

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Fransham Parish Council held virtually at 7.00pm on Tuesday 17th November 2020.

Under the Coronavirus Act, the Secretary of State has published meetings regulations which remove the requirement to hold annual meetings and allow virtual meetings up to 7 May 2021. These are contained in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present: Cllr Russell James (Chairman)
Cllr Richard Watts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr James Sheringham
Cllr Emma Spratt
Cllr Andrew Lake

Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Cllr Gerry Taylor and Cllr Brian Drewitt were approved. Apologies were also received from County & District Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none declared.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th September 2020.

Cllr Watts proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Lake and agreed by Council. The Chairman will sign the minutes in due course.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

A County report from Cllr Kiddle-Morris has been circulated prior to the meeting and this is attached.

In addition and in respect of Breckland, he had drawn the council's attention to the response by Breckland objecting to much of the Planning White Paper. The LGA had very recently announced that it will reconsider the algorithm being used to determine housing numbers which would have almost doubled the amount to be built in Breckland.

He had also drawn the council's attention to the proposed reduction in grass verge cutting, from two cuts per year to just one. Council agreed to object to this proposal on the grounds of highway safety as visibility would be much reduced, particularly at road junctions.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation.

There were no members of the public present.

6. To receive a report in respect of the Proposed Vattenfall Wind Farms.

There was nothing new to report.

7. Highway Matters.

a) To receive updates in respect of issues previously reported

Council noted the following updates:

- Broken street light adjacent to westbound bus shelter – this has been repaired.
- Obstructing Hedge at 3 Station Road – Highways to remove.
- Obstructing Hedge at The Pottery – this has been cut back.
- Dropped manhole covers on A47 – reported to Highway England.

Council noted that C/Cllr Kiddle-Morris was unable to take any highways matters forward at the present time due to the shortages in the Highways Team, this was unlikely to change before mid-December at the earliest.

b) To receive an update and consider any further action re the trod.

In the absence of a Highways Team, this matter could not be progressed.

c) To receive an update regarding HGV use of Station Road and the request for a 'unsuitable for HGVs' sign.

The Chairman updated Council on the letter he had sent to the C/Cllr informing him of the recent issues with HGV vehicles becoming stuck on Station Road. The C/Cllr will take this forward but had warned of the difficulties in obtaining suitable signage from Highways England, who were challenging to deal with.

d) To consider any new highway issues.

There were no new issues raised.

8. Planning Issues.

a) New Applications.

Council considered the following applications:

- 3PN/2020/0048/UC – Agricultural Barn off Station Road - Prior approval for Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling House (C3) and works reasonably necessary Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q – Council agreed a no comment response to this application.
- 3PL/2020/1176/O – land to the rear of 2 Wood Farm Cottages, Goggles Lane - Erection of a rural worker's dwelling in association with long standing agricultural (game farm) business operating on the site and adjacent fields – Council agreed a no objection response with the proviso that any mature trees in the surrounding area of the proposed dwelling must be protected.

b) Decisions Due.

Council noted the following decisions:

- 3PL/2020/0604/F – Field House Farm, Station Road - change of use of land for proposed manege & associated fencing – Undecided.

- 3PL/2020/0806/O – Turnpike Farm, Main Road, Little Fransham - Residential Development (4 dwellings) – REFUSED.
- 3PN/2020/0023/UC – Top Farm, Main Road, Little Fransham - Change of use and conversion of existing agricultural building, and land within its curtilage, to a single dwelling – APPROVED.
- 3PL/2020/0879/VAR – Lane Farm, Main Road - Variation of Condition No 2 on 3PL/2008/1332/F - Garden Room and Porch / Landing extensions are to be added – APPROVED.

c) To receive a report regarding the recent Planning Regulations Seminar.

Cllr Watts had attended the seminar and reported that it had been interesting and advocated the use of Neighbourhood Plans, which gave a voice to local residents to ensure planning decisions are in keeping with local areas. Cllr Watts reminded Council that they had looked at this subject and agreed it was not suitable for Fransham at the present time.

