

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Fransham Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th July 2023, at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Richard Watts (Chair)
Cllr Russell James (Vice Chair)
Cllr James Sheringham
Cllr Emma Spratt
Cllr Andrew Lake
Cllr Gerry Taylor
Cllr Katharine Robinson

One member of the public
Sheryl Irving (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from County & District Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

There were none received.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 16th May 2023.

Cllr Taylor proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting, this was seconded by Cllr Sheringham and unanimously agreed by Council. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

4. To receive County/District Councillor reports.

C & D Cllr Kiddle-Morris had sent a written report and this is attached. The following matters were brought forward as issues to raise with the Councillor.

The grass at the front of the bungalows on Station Road is still yet to be cut and is now causing highway safety issues because of the lack of visibility. Council agreed to raise this direct with Highways, copy to Cllr Kiddle-Morris.

Cllr Kiddle-Morris had confirmed the cost of the works to the trod although a date for the works was yet to be fixed. Cllr Taylor stressed how important it was that the dip at the end was filled, or the trod extended, otherwise the trod would continue to be virtually impossible to use. The C/Cllr will be notified.

5. Open Forum for Public Participation.

A member of the public raised the issue of the churchyard management and how disappointing it was to see the graveyard in such a poor condition, with long grass knocked over by the mower and left to die. Additionally, there was now no water available at the church to wash down the memorials.

The Chairman explained that Council had been let down by the contractor last year but the new contractor had started well.

Cllr Sheringham said the cost of grass cutting increases every year and the Council is restrained by the number of cuts, against affordability. However, a cut is now due and Council agreed to have two quick cuts, to get the grass back to a manageable level. Cllr Sheringham will liaise with the contractor. The number of cuts will be reviewed at the September meeting.

Cllr Sheringham confirmed that the previous wooden water butt had reached the end of its life but its replacement is a matter for the Church Council to decide and he will raise the matter with them.

The Chairman had received a request for a 30mph speed limit on Beeston Lane, from the Station Road junction to the village boundary. Council agreed that a speed limit would be desirable, particularly as there has been a spate of recent accidents and with the road well used by walkers, horse riders etc with heavy HGV and farm traffic, it was not always safe. Council agreed to submit a request to Highways for a speed limit on the north side of the A47, including Station Road and Beeston Lane, to the village boundaries.

6. Highway Matters.

a) To receive updates in respect of issues previously reported.

Council noted the following updates.

- Four dropped manhole covers on A47 – reported to National Highways again.
- FP4 – junction with Dereham Lane – broken stile – reported to Highways who have written to the landowner.
- Overgrown grass to front of bungalows on Station Road – Norfolk County Council should cut this grass four times a year but have not done so in recent years. C/Cllr to ensure grass is picked up following first cut this year (see item 4 above).
- Misleading signage on Love Lane – C/Cllr investigating and will be asked to chase this up.
- A47 Streetlight – fitted incorrectly or insecure – reported to National Highways.

b) To receive an update regarding repair works to the trod.

This matter was dealt with at item 4 above.

c) To receive an update on requests to National Highways for a pedestrian crossing and an extension of the pavement from Spicer's Corner.

Council agreed to contact National Highways for an update.

d) To consider an application to the Parish Partnership Scheme.

Council agreed to consider possible locations for 'SLOW' on the roads, for the September meeting.

7. Planning Issues.

a) New Applications.

Council considered the following application and Cllr Watts proposed a response requesting a 30mph speed limit, due to the increased development, and a footpath from the end of the new development to the existing footpath, both for highway safety. This was seconded by Cllr James and unanimously agreed by Council.

- 3PL/2023/0634/VAR - Development Site 590516 312080, Crown Lane - variation of Conditions 2, 3, 4 & 5 on 3PL/2021/0055/D.

b) Decisions Due.

Council noted that prior approval was not required in respect of the following application:

- 3AG/2023/0012/AG – Hyde Hall Farm, Main Road - proposed steel framed building.

