was reversed in 2022 when a deficit of about £11000 was recorded. (The “real” deficit is rather lower when the drainage grant refund and the VAT reclaims are accounted for since they total about £7100, making the real deficit about £3900). This deficit arose from the costs of the War Memorial and The Pump which marked a welcome return to community projects. Assuming reserves are adequate there is no merit in taxing the community only to bank a fair proportion of that taxation as an annual surplus. In the current year the surplus is likely to be about zero but some significant projects should be completed
- A drainage grant of £4339 was received and used to resolve the longstanding drainage problems at The Heath and also to carry out important annual maintenance work on Parish ditches.
- Due to the high expenditure in 2022-23 the VAT reclaim was significant at £2105 and was received in April 2023.
- 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
Transactions	72	62	74	49	82	122

- This high level of financial activity has resulted in Council exceeding the arbitrary threshold of £25,000 for expenditure which means that 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 2022

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council				
Statement of Accounts 2022-23				
		Note	Year ending	
			31 March 2022	31 March 2023
1	Precept	1	12289.00	12289.00
2	Pump Advertising	2	1088.00	575.00
3	Pump Postage	3	60.00	40.00
4	Grants	4	0.00	0.00
5	Other Income	5	54.27	115.12
6	VAT Reclaim	6	2268.46	0.00
7	CW Fundraising	7	862.81	2070.18
8	Other Projects	8	0.00	2080.00
9	TOTAL INCOME	9	16622.54	17169.30
EXPENDITURE				
10	Clerk	10	3758.12	4403.50
11	Administration	11	520.85	445.88
12	Insurance, audit, professional	12	697.36	887.38
13	Website & IT	13	321.99	155.00
14	Hire of Halls	14	216.00	200.00
15	Training and development	15	175.00	0.00
16	Equipment	16	132.99	1065.22
17	Maintenance	17	0.00	0.00
18	HMRC	18	939.40	733.60
19	Other	19	86.00	86.00
20	DAY TO DAY EXPENDITURE	20	6847.71	7976.57
PROJECTS				
21	War Memorial	21	0.00	5678.34
22	Parish Pump	22	2128.06	4260.34
23	Lengthsman	23	1570.56	6270.50
24	Community Week	24	643.24	1932.96
25	Environment Project	25	0.00	0.00
26	Website modernisation	26	0.00	0.00
27	Welcome pack	27	0.00	0.00
28	Project D	28	0.00	0.00
29	PROJECTS EXPENDITURE	29	4341.86	18142.14
30	Reclaimable VAT on the above	30	645.86	2110.66
31	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	31	11835.43	28229.37
32	SURPLUS	32	4787.11	-11060.07
	Opening balance		10100.50	14887.61
	Surplus		4787.11	-11060.07
	Balance carried forward		14887.61	3827.54

Notes to receipts and payments account summary

- 1 Precept - set in January 2022
- 2 Income has fallen significantly due to operational issues with Pump advertising. These issues are expected to be resolved in the coming financial year
- 3 Fewer issues being mailed, encouragement to take online editions.
- 4 Grant scheme for 2022-23 is £4339. Work is completed and invoices submitted to Herefordshire. Payment expected by end of April 2023.
- 5 £115.12 refund from Pencombe Council for joint stationery purchase.
- 6 VAT claim for £645.85 & £2110.66 submitted. Payment received April 2023.
- 7 Includes donations of £1780 for gazebos and storage shed
- 8 Sale of War Memorial Plaques
- 10 Includes arrears for 2021-22 and 2022-23 salary awards. Also mileage (£130) and office expenses contribution (£50).
- 11 Bank charges, stationery, payroll, postage, Parish Online (mapping), ICO
- 12 Audit fees, Insurance, HALC subscription, SLCC subscription.
- 13 Website hosting & maintenance
- 14 Standard hall charges for 8 meetings (6 ordinary and 2 extra ordinary)
- 15 No training but for 2023-24 will be higher due to 4 new Councillors
- 16 Purchase of 2 external map cases to display large PROW maps
- 17 No maintenance work, mostly included in Lengthsman
- 18 PAYE payments on Clerk's salary
- 19 Donation to Royal British Legion (£50) & CPRE (£36)
- 21 War memorial project in Stoke Prior. Completed during 2022-23
- 22 Costs for printing and distributing the Pump
- 23 Costs include £3807 from the drainage grant
- 24 Costs include purchase of gazebos & storage shed (see line 7)
- 25 New project for 2022-23 but no expenditure during year
- 26 New project for 2022-23 but no expenditure during year
- 27 New project for 2022-23 but no expenditure during year
- 28 Possible new project (TBA) for 2022-23 but no expenditure during year
- 30 Both years claimed at end of 2022-23. Payment received in April 2023
- 32 The deficit appears high but will be significantly reduced when the VAT re-claim and drainage grant payments are received

