



## FRAMSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

***All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.***

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at Framsdén Village Hall

Attendance	Dominic Vaughan (DV)	Ian Seager (IS)	Neil Mellor (NM)
	Claire Macaulay (CM)	Nicola Whitmore (NW)	
	Sarah Clare (Clerk)	Nick Hardingham (NH) District Councillor	Matthew Hicks (MHi) County Councillor

Public present at the meeting: 0

### FPC 23-06-01 Appointment of Chair

CM was nominated as Chair by DV, NW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**

The acceptance of office form was signed

### FPC 23-06-02 Apologies for Absence

Glen Buckingham (GB) was unable to attend due to work commitments and had sent his apologies. The Council accepted.

### FPC 23-06-03 Declaration of Interests

CM declared interest in FPC 23-06-10 b) iii) as a named director of Sustainable Framsdén CIC.

### FPC 23-06-04 Public Forum

None

### FPC 23-06-05 To Receive District Councillor's Report – District Councillor Nick Hardingham (NH)

The District Councillor's Report for July was presented to the Council and is now posted on the village website [www.framsdén.onesuffolk.net](http://www.framsdén.onesuffolk.net)



NH brought attention to the following:

The new administration at the Council is hoping to hold more meetings around the county, rather than just in Ipswich. It is hoped this initiative will help make the District Council more accessible and meaningful to residents. The first cabinet meeting took place John Peel Centre in Stowmarket, and the next full Council meeting is due to take place at Blackbourne Centre in Elmswell, members of the public will be warmly welcomed.

The problem of Anti Social Behaviour is being addressed, with information sessions across the county having taken place and advice being given to help counter any problems.

The Joint Local Plan with Babergh is progressing slowly, a hearing took place at end of June and it is likely that the plan will be adopted soon. This will help Council Officers work together more easily, with policies being the same across both districts.

More locally to Framsdén, NH had investigated the background of Tollgate Corner and what plans the District Council had for its future. The land is currently let to the Helmingham Estate under a farm business tenancy, that started in 2022 and is due to expire at the end of 2024. NH has asked for clarification on what tenancy rights to roll over may be in place for when the current agreement runs out, so at present there is no opportunity for local involvement. CM thanked NH for the information, but expressed frustration that this information had

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not been passed onto the Parish Council, particularly in light of the interest that had been expressed many times in past years to indicate that the Parish Council would like to be more involved in the management and use of the site.

NH had also spoken to the ACV team about the Doberman Inn and was aware that there had been no response to the Parish Council's letter which had been sent at the end of March asking that the decision to remove the ACV protections be reviewed. NH will chase the ACV team up for a reply, but noted that Community Action Suffolk may be able to offer legal advice to the Parish Council on how to contest the decision if necessary. CM noted that the Community Benefits Society are currently in dialogue with the owner, but the current status is not known.

Finally, the National Grid pylon consultation was discussed, the proposed route runs quite a way from Framsdén, so there is no direct involvement for the village at this point, but NH understands some of the concerns from residents relates to the piecemeal way in which the projects are being put together and the way in which the National Grid can override local objections. NH will keep the Council updated on this matter.

FPC 23-06-06 To Receive County Councillor's Report – County Councillor Matthew Hicks

The County Councillor's Report for July had been received, circulated to the Council and posted on the village website [www.framsdén.onesuffolk.net](http://www.framsdén.onesuffolk.net)

MHi brought attention to the following:

Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service is bringing their control room back to the county rather than running a shared facility with neighbouring counties as the technology has moved forward. Although this will help the service, reassurances have been given that there will be no noticeable change to the general public.

MHi asked that the Parish Council help with the drive to try and find people who are on pre-payment meters for their electricity. Help is available for these people to get onto better tariffs and to help insulate homes and provide other energy efficiency improvements, but it is proving difficult to get the help to those that need it. It was agreed that the Clerk would put something together to go out on the Council managed email system.

Project Gigabit has been launched – a £108 million scheme to help people in the county get online. It is estimated that the money will be enough to reach 218,000 premises. MHi has already highlighted to the scheme leaders that Framsdén has been left out of every other scheme that has been launched to help with broadband, due to the complexity of the issues in the village. MHi has had assurances from the companies concerned that Framsdén will be high on the priority list and the problems will be addressed, but only time will tell if this comes to fruition. The majority of the £108 million award is likely to go towards the overlay of existing infrastructure to help with the provision of increasing broadband speeds, alongside dealing with the 'hard to reach' areas. There is a suggestion that for some particularly difficult and outlying properties, the scheme may be offered in the form of vouchers for residents to use towards the cost of installation of services, but again the details are yet to be finalised.

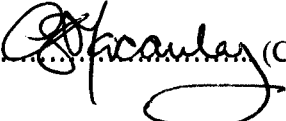

A new contract is being negotiated for the provision of library services across the county. The current providers have been through a very difficult period with the impact of the pandemic, but they are tendering again. It is unlikely that the public will see much change in face-to-face services.