Council noted that no decisions had been made in respect of the following applications:

- 3PL/2022/0833/F – Beeston & Fransham – New Farm, Fransham Road - construction of rural workers dwelling and double cart port.
- 3PL/2022/0957/F – land at Grovewood House, Station Road - conversion of existing barn to holiday let - Amendment: Red line amended to incorporate new access point.

Council noted that the following application had been refused.

- 3PL/2023/0320/F – Proposed Barn at Station Road - Erection of 1 no. rural workers dwelling.

8. To receive an update in respect of the Vattenfall Community Fund, the Offshore Transmission Network and any other matters relating to the infrastructure at Necton.

Cllr Sheringham had attended the recent meeting regarding the Community Fund but had no further information to report.

9. To consider any issues arising from the regular inspections of council assets including the dedication plate on the Village Sign.

The Chairman will install the dedication plate in due course. He reported that a large chunk of the Village Sign plinth was missing and Cllrs will inspect before making any decision at the September meeting.

The Chairman also reported that slats on the bench on Station Road are warping. The bench remains safe but uncomfortable. Cllr Taylor will inspect and deal if possible.

Cllr Lake agreed to look at the notice boards to see if an alternative locking mechanism could be installed which would prolong their life.

10. To consider any action in respect of damage to a headstone allegedly caused by Parish Council grass contractor.

Council agreed this was a matter between the contractor, their insurer and the complainant.

11. Finance & Governance Matters.

a) To receive a financial report for the year ending 31st March 2024.

The financial report (attached) was noted.

b) To consider approval of the following policy documents.

In respect of the asset register, Council agreed to increase estimated replacement costs by 20%.

With the above amendment, Cllr Robinson proposed approval of the following policy documents, this was seconded by Cllr James and unanimously agreed by Council.

- Asset Register
- Risk Assessment & Management Policy
- Information & Data Protection Policy
- Co-Option Policy

c) To consider approval of the following payments and note any receipts.

Cllr James proposed approval of the following payments, this was seconded by Cllr Spratt and unanimously agreed by Council.

P9 Clerk Salary & All (June)	£131.52 (SO)
P9 HMRC – PAYE	£30.40
P10 Clerk Salary & All (July)	£131.52 (SO)
P10 HMRC – PAYE	£30.40
P8 Printing Costs – Annual Report	£155.45

The following receipts were noted:

Bank Interest	£10.51
R4 Recycling	£31.76

12. Correspondence for circulation.

Breckland – Mobile Deployable Surveillance Cameras/Signage Interest – Council agreed there were no great issues and cameras and signage was not required.

Community Enable Visit – Breckland Inspiring Communities – Cllr Robinson agreed to contact the Breckland Officer and update Council as to whether there were any mental health services available for the village.

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

Council agreed to review the grass cutting contract.

14. To confirm the next meeting of Fransham Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Council noted the date of the next meeting and the Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.07pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL - YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2023					
FINANCIAL REPORT - JULY 2023					
BUDGET UPDATE	Budget	To	%	Bank Balance at 01.04.2022	8149.94
	2023/24	Date	Spend	Plus Receipts at 30.06.2023	3107.40
				Less Expenditure at 30.06.2023	2061.27
PAYMENTS*				TOTAL	9196.07
Admin	2,517	714.40	28%	Balance at 30.06.2023	
Salary	2,019	607.88	30%	Community Current Account	4177.05
Maintenance	100	-		Business Savings Account	5049.42
Grass Cutting	2,118	875.00	41%		9226.47
Donations	50	-		Plus any outstanding receipts	0.00
TOTAL	6,804	2,197.28		Less any outstanding payments	30.40
				TOTAL	9196.07
RECEIPTS			Received	including:	
Admin	-	-		Highway Reserves	2656.61
Precept	5,750	2,875.00	50%	GENERAL RESERVE	6539.46
Bank Interest	-	10.51			
Recycling	20	31.76	159%		
HMRC	-	117.40			
TOTAL	5,770	3,034.67			
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-1,034.00	837.39			

*includes payments awaiting authorisation at this meeting as listed on the agenda.