Internal controls and statement by Responsible Financial Officer

The accounting systems and internal controls operated by the Responsible Financial Officer were reviewed by the Council's standing Finance Working Group in October 2019, with some minor changes to procedures recommended. Since then there has been significant improvement in data entry and error detection techniques which have rendered the accounting system much easier to operate and with a much lower initial error rate.

Currently the RFO believes the regulations are fit for purpose

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 2023.

Allan M Drew

Responsible Financial Officer

5 May 2023

(c) To approve the bank reconciliation statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council

Financial Year 2022-23

Bank Reconciliation Statements as at 31/03/2023

Prepared by Allan Drew (RFO) Date: 17/04/2023

			£	£
Balance from Bank Statements				
Unity Trust current account dated	31/03/23	Balance as at 31/03/2023		3827.55
Petty cash in hand		As at 31/03/2023		<u>0.00</u>
				3827.55
Less unrepresented items				
			0.00	<u>0.00</u>
Plus receipts not banked/cleared				
			0.00	<u>0.00</u>
		Net balance at 31/03/2023		<u>3827.55</u>

The net balance reconciles to the cash books for the year to 31/03/2023 as follows:

Balance in current account cash book

Opening balance at 01/04/2022		14887.62
Add: receipts to 31/03/2023		17169.30
Less: payments to 31/03/2023		<u>28229.37</u>
	Net balance at 31/03/2023	<u>3827.55</u>

Balance in petty cash book

Opening balance at 01/04/2022		0.00
Add: receipts to 31/03/2023		0.00
Less: payments to 31/03/2023		<u>0.00</u>
	Net balance at 31/03/2023	<u>0.00</u>

All Cash Books

Net balance at 31/03/2023 **3827.55**

Difference

0.00

Signed: 

RFO Date 17.4.2023

Countersigned

Councillor Date

(d) To consider the Internal Audit Reports and checklist

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")	✓		
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: **05/05/2023** DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY
 Name of person who carried out the internal audit: **Mr Ian Pardoe** OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:  SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date: **09/05/2023**

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**
****Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).**

(e) To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

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 2023, that:

	Agreed		*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.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
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.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
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.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
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.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>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.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
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.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
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 <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***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:

17/05/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

50/23(e) MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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(f) To approve the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

HUMBER, FORD & STOKE PRIOR GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	10,100	14,887	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	12,289	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	4,333	4,880	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	4,697	5,137	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	7,138	23,092	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	14,887	3,827	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	14,887	3,827	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	0	0	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 do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 11/05/2023

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

17/05/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

50/23(f) MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman 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. For this year the 10 July working days run from Monday 3rd July to Friday 14th July inclusive. It is recommended that this year the period runs from Monday 20th June until Monday 31st July inclusive. Council should agree this recommendation.

