



ANNUAL REPORT 2020 – 2021



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As we all know this has been an extremely difficult year and it's still not over yet. Life has been very different recently, and for some it has been challenging. What has been great though is the reaction of the local community with lots of people stepping forward to help the less able – it has been truly marvellous to witness and just shows what a great community we live in.



All the council meetings have been held on Zoom which has been a truly interesting experience and a learning curve for us all. We have been lucky at times to be joined by some of our parishioners and we hope it has been an interesting experience.

Over the course of the year, we have lost five councillors through various different personal reasons, we say goodbye and thank you to Elizabeth Stevenson, Brian Hockin, Kelvin Groves, Ian Capon and Ian Crawford. We now say welcome to Helen Walker, Louise Goodger, Tim Steer and Sue Haywood. We have a co-option due to replace the last of the four councillors on 4th May and will be welcoming another new councillor then.

Kate Graddock, the Deputy Executive Officer, left us in January for a new role, we wish her the best for the future. In January, our new Maintenance and Amenities Operative Nigel Tounson started and is already making a huge difference in the parish. If you know of areas of concern, please do let us know and we can send Nigel to check things out.

On 23rd March, our new Administration and Projects Manager, Mrs Jude Wood joined the council. We hope that she will enjoy her time with us.

This year we were lucky enough to be able to update the play equipment at Babbages Play Area using the £23,816 of Section 106 money. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to do this and hope to identify similar funding for Ellerslie Play Area to be updated and for further updates to the Babbages Play Area. The Community Building, Storage Building and Football Pitch at Riverside Park and Water's Edge has also been transferred to us, we will be leasing them to the Scout Group and Football Club and we hope that they will be able to use them soon.

Additionally, we have also made progress with the Neighbourhood Plan; we hope to have a draft sent out in the near future.

In September of 2020, the old Council Offices at 12 Higher Road were sold. The Beechfield Centre held a multitude of different classes and activities throughout the past year, we look forward to being able to open the hall once restriction have ben lifted.

With the departures and new arrivals to the council hopefully as the year progresses, we can all move forward. At the moment we are still waiting to hear if we carry on with virtual meetings from May onwards. Some of the councillors are keen for this to continue as some have been shielding.

There will be elections for the Devon County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner where the voting will take place in the usual locations.

The Prime Minister has given us a roadmap out of the current lockdown. So hopefully it will all go to plan and we can all get back to some sort of normality. I am certainly looking forward to meeting with friends for coffee.

Cllr Sue Kingdom, Chairman

This Annual Report is available on the Council's website at www.fremingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk and in a large print version.

**If you would like a large print copy please contact the
Parish Council Offices
on 01271 321063, or email
admin@fremingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk**

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

First, I would like to thank Cllr Alan Rennles for his service as Chairman to the Finance & Personnel Committee up until the summer of this year. I have had the privilege of taking over the role and have enjoyed the working relationship with the Committee members and staff in my role.

2020/2021 has seen a busy year for the Finance and Personnel Committee, despite the pandemic. We were pleased to welcome back Mrs Victoria Woodhouse, Executive Officer, from Maternity Leave at the start of the year and appointed Mrs Kate Graddock as Deputy Executive Office. Unfortunately, we have said goodbye to Mrs Graddock who has taken up a new role elsewhere, I would like to thank Kate for her commitment and contribution to the Council and wish her all the best in her new role. We have recently appointed Mrs Jude Wood as Administration & Projects Manager and look forward to developing the role with Jude. Mr Nigel Tounson was also appointed at the start of the year as Maintenance & Amenities Operative and we hope you have noticed the difference he is already making around the parish. To assist Nigel in his role the Parish Council has leased a hybrid vehicle recognising our commitment to our climate emergency declaration.

With the new staffing structure, we have been able to progress projects and services for our community and hope to develop this further in the future. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit just before the start of the new financial year and Government restrictions meant significant changes for the way in which we as a Council have operated and working procedures for staff. I would like to thank staff for the way in which they have responded and adapted during this time. The staff have, as ever, been supportive to Cllrs in trying to ensure Council business continues and in providing support to the community during the first “lockdown” co-ordinating volunteers and assistance to those in need.

The restrictions over the last year have been tough for everyone but with the closure of most services and additional expenditure to ensure the safety of our community we have had to monitor our finances closely and adjust priorities where necessary. It was a shame to see the Beechfield Centre, which had become a lively hub of the community for many groups, lay dormant and empty for much of the year and we are looking forward to welcoming groups back which each level of the easing of the Government’s restrictions.

September finally brought the news the Committee had been waiting for and confirmation that the previous Parish Council's Offices at 12 Higher Road had been sold. This has enabled us to bridge the gaps where there has been a drop in income or increase in expenditure and allocate funds towards reserves for projects, we are hoping to undertake this year. For example, we have just agreed an allocation of £30,000 towards play area maintenance, £30,000 might sound like a significant amount of money but we do currently manage around 10 areas with play equipment and the staff will be working up a programme for the play areas/equipment most in need of replacement and/or repair.