Finally, MHi confirmed that funding and the go-ahead for all the signs on the A1120, A140 and A143 that need replacement or repair has been signed off. The work is due to start in October when the new Highways contract begins. In addition, each County Councillor can nominate up to a further six signs in their area that need work and so MHi will be looking for signs to be nominated.

DV raised a query about when the verges are due to be cut in the village, as he had been disappointed that the verges in Framsdén had been cut early in May when the wildflower were just starting to come through. The verges had not been cut since then and probably needed it in some places. MHi explained that the verge cutting schedules can be viewed on the Suffolk County Council website, but if there is a particular area that DV felt should be protected due to wildflower growth then it might be worth looking at applying for a Roadside Nature Reserve, although this would need a management plan at Parish level.

FPC 23-06-07 Minutes of previous meetings

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by IS, seconded by NM and **WERE SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

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FPC 23-06-08 Matters Arising and Action Points from June minutes

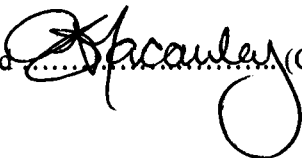

- 8.1 Arrange for Community Benefits Society to update District Councillor on Dobermann Inn Case. ONGOING
- 8.2 VHMC to liaise with Framsdens Fundraisers about a potential new community use board at the Village Hall. DISCHARGED – This will need to be an agenda item at a future meeting once decisions have been taken by Framsdens Fundraisers about the proposal.
- 8.3 Arrange for a site visit and assessment of whether the Village Hall is a suitable location for an EV charging point. ONGOING – Approval is needed for the form (as completed by Sustainable Framsdens CIC on behalf of the Parish Council) to be sent for the site visit and permission needs to be obtained from the Diocese as landlord. It was noted that the first seven years of maintenance are included in the installation and it was confirmed that there is no financial commitment to the Council by submitting the expression of interest form. NW proposed that the form be submitted, DV seconded, 3 voted in favour, 1 abstained due to declared interest and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will contact landlord to get formal permission for a charging point to be fitted and once this is obtained the expression of interest form will be submitted.
- 8.4 To review list of tasks related to the management of the Village Hall and consider potential volunteers to be approached. To be discussed later in meeting.
- 8.5 Submit responses to planning department at District Council as agreed. DISCHARGED
- 8.6 To distribute payments as approved at the June meeting. DISCHARGED
- 8.7 Circulate report on Energy Audit Report to Councillors for consideration on outcomes and future action at next meeting. To be discussed later in meeting.

FPC 23-04-10 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None
- b) To consider any planning applications which have been submitted since agenda published: None
- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications:
- i. DC/23/02329 – Householder Application – Erection of single storey rear and two storey side extensions, including insertion of rooflights in conjunction with conversion of loft and front porch (amended scheme re-submission of DEC/23/00282) – 3 Bell Farm Cottages, Birds Lane - Granted

FPC 23-06-10 Parish Council Activities & Projects

- a) To consider co-option to Council - Nobody came forward for co-option. The Clerk confirmed that the vacancies are published on the village website.
- b) VHMC Report to include:
- i. Update on application to Suffolk ProHelp, including consideration of amount of donation to Suffolk ProHelp in return for the voluntary work to be carried out to help with the Village Hall Plans – NM reported that the architect will be visiting the site soon, date to be confirmed. It was agreed that until the work has been carried out the amount of the voluntary donation to the Suffolk ProHelp group cannot be properly considered.
  - ii. Consideration of revised hire fees for Village Hall – At present local residents/charities get the hall at £5 per hour, with everyone else being charged £10 per hour. There is a day rate of £60, which doesn't make much sense for locals. Research on other local halls has uncovered a number of different strategies in pricing, with one hall charging a higher rate over the winter months to cover additional energy costs. It had, however, become clear that Framsdens's rates were substantially lower than many other halls, mostly due to the fact that the rates had not been raised for a number of years. It is clear that due to rising costs the hall hire rates need to increase in order to keep the hall financially viable and it was probably fairer to charge a small amount extra to hall users, as the only other way forward would be increase the precept charge across the village. It was agreed consider and research this matter further, with a view to formal adoption of some new rates at the next meeting.

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NW has spoken to the PCC, explaining that the lease terms state the church is guaranteed a minimum of 36 days hire across a year, the hire is to be on the same terms as other hirers (i.e. at local/charity rate), not necessarily for free. In order to meet ongoing and increasing costs in operating the hall it is hoped that the PCC will understand the need to contribute by paying for their hires going forward.

iii. Energy Audit Report – outcomes and future action – The report had been circulated to all Councillors prior the meeting. CM opened the discussion by stating that it looks like the best solution would be to install new heaters to help save energy. Installing the proposed heaters would also work well with the need to keep the hall well-ventilated in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The type of heaters proposed also respond much more quickly, which would save energy in the long term too, as currently a number of hall users come in early to put the heating on for an hour or so before their events/meetings are due to take place. IS noted that only 50% of the installation would be paid for by grant and other funding would need to be sourced. IS also queried whether the Parish Council could cherry pick from the report and not necessarily implement all the suggested actions, CM confirmed it could.

iv. VHMC Recruitment of volunteers for specific tasks and/or to join the team – No response had been received on a general request for volunteers.