Agenda item 51/23 Review of Standing Orders

Standing orders were comprehensively reviewed and a minor amendment made last year. No further changes are recommended

Agenda item 52/23 Review of Financial Regulations

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

Agenda item 53/23 Review of Council policies and procedures

A full review has been undertaken and a small number inaccuracies have been identified in the Council's policies. Routine housekeeping has been carried out as below

POLICY NAME	DATE ADOPTED	LAST AMENDED	STATUS AT 31/03/2023
Safeguarding Statement	15 November 2017	N/A	Link in document no longer valid. Has been amended. Council to approve
Equality & Diversity Policy	16 March 2016	18 May 2022	OK
Publication Scheme	21 November 2012	N/A	Amendment required to cover charges for information provision where justified. This amendment mirrors the model publication scheme
Complaints Procedure	16 January 2013	July 2021	OK
Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee Meetings	3 December 2014	N/A	OK

Agenda item 54/23 Allocation of portfolios to Councillors

The aim of this exercise 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. In many meetings the Clerk takes the lead on describing, for example, planning cases or the financial situation. Whilst Councillors do of course contribute and take control of these discussions at meetings, currently no one Councillor has responsibility for researching the topic beforehand and leading/moderating any discussion.

It is proposed that a Councillor would lead discussion on a topic covered by his/her portfolio and would have carried out some pre-meeting research on the topic. The Clerk will continue to provide information as at present in papers etc but would not be involved with the discussion other than on legal points or financial probity.

The following portfolios are suggested but Council is free to decide an appropriate list. With 11 Councillors 11 portfolios have been suggested. However, with three vacancies Council may wish to-

- Modify/agree the principle of portfolios
- Wait until the co-option process is complete before allocating portfolios to individuals

Suggested portfolios are-

Finance: Community engagement: Planning, Stoke Prior: Planning, Humber: Drainage, Stoke Prior: Drainage, Humber: PROWs Stoke Prior: PROWs Humber: Pump liaison: Road Safety: Technology:

Agenda item 55/23 Review of assets, risk assessment and insurance

(a) to receive: the list of fixed assets

Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council				Asset Register 2022-23		
Fixed Assets 2022-23						
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	0.00	250.00
Noticeboard	Risbury Bus shelter	Internal noticeboard+sign	09/06/2022	75.00	67.00	75.00
Noticeboard	Stoke Prior Post Office	bought second-hand	22/11/2012	25.00	0.00	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	100.00	299.00
PROW Map cases with maps	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	300.00	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	300.00	500.00
Minky gas barbecue	Great Marston Farmhouse HR6 0NJ	Community use	05/12/2019	216.65	216.65	216.65
QTX QR12PA portable PA system	Great Marston Farmhouse HR6 0NJ	Community use	31/03/2020	154.17	154.17	154.17
War Memorial	Stoke Prior "roundabout"	On highways land	01/07/2022	10000.00	10000.00	10000.00
			TOTAL:	15835.33	14884.82	21951.82
Assets disposed of in 2022-23						
Noticeboard	Risbury bus shelter	donated	01/09/2012	1.00	0.00	120.00
Portable tripod screen	Risbury Village Hall	Cannot be found	04/06/2014	59.00	15.00	59.00

NB Assets added during the year are shown in bold italics

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

The risk management schedule has been updated from latest experience with one risk moving from medium to low and one from low to zero.

Risk	Current risk (1-6)	Revised risk	Reasoning
Poor budgeting to underlie annual precept	3	2	Precept estimation is now on a more robust footing and improved spreadsheet automation has made budgeting system much less prone to human error.
Assault on staff or others carrying cash	3	Nil	Personal Accident (Assault) cover provided under Money insurance. However, no cash handled by Council in last 3 years

Council is invited to discuss the above changes and, if agreed, to sign off on item 5 of the Annual Governance Statement 2021-22.

(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 2023, 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. By estimating the value of the War Memorial at £10,000 this takes Council's total asset value to nearly £15000 which is in excess of the "property - all risks" cover of £10,000. The RFO has written to the insurers seeking revisions to the policy and an update will be provided when a response is received.

Agenda item 56/23 Committees and membership 2022-23

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 Gill Stovold.