9. To receive a report on the Bus Shelter Project & Repair.

Council noted that the Highways England licence had not been ready in time for the October works date and it was hoped that works would now be completed during December.

10. To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee regarding repairs & Covid-19 situation.

Cllr Spratt reported that, due to lockdown, the hall was once again closed, although it was being used once or twice a week for an educational purpose. The Committee are reluctant to commit any funds to the repairs at the present time as they may be required for the day to day running costs in the absence of any other income.

11. To receive a Crime & Policing report.

The Chairman reported there had been one report of criminal damage during August and none in September.

12. Financial Matters.

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Council noted the financial report and the Chairman reminded Council of the Highway Reserve Pot available and requested ideas. The Parish Partnership scheme is open until 4th December for match funding grants.

b) To appoint an internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021.

Cllr Lake proposed the appointment of Mr Bergin as internal auditor for the year ending 31st March 2021 at a cost of £25. This was seconded by Cllr Sheringham and agreed by Council.

c) To consider the budget and set the precept for the year ending 31st March 2022.

Council considered the draft budget and Cllr Lake proposed the precept should remain at its current rate of £4,250 for the year ending 31st March 2022. This was seconded by Cllr Sheringham and agreed by Council.

d) To consider approval of the following payments.

Cllr Lake proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Sheringham and agreed by Council.

- Clerk Salary & Allowance – Oct/Nov & Arrears & HMRC Refund £245.04
- SLCC Membership (Brisley PC) £15.80
- Grass Contractors £600.00

13. Correspondence for circulation.

Council noted the following correspondence and no issues were raised, other than those raised at item 4.

- Boundary Commission Review
- Breckland Response to Planning White Paper
- NCC Budget Consultation

14. To receive any new items for the next meeting.

There were no new items received for the next meeting.

15. To confirm the next meeting of Fransham Parish Council will be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 19th January 2020.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the meeting then closed at 7.25pm.

Signed:

Date:

County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division Report November 2020

Covid 19: In advance of any serious second wave please remember to contact those people who needed support during the last lockdown to reassure them of support in the future if required.

Flu: Flu causes the death of around 15,000 people in the UK each year. The most vulnerable group are those people over 65, the same group that are at most risk from Covid 19. There has been an increase in the take up of the flu vaccine this year, but the message must be to all those who are at most risk i.e. those with underlying respiratory conditions plus those over 65 to get a flu jab.

Budget: There is still considerable uncertainty in what government funding will be available for financial year 21/22. Additionally, the government has not stated whether the allowed percentage increase in the general precept will remain at 2% or be amended. There is also uncertainty as to whether a rise is permissible in the adult social care precept. Despite this uncertainty NCC are obliged to consult on its budget proposals for 20/21 making suppositions as to governments intentions. The consultation runs until the 14th December, details can be found on the NCC website. The Council will set its council tax at its February 2021 meeting.

Grass Cutting: As part of the budget consultation (above) it is proposed to reduce grass verge cutting on “C” and “U” roads from 2 cuts per year to one. Also, it is proposed to reduce urban cuts from 5 to 4 per year.

Boundary Review: The second Boundary commission consultation on proposed changes to the Councils Division boundaries closes on the 23rd November. A change from the initial consultation is that Brisley is added to the new Division “Launditch”. Due to a delay in the process due to Covid any changes will not take place until the 2025 Norfolk Council elections.

Parish Partnership: A reminder that bids for 50% funding for small highway improvements under the Parish Partnership scheme need to be submitted by the middle of December. If you have any queries please contact me in the first instance.

County Farms: The County Council is committed to maintaining the County Farm Estate in excess of 16,000 acres. The tenanted farms which vary in size provide a thriving and progressive estate which supports individual businesses and enables economic growth into the county’s agricultural sector and indirectly into numerous related businesses. Any capital receipt from the sale of redundant buildings and land are reinvested in the estate. The County Farm estate was recently increased through the purchase of 163 acres.

Grants: Pubs and restaurants providing a takeaway service will not be eligible for a government grant, but I understand that those that do close completely may be eligible for a Breckland grant. More information to follow in due course.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.
Member for Necton and Launditch.
Norfolk County Council.