

Freston's Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2023

at 6.30pm

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 5th April 2023 at Freston Village Hall

Present: County Cllr Simon Harley, Cllr Henry Stogdon, Cllr Vanessa Penn, Cllr Gemma Stronach, Cllr Russell Ross-Smith, and 4 residents

1. Apologies from Cllr Jane Gould
2. Introduction and welcome: the Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed condolences to one of the residents for their recent loss.
3. To receive the Annual report of the Parish Council from the Chairman, Cllr Henry Stogdon explained that the Council had had a slow start post Covid but were now back on track.
4. To receive a statement of the accounts of Freston Parish Council for year ending 31st March 2023. The Parish Council started the year with £4667.03 and ended the year with a balance of £5,180.93. The increased balance was due to there being no clerk for some months. The accounts will now be submitted to the auditor and once audited will be put on the website.
5. Cllr Jane Gould, Babergh District Council was unable to attend the meeting and the Chairman expressed thanks for her help over the past few years, Cllr Gould was not standing for re-election as a District Councillor in May.
6. Cllr Simon Harley, Suffolk County Council was invited to address the meeting. He outlined some key points from his annual report: there is still a need for more families to host Ukrainian refugees – some existing refugees are seeking new accommodation and new refugees are also arriving. Some initiatives put forward during the year by the opposition, such as improvements in rural transport, sewerage in our local rivers, lack of infrastructure investment, etc. had not been adopted. The SCC Carbon budget was not on track to reach net zero by 2030 currently without further investment. SEND provision has received more money as a result of a review and services have improved. Suffolk is going to be given a County deal as part of the devolution and levelling up initiative and as part of this will have an elected leader and an additional 12 million a year funds, which will help with housing and education Following a question about the 32 million for new schools in his April report, Cllr Stronach asked how much is spent on SEND and further information about the new schools. Cllr Harley agreed to find out more details. The Chairman thanked Cllr Harley for his report.
7. To receive reports from representatives of other village organisations:
A report was received from the Village Hall – regular bookings were down when compared to bookings before COVID and this may not change in the immediate

future. There had been some good fund-raising activities during the year and a memorial bench is being organised for the back of the hall. The VH are holding coffee mornings on the 1st Wednesday of every month, approximately 20 Freston people came to the last one. There is going to be a regal themed quiz on 20th May. And the suggestion of a Bingo Night would be taken forward. The Allotment Group said there may be a vacancy for an allotment which would go on the next newsletter.

8. To invite the public to raise any matters of interest:

One of the residents present expressed concern about potholes, flooding and ditches which needed to be cleared out. They also expressed concern about a telegraph pole which had fallen down on the day of a funeral.

Cllr Harley gave a brief explanation of the process for reporting all of these things – everyone can report to Highways any issues via the reporting tool - [Suffolk County Council - ReportIT](#). Cllr Harley suggested that anyone reporting an issue could also notify the Parish Council who could lend their support and also enlist the support of the County Councillor where little action was being taken.

Following a discussion, it was suggested that a letter is written to UK Networks to ask them to check telegraph poles in the village, as there are some which are carrying exceptionally low wires.

Another item raised was the possibility of having a 30-mph sign for people exiting the village. The Parish Council will ask through Cllr Harley if an additional sign could be put up in the village. Cllr Harley reported that the Green Group had put forward a 20-mph limit through all towns and villages, but this was rejected.

The meeting then concluded and the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and participating.