This year has meant that it is more important than ever to support our community and community groups and I am pleased to say that the Committee has awarded around £2,000 in grant funding towards our local community groups which will be awarded in July 2021, we had hoped to make our grants presentation evening into a community event this year, however, given the amount of planning and uncertainty around the restrictions I suspect this will have to be postponed until next year.

I would like to thank the members of the Finance & Personnel Committee and staff for the support they have shown me since I was elected Chairman and look forward to another busy year ahead.

Cllr Frank Biederman, Chairman

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2020/21

TOTAL £2,035

Age Concern Barnstaple	£200.00
Barnstaple Disabled Fellowship Club	£100.00
Barnstaple Library Friends Group	£75.00
Barnstaple Pilot Gig Club CIO	£100.00
Bickington Brownies	£100.00
Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon	£200.00
Fremington Garden Club	£50.00
GO North Devon	£100.00
Instow & District Social Fellowship Club	£50.00
Instow, Westleigh & West Yelland Parish News	£60.00
Lady Linscott Club	£100.00
50th North Devon Scouts	£100.00
1st Fremington Air Scout—Beavers Colony	£100.00
1st Fremington Guides	£100.00
Record Office	£600

FREMINGTON QUAY COMMITTEE



Fremington Quay has seen a significant rise in visitors since the start of the pandemic, with more people being ordered to stay at home it has become a popular site for locals to undertake their daily exercise and visit when restrictions allow. It has been fantastic to see the Quay so busy, however, I would remind all those using the area to park in the areas provided as we have had several complaints about inconsiderate parking over the last year. We know spaces are limited and would encourage, those that can, to park elsewhere and walk to the Quay. We have been working with the District Council to increase litter bins at the Quay, but please if you do find the bins full do take your litter home.

The effect the restrictions have had on the hospitality trade and in particular the café at the Quay has been difficult for all and disappointing that the restrictions have prevented the business from being full open for much of the year.

I am pleased that the North Devon Council has carried out repairs to the Quay wall as necessary and the Parish Council has carried out some repairs to the parking area.

The Parish Council was offered the opportunity to purchase the vintage bike collection that has been displayed in the café for the last few years. Unfortunately, the Parish Council was unable to identify funds to support the purchase and has therefore had to regrettably decline the offer, it is hoped that they will stay in situ until such time as they are sold.

As always, I would like to thank the staff and fellow Councillors for their support over the last 12 months, I continue to thoroughly enjoy the role as Chairman and like everyone else, am hoping for a successful forthcoming year.

Cllr Frank Biederman, Chairman

FOOTPATHS COMMITTEE

This last year with lockdown and a significant amount of people at home, the footpaths/bridleways throughout the Parish have seen an increase in usage.

As in previous years, the general clearance and maintenance of footpath/bridleways/byway in the Parish has been carried out by local contractors, the majority of works involving clearance of overgrown vegetation.



The season's first cut of footpaths / bridleways was carried out in accordance with the specifications. This first cut ensures the maintenance and upkeep of our footpath/bridleways/byway network is easier to control and improves access for parishioners and visitors to the parish.

The surveys of footpaths/bridleways/byway network for 2020-2021 was carried out again by Mrs Steer for which the Footpath Committee thank her. We are pleased to report that all have passed, and Mrs Steer has agreed to carry out the surveys for 2021-2022. The Footpaths Committee have agreed to pay Mrs Steer the sum of £80.00 to carry out all the surveys in her own time.

As in previous years planning applications are on-going in the Parish, due to the impact on the footpath network we have not submitted Specific Bids for the coming year. Footpath 17 (Tews Lane) is now open although re-directed through the new housing estate.

A P3 Grant in the sum of £450.00 was awarded last year and has been spent on clearance and maintenance work that was required on the Parish's footpath/bridleways/byway network.

Finally, our thanks go to members of staff, local contractors and our Public Rights of Way Warden for their continuing support and assistance in maintaining our footpaths/bridleways/byway network.

Cllr Samuel Adams
Chairman

Mrs Liz Steer
Joint P3 Co-ordinator

TEWS LANE COMMITTEE

I have only recently been elected as Chairman of the Tews Lane Committee following the resignation of the previous Chairman and I would like to thank Mr Ian Capon for his service as Chairman to the Committee.

The last year has been a difficult year for all, unfortunately, the pandemic has meant that for much of the year the football teams have been unable to play but whilst they have not been able to make the most of the site many of our local families have been able to enjoy the open space and play area whilst complying with Government restrictions. I would take this opportunity to remind everyone using the site to pick up after their dogs so that all users can enjoy the site. Unfortunately, the multi-play unit has had to be removed from the play area due to safety concerns and the outdoor gym equipment has also reached the end of its life and programmed for removal at the end of April/beginning of May. We know that the multi-play has been missed and hope to look at replacement equipment in the future.