IS raised that the previous VHMC from the 1990's had a minimum of four Parish Councillors involved, whereas currently it was just himself and NM on the committee along with a non-Councillor volunteer. IS Also observed that other local halls have substantially larger committees helping to run the facilities. IS asked whether any other Councillors could join the Committee to help. Other Councillors present explained that they could not commit anymore voluntary time for a variety of reasons, IS asked that this be minuted. IS then proposed that the role of managing Health & Safety responsibilities for the hall revert back to the Parish Clerk. The Clerk advised that this is not something that she felt comfortable doing and that she had taken on the job of Clerk on the understanding that a Management Committee for the hall would be formed.

NM suggested that the list he had put together in early June of the specific jobs where help is needed to facilitate the running of the village hall, should be circulated to the village. This would include someone who could take on the task of co-ordinating the Health & Safety responsibilities, which was estimated to likely take about 30-60 minutes per month. It is hoped that by being more specific about what would actually be required from volunteers it might encourage someone to come forward. The Clerk will draft an email on this basis for NM to review. Upon approval this will be circulated on the village email system to see if someone comes forward.

v. Status of Sole Plate Repairs for reporting to Locality Budget Monitoring – NM reported that the work is due to be started on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July.

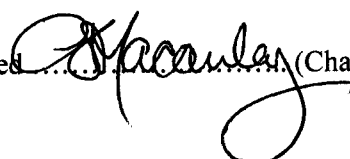

vi. Village Hall Chair Coverings – The material for re-covering the chairs has been sourced and the work will be carried out by the Debenham Shed. IS had checked the current price of purchasing new chairs and had calculated that this re-covering and refurbishment work is going to save about £732 for the Parish Council.

vii. General Maintenance – A few minor repairs have been carried out with a local tradesperson's help. The Council expressed their thanks.

viii. Lighting – Framsdon Fundraisers will help install the lighting for the 'stage area' at the end of the village hall.

c) Tollgate Corner – potential future plans – (subject to receiving information from District Council) – This item had been discussed during the District Councillor's report. As the land is currently let out to Helmingham Hall, there is no mechanism to take this matter forward until the tenancy runs out at the end of next year. CM again expressed frustration that the tenancy had not been advised to the Parish Council directly, as the District Council is fully aware that the Parish Council had an interest in developing the site for community use and proposed that a formal complaint be submitted to the District Council about the lack of notification to the Parish Council, NW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. CM will draft a letter of complaint, which will then be sent via the Parish Clerk.

d) Update on Play Area – snagging/completion/request for part payment of the outstanding bill – CM reported that the remedial work had taken place, some of the ground is still uneven, but there is agreement with

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the contractor that the groundworks will be reviewed again in September to see if any further work is required once the ground has had time to settle. IS expressed concern that if the bill is settled in full then there would be no incentive for this further check to take place and it has taken a lot of effort to get the snagging works completed already. After discussion it was agreed to withhold £2,000 from the final settlement until the September review has taken place and it is confirmed that the works are completed to full satisfaction.

IS passed CM a list of additional concerns about groundworks around certain items of play equipment. CM will send this information to the contractor to explain the reason behind the withholding of the final funds.

An email had been received from a parishioner noted that some items of equipment at the Play Area needed cleaning. After discussion it was agreed to ask for those that use the Play Area to form a volunteer party to help with the cleaning.

A request from a parishioner for changes and additions to the goal posts were also considered. The Parish Council had taken advice from professional play area designers and many of the issues raised in the email had been considered and the best solution offered is the design as newly installed. The Clerk will write back to the parishioner advising accordingly.

#### FPC 23-06-11 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement for the month, as supplied by the Clerk - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement for July. There were no queries. NM proposed acceptance, CM seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.
- b) To agree payments as detailed on Payment Schedule - CM proposed authorisation on the understanding the payment 30 is reduced by £2K due to the issues raised under FPC 23-06-10 d), NW seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will set up payments accordingly.
- c) To review and re-adopt the Financial Regulations - CM proposed adoption of the Financial Regulations as circulated, NM seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the adopted regulations on the village website

#### FPC 23-06-12 Matters of urgency to be brought to the attention of the Council

- a) Items for next agenda:
  - VHMC volunteers
  - Hire charges for the Village Hall

#### FPC 23-06-13 Confidential Matters

The Chair of the meeting CM proposed that the meeting be closed to the public as an individual Councillor wished to share with other Councillors some private information and how it may impact their workload going forwards. NW seconded the proposal, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The public were asked to withdraw. (Confidential Minute Appended)

Items for the September Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September at the latest, with any accompanying paperwork ready to be circulated with the agenda upon publication.

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 9.12pm. The next Parish Council meeting is set for **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023** at 7.30pm, in Framsdon Village Hall

Signed ..... (Chair of meeting authorising minutes)

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