

Annual Fovant Parish Meeting, 2022. Report of meeting

The 2022 meeting was held in Fovant Village Hall on Friday 20th May, commencing at 6.30 pm. Eighteen residents attended, as well as the Ward Councillor Mr Nabil Najjar. Notices advertising the meeting had stated that the meeting was open to all electors to speak on any issue of local interest. Twenty one local organisations and groups had been identified and were sent reminders of the meeting, and all of them submitted written reports. According to tradition, the outgoing Chair of the Parish Council, Dr Tony Phillips, chaired the meeting and read out reports where the proposer was absent. Given the number of reports, the Chair asked for discussion to be left until the last agenda item, 'Open Forum'. Two subjects were raised at that point.

A) Discussion of the Three Towers Community magazine report

- The Financial year of the magazine (to end October) and the business year of a Parish Council (to end March) differ. In its business year 2021-22, Fovant Parish Council (FPC) had provided funding of £600 followed by £200, to defray printing costs for FPC information. FPC has yet to decide on appropriate funding for 2022-23.
- FPC has never suggested that print publication should cease and transition to digital. Digital availability was only thought of as an alternative that could be offered, as a means to reduce the number of copies being printed and at the same time facilitate distribution by not requiring delivery by volunteers or by post.
- Conversations between residents in the last few weeks for example at village coffee mornings confirms that having a printed copy to read is appreciated by many people.
- There is currently renewed recognition of the importance of an accessible historic resource for Fovant. Having a collection of PDF files of the magazine could be an important element.
- Perhaps colour could be restricted to the front page, to cut printing costs.
- Cash payments as a charge for each copy of the magazine would be too difficult to collect. However, many readers may be willing to make periodic payments direct to the Editor. This strategy should be investigated.

B) Discussion of the proposed cost of the Stonehenge tunnel scheme.

- A concern was raised about the potential cost of the proposed Stonehenge tunnel, £1.7bn, seemingly excessive relative to improvements needed to other sections of the A303. Another view was that to remove the public's view of the monument from the South in perpetuity by the closure of existing roads would be unjustifiable.
- The Chair contacted Ward Councillor Nabil Najjar and Area Board Chair Cllr Bridget Wayman subsequently to ask about the potential draw on Council Tax. There would be a small cost to Wiltshire Council because officers must deal with ancillary matters such as the design of interfaces with local roads, and County archaeologists and ecologists may also be involved. However, most of the funding for our Highways team comes government anyway so there should be only be minor costs to be funded from Council Tax.

Tony Phillips, as Chair, 28 May 2022