

FRANSHAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2022
to
31st March 2023



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY

Our Councillors



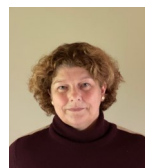
Richard Watts, Chairman

01362 681917



Russell James, Vice Chairman

01362 687148



Emma Spratt

01362 687791



James Sheringham

01760 722159



Gerry Taylor

07711 082373



Andrew Lake

01362 687537



Katharine Robinson

07760 669169

In September 2022, Katharine Robinson joined the Council and is looking forward to supporting the Parish Council and assisting in any way she can.

Our Staff

Sheryl Irving, Parish Clerk & RFO

01362 667756

franshamparishcouncil@gmail.com

www.franshampc.info



Fransham Parish Council has been awarded a Quality status as part of the Local Council Award Scheme. This award recognises that the council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Fransham Parish Council has gone above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their community and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

The award was presented to the Parish Council at their Council meeting on Tuesday 21st March 2023 by Ms Gabbie Joyce of Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

The Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) is designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential.

The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed them by their peers, and put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

We are proud to say that in February 2023, we met the criteria for the Local Councils Award Scheme—Quality Level. This award shows that we serve our community as best we can and try to make a real difference in the lives of the people that live here.



Chairman's report

I would like to start, once again, with a thank you to the Vice-chair and the Clerk for their support and assistance through the previous year. It is a pleasure to serve as the Chairman and thank the council in voting me in to the role.

In August 2023, Brian Drewitt resigned as a Councillor. We are grateful to Brian for his support and time he committed to the Parish Council. We have been pleased to quickly fill the vacancy; we welcome Katharine Robinson to the council. Katharine brings with her experience of being involved with local council and has already started a Fransham Facebook Community page. The page is not just for the council it is for all the local community, I know that she would be delighted to have help keeping the page up to date, feel free to contact her directly through Facebook if you would like to help.

The purpose of the council is to represent the community and make decisions on their behalf, it is always rewarding to see positive changes because of the council's efforts. During the last year a few examples have stood out for me which I think deserve mention. Firstly, we put out a questionnaire to the community asking for ideas for applications to the Vattenfall Community Fund, it was great to have responses, and all have been considered. More than one response led us to contacting National Highways, we greatly appreciated a visit from the Head of Planning and Development to one of our meetings (their presentation is available on the Fransham Parish website), the result of which, among other things is they will be conducting a feasibility study for a crossing of the A47, we will be pushing for this as strongly as we can. Secondly, we have secured funds to improve the road, it is used a great deal and has improved safety for pedestrians, unfortunately the quality of the initial installation has been in question from the start. It is with thanks to our District Councillor that we have improvements due.

I am very pleased to be able to report that the council has been awarded the Local Council Quality Award. I mentioned in the previous report that we have been working hard to achieve the required criteria and the award is the result of this hard work. The idea was put to me by our vice chair who had helped another parish to obtain quality status in the past, and I could immediately see the benefits, in particular greater standing with the district and county councils. The normal route is to obtain intermediate accreditation at a foundation level and then move on later to full accreditation. However, as we already met many of the requirements the council decided to go straight in at the full quality level. The award was presented to the council during a meeting earlier this year by Gabbie Joyce of the Norfolk Association for Local Councils. As always planning is a continuous item on the agenda and this previous year has been no exception. The Council is given an opportunity to put forward appropriate comments to the next stage of the planning process, I would like to emphasise that we are your voice. We can put forward the views of the members of the public as our comment, our meetings are a chance for you to have your say.

We put out a call on our website to encourage volunteers to get involved a village event to celebrate the King's Coronation during May, but unfortunately, we had no takers. We would like to be able to support the community in such events. If in the future, you would like to organise an event please consider how the Council could be of help and contact the clerk.

Finally, I would like to use the words I signed off with last year and to reinforce the point that we are representatives of the community. We all give freely our time to ensure the community has a voice. It is your views, comments, and questions that we are here to listen to and act upon.

Richard Watts

Chairman

What we did during the year

- We surveyed the village to find out what residents want to see in Fransham. Many of the actions are being taken forward. Suggestions for events have been passed to the Village Hall for their consideration. The full results were published in the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting dated 6th September 2022.
- Many highway issues were reported to the relevant agencies and monitored to ensure they were completed. These included removing a hedge obscuring highway visibility, pothole repairs, replacement signage on public footpaths etc.
- We continued to push Norfolk County Council for a 30mph speed limit on Crown Lane which has limited refuge for pedestrians.
- We continued to push Norfolk County Council to improve the quality of the trod on Station Road and it is hoped those works will have been carried out by the time this report is published. We are also looking at funding to extend the trod to meet the existing pavement.
- We have engaged with Vattenfall in respect of the