It is recommended that this committee remains unchanged (without Cllr. Stovold) until the co-option process is complete

(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.

With Community Week fairly imminent the structure of this committee should remain for the present, but be reviewed at the September meeting

The Council has three working groups-

(c) The Lamb working group

Remit - advising the Council on The Lamb

The Lamb project is in abeyance. At last year's meeting a decision was made to maintain the working group in view of some new activity related to The Lamb. Since then there have been several relevant meetings but there is no sign that The Lamb will be on the market as a pub in the short to medium term. Council should decide if a working group is appropriate and if so form a group post co-option.

(d) War Memorial working group

Remit - considering and making recommendations on a permanent war memorial or memorials for the parishes

Following completion of a most successful project it is recommended that this working group is retired.

(e) 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. Both Councillors are prepared to serve on the group for 2023-24

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

Agenda item 57/23 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 vacant).

Stoke Prior Village Hall Committee representative:(Currently vacant)

Police Liaison Officer: (Currently vacant).

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

Safeguarding Officer: (Currently vacant).

Humber Close Liaison Officer (Currently vacant)

Agenda item 60/23 Planning Committee and Planning updates

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

Ford & Stoke Prior

230934, Stoke Haven, Normans Lane, Stoke Prior Proposed Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed single storey side extension. **Comments not required.**

230829, Land at Heath Farm Stoke Prior Proposed non-material amendment to planning permission 181844 (proposed new dwelling) - to change cladding of garage/workshop walls from timber shiplap to the same brick as house. **Approved with Conditions (Comments not required)**

Humber

There are no new applications

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

Ford & Stoke Prior

230076 Ashwood House, Stoke Prior. Proposed detached garage to include garden room with home office above. **Approved with Conditions.**

224117 Wood Park, Stoke Prior Erection of new 4 bedroom dormer bungalow to replace existing bungalow and annexe. **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.**

221781 Highfield Cottage, Stoke Prior, HR6 0LW Proposed two storey extension and detached cart shed (3 bay garaging). Access track and entrance to road to C1055. **Undecided.**

204230 Priory Farm, Stoke Prior, HR6 0ND : Proposed alterations and development of existing equine facilities to form a new indoor arena, stabling and an essential worker's dwelling **Refused.**

Humber.

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 62/23 General Financial Matters

As at 11 May 2023 the bank balance was £14,473.

The first part of the 2023-24 precept (£7500) has been received from Herefordshire Council

The VAT refund of £2105.77 for 2022-23 has been received from HMRC

Income received since last meeting as at 15 May 2022

Description	Classification	Receipt £	Date received
Hubbard MMA	Adverts	30.00	10/03/2023
Margaret Brown	Postage	20.00	16/03/2023
HMRC VAT	Reclaim 2021-22	645.85	20/04/2023
Herefordshire Council	Precept Pt 1	7500.00	21/04/2023
HMRC VAT	Reclaim 2022-23	2105.77	21/04/2023
Herefordshire Council	Drainage grant	4339.00	25/04/2023
T Dines Electrical	Adverts	135.00	5/05/2023
Crankshaw A	Postage	20.00	10/05/2023
TOTAL		£14795.62	