District Councillors Report July 2023

Local Plan:

When the current Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 it contained a policy, INF 03, inserted by the Inspector at the examination in public. This required Breckland Council to submit updated policies on housing, economic development, gypsy and traveller accommodation and internal space standards. The new policies were submitted for examination in public late in 2022. The Inspector in charge of the examination has submitted an interim report which, in a very pragmatic way, has cleared all the policy updates required by INF 03 to be included in the Local Plan full update which is being carried out currently. The Inspectors interim report has been published on the planning policy section of Breckland's website.

A reminder that none of the sites submitted by landowners, developers and agents have been assessed for their suitability for development and subsequent inclusion in the new Local Plan. The results of the recent Issues and Options consultation and the fully appraised sites will be issued for a further consultation later this year. The timelines for the completion of the Local Plan are contained in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) document which is available to view on the Councils website. The LDS is "living" document so if the timelines change, they will be reflected there.

It is intended that the draft Local Plan is submitted for examination in December 2024, and if found "sound" at that time, adopted by December 2026.

All the documents relating to the Local Plan full update can be found at <https://brecklandlocalplan.commonplace.is/>

Nutrient Neutrality:

Mitigation schemes to offset the harm nitrates and phosphates are causing to certain rivers and their catchments are currently being worked up by the Environment Agency and government departments. Schemes will include the creation of new wetlands which will be designed to "soak up" the pollutants. The first scheme, costing c£30m, started in March in the Tees area. Developers will be able to buy credits to offset the pollution from their development, it is estimated (in some quarters) that neutrality mitigation will add around £10k to the cost of a rural dwelling. Other areas will be rolled out in the future.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Another reminder that from November this year most developments (small sites from April 2024) will have to prove, through on-site measures or purchased credits, that the biodiversity of the site is measurably better than before the development took place. This will require developers to carry out a baseline biodiversity assessment of their site plus a post development assessment to prove the biodiversity uplift. The government are asking for a 10% uplift in biodiversity on all development with few exceptions. BNG is in addition to, and does not replace existing protection for protected sites, habitats or species. Habitat enhanced or created for BNG purposes must be managed and maintained for 30 years. The Natural England website contains a quick guide to BNG.

Housing the Homeless:

Addressing the housing crisis and homelessness is one of the key challenges facing Breckland, as well as the rest of the country. Nationally there has been a 50% rise in no fault evictions over the past year. In Breckland we have seen the numbers in temporary accommodation double over the last 3 years.

Breckland has already taken bold steps towards tackling these challenges. In 2021-22 the Council invested £1.8m into the Elm House site in Thetford, creating new temporary accommodation for up to 35 people. In 2022 the Council started a programme of targeted acquisitions to use as temporary accommodation. In February 2023 it was agreed at full Council that external funding should be used to continue to expand this programme. Capital funding has seen the Council obtain ownership and refurbish around 26 properties some of which provide sustainable homes for those welcomed to the area under the Afghan and Ukrainian resettlement schemes.

As part of the programme the Council agreed to review the best solutions for holding and managing housing assets. A strong legal and regulatory steer has indicated that the Council should become a Registered Provider (RP) with the Regulator of Social Housing. Access to more external funding to purchase properties and relief from stamp duty on the purchase price are just some of the benefits which RPs enjoy.

The Cabinet will discuss becoming a RP at its meeting on 3rd July.

Business Waste Collection Service:

Breckland Council have commenced a business waste collection service. This will provide an affordable and flexible waste collection service with reliable collections as often as is needed, including one off and seasonal events. For details visit

www.waste.breckland.gov.uk .

Contacting Breckland:

Applying for housing and council tax, building control inspections, garden waste collections, voter registration and more: - www.breckland.gov.uk/applyforit

If an issues affects you, your property or your community: - www.breckland.gov.uk/reportit

You can be kept up to date with all things to do with Breckland Council by subscribing to receive information that interests you at www.breckland.gov.uk/email-updates

Mark Kiddle-Morris

Member for Launditch Ward.

1st July, 2023.