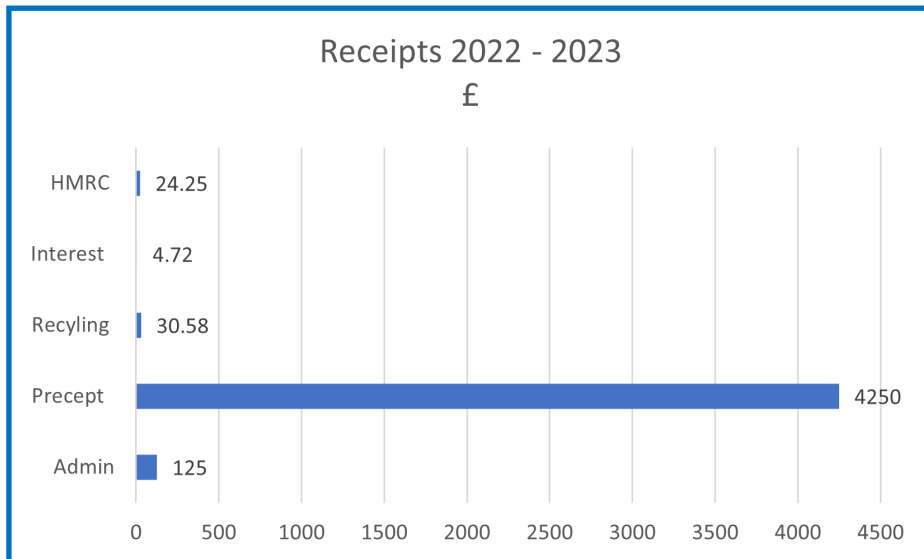
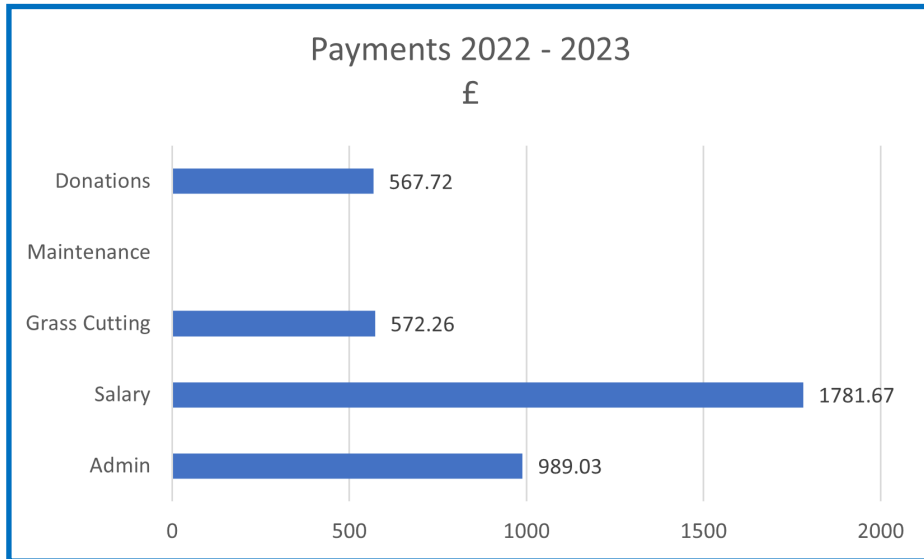
Community Fund which may allow us to take forward some of the suggestions arising from the village survey.

- We are part of the Parish Council group pushing for an Offshore Transmission Network to replace the current onshore cabling routes bringing power in from the windfarms offshore.
- Commemorative plaques were installed at both Jubilee trees planted in the churchyards.
- The dedication plate on the Village Sign is being replaced.
- We contribute to planning matters to ensure that the village voice is heard at Breckland.
- We were awarded the Local Councils Award Scheme—Quality Level. We want to serve our community as best we can and make a real difference in the lives of the people that live here.
- Most importantly, we engage with our local residents and do our best to take any concerns or ideas forward on their behalf. We always welcome their attendance at our Council meetings which are held at 7.00pm on the third Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Looking Ahead—Our priorities for 2023/24

- To continue to engage and secure the best possible outcome for our community in respect of the Vattenfall Community Fund, taking forward many of the suggestions raised in the Village Survey.
- To continue to engage with National Highways to ensure a pedestrian crossing is installed on the A47 and the pavement from Spicer's Corner is extended to meet up with the public footpath.
- To continue to ensure Fransham is well maintained, both by the Parish Council and other agencies where appropriate.
- To continue to push for a 30mph speed limit on Crown Lane.
- To continue to engage with the local community and encourage community connectivity.

Finance

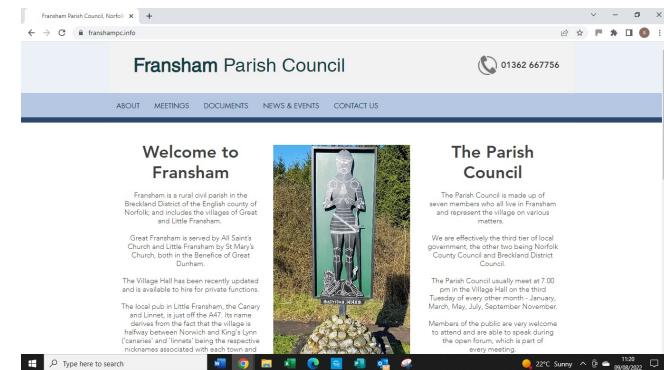


Admin includes insurance, office supplies, subscriptions etc.

Our Website

www.franshampc.info

Our website is the best place to find information about your local council, its functions, governing documents, action plans, minutes and finances etc.



2023/24 Meeting Dates

Members of the public are warmly welcomed to attend and are able to raise matters during the Open Forum session.

- 16th May 2023 (Annual Parish and Annual Council Meetings)
- 18th July 2023
- 19th September 2023
- 21st November 2023
- 16th January 2024
- 19th March 2024



Did you know that Fransham now has a Facebook page?

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/549720513808163/>

A community group to keep us all connected to our lovely villages. For people to add interesting facts and items. To keep us all informed of events and matters locally.