Payments made since last meeting

Description	Cost	VAT	Total	
Clerk's February salary	£624.03		£624.03	Clerk's February salary. Includes salary arrears from 1 April
Clerk's March 2023 salary	£346.53		£346.53	Clerk's March salary (pay 25 th March)
Barrington Print	£398.00		£398.00	February Pump
Barrington Print	£438.00		£438.00	March Pump
Risbury VH	£20.00		£20.00	Hall hire – 1 Feb meeting
Gwent web design	£155.00	£31.00	£186.00	Website hosting & domain names
Margaret Brown	£18.32		£18.32	Pump postage refund
D C Gardening Services	£3807.50	£761.50	£4569.00	Scraping drain tops, reinstatement of grippers, digging out some ditches
Society of Local Council Clerks	£146.00		£146.00	Membership of SLCC. Rotates, Clerk, Pencombe then HFSP. Pay 1 April
Clerk's mileage	£129.60		£129.60	288 miles @£0.45/mile. July 2022 minute 61/22. See mileage record following.
Clerk's office	£50.00		£50.00	Contribution to office heating and lighting. July 2022 minute. 61/22
Bank charges	£18.00		£18.00	Applied automatically
Total 2022-23	£6,150.98	£792.50	£6,943.48	
HMRC	£325.44		£325.44	PAYE Q4 (pay 6 th April)
Hugh Fowler-Wright	£21.00		£21.00	Hire of Risbury hall 25 Jan 2023
D C Gardening Services SI-1514	£2596.50	£519.30	£3115.80	Drainage grant work at The Heath
D C Garden Services SI-1513	£531.50	£106.30	£637.80	Drainage grant work around Parishes
Total 2023-24	£3,474.44	£625.60	£4,100.04	
Grand Total	£9625.42	£1418.10	£11043.52	

Council to note that when the drainage grant was received in the bank account the RFO agreed with the Chairman that the Lengthsman invoices SI-1513 & SI-1514 should be paid. (The Lengthsman had urged payment)

Payments for authorisation

The following payments require authorisation by the meeting-

Description	£ Cost	£ VAT	£ Total	
Clerk's salary April 2023	346.73		346.73	
Clerk's salary May 2023	346.73		346.73	For payment 25 th May
Autela	59.65	11.93	71.58	Quarterly Payroll charge
Tangled web	250.00	50.00	300.00	Stage 1 new website
Barrington Print 11251	£460.00		£460.00	The Pump printing (April 23)
Barrington Print 11369	£448.00		£448.00	The Pump printing (May 23)
Parish Online	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00	Annual invoice, mapping services
Zurich Insurance	£167.44		£167.44	See note below. Annual renewal premium
Total	2108.55	67.93	2176.48	

The RFO is in discussion with the insurance company regarding the insured value of the War Memorial. 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 2023.

Agenda item 63/23 Lengthsman

The Lengthsman completed work at The Heath, Stoke Prior early in April 2023. The project appears to be successful and there has been significant rainfall since then and the drainage has worked perfectly. Local residents are delighted as no doubt are the road users.

Although not a Lengthsman project it is worth mentioning that following determined intervention by Cllr. Fullwood there has been a considerable improvement at Wheelbarrow Castle. The ditches have been very well dug out although some of the drains still need to be jetted or rodded through for maximum effect. The work was carried out by BB and had been on their “to do” list for some years. Council will remember that Cllr. Harrington took this on as a personal project but in the end it was quite a simple job.

That is two major blackspots in Stoke Prior cleared and Council should be pleased to have achieved these (fairly) permanent solutions after years of problems. The Parishes are well placed to make further progress on the network this year.

The Lengthsman has been asked if he wishes to renew his contract for 2023-24.

Agenda item 65/23 Current Projects

Project leads to provide any updates or plans for the coming year to deliver their project.

An invoice has been received from Tangled Web for a down payment of half (£250+VAT) the anticipated cost of the website project. The Clerk requested further details on project deliverables and timescales and some of these requirements have been satisfied by a proposal document provided by Tangled Web. The Clerk is still in correspondence.

Agenda item 66/23 Co-option to Council vacancies

Council can follow the normal co-option process but without the need to advertise for an election. Progress should be made as quickly as possible because of the 35-day rule. It is understood there is at least one interested candidate for Humber. Generally, the process followed is laid out in Standing Order 11(d).

It is suggested –

- Council now declares the three vacancies (one for Ford & Stoke Prior; two for Humber) and that they will be filled by co-option.
- On 18 May the Clerk will inform Herefordshire who will provide their official form of Notice for boards & website. They will also advise an effective date for the 14-day advertisement of the Notice.
- Council will follow SO 11(d) to fill the three vacancies at the July Council meeting

Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 19 July 2023, Stoke Prior Village Hall, 7.30pm