I am pleased to report that the amended plans for completion of the pavilion at Tews Lane have now been submitted to the Planning Officer and we hope to receive a decision before the end of May. The Committee hopes that the revised plans will meet the current and future needs to the community and provide a much-needed community building for the area.

Drainage of the pitches on site has been an ongoing concern, following advice from the Football Association the Committee appointed STRI to undertake a drainage survey. STRI were able to conduct a site visit, inspect the pitches and check the drain lines and profile. Their report summarised the findings and recommended that further investigatory works are undertaken. This work was undertaken, and proposals put forward for a new drainage system for the pitches, however, the anticipated cost is in the region of £90,000 and with only £19,000 (approximately) available for drainage in Section 106 funding the Committee is currently investigating other funding sources to undertake the works.

I understand that Linden Homes have now completed the footpath works as per their planning approval, however, they are still required to complete works to join the footpath to site and plant a hedge along the fence to comply with the works licence agreed with the Parish Council and officers are currently pursuing the developer to complete these works.

I would like to thank the Committee and staff for their support and hope to build on the work achieved over the last year during my time as Chairman.

Cllr Sue Kingdom, Chairman



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PARKS & PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE

Babbage's play area was closed off for a period of time which resulted in the site being cleared of the old play equipment and replaced with a more robust and practical piece's of play equipment that should out last the previous by a great deal. This in turn will provide the young people and children in the area a safe space to play, take risk and learn from these experiences.

Similar funding is being sought to rejuvenate the Ellerslie play area in Sticklepath. After the removal of the multi-play equipment.

Beechfield has seen the removal of the self powered fitness equipment that was on the football field. There are no current plans to replace this. However a assault/fitness course has been added to the neighbourhood plan with the hope of catering for those who like to take fitness to the outdoors.

Beechfield has also had dugouts built and erected by the football club and with the easing of lockdown has seen the return of games over the last few weekends.

However at times these have been targeted and vandalism has occurred the community policing team been made aware. The Beechfield centre itself has also had to contend with the vandalism and as a result CCTV has been installed.

The Beechfield centre has started to re-open with the lifting of lockdown measures and this has seen the return of groups that help support the community.

Throughout the year all of the play areas and associated equipment have been inspected and maintenance carried out. With the help of the new Maintenance and Amenities Operative that started working for the Parish Council this year. We welcome Nigel to this role.

Griggs field has also been mentioned in the Neighbourhood Plan with a view to improve the BMX track that sits within it. Work has started on a new pathway around Griggs field itself, with the hope of making it more accessible for more members of the community.

The Leat Nature Reserve has seen improvements over the course of the last financial year.

There has also been a donation of Oak saplings which have been planted at various points throughout the community.

Fremington Primary School has started the Maybe Something Beautiful project, which saw the young people of the community design and make art work that would be installed in the Beechfield park as a way of brightening up the community whilst it was a particularly dark/unknown time of year during the pandemic.

The village green in Fremington has seen the removal of the shelter and the benches that were starting to show their age. These have been replaced with wooden benches. Dogs are still allowed on the green however this must be on a lead and under control. Not to forget the installation of key worker Kate on the Village Green itself.

The Parish Council has continued to support 50th North Devon Scouts and hopes to be able to support them to build a new facility to operate out of as the old premises became unsafe to do so.

The allotment sites are running well and in addition to this we are expecting to take on a new site down at Yelland with the completion of the new development at Tarka Ridge.

Cllr Samuel Adams, Chairman



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Unfortunately, the pandemic has meant that Neighbourhood Plans cannot be presented for referendum until May 2021, however, this has given the Steering Group time to review the draft in detail and the change in needs/aspirations of the community. The Steering Group has made significant progress over the last year with this review and in producing an initial draft of the Fremington Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The Climate Emergency Working Party appointed members to sit on the Steering Group to ensure that climate change is incorporated into the plan and its policies as far as possible.

The Parish Council is keen for the community to understand that The Neighbourhood Plan aligns the Parish Council's policies with those of the Local Plan and Government's aspirations. The Parish Council must comply with the Government's housing quota as set out in the Local Plan and the Parish Council has little choice, it needs to work proactively using forward thinking to prevent aggressive developers from dictating to the Parish and be in a position to defend hostile planning application refusals. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to prevent development.

The Parish Council has recently provided detailed comments on the initial draft which the Steering Group has worked through and amended accordingly. The Steering Group is now in the process of seeking advice on the initial draft and next steps from the North Devon Council as the Local Planning Authority. The Steering Group envisages that it will announce a "call for sites" to be considered for inclusion within the draft in the near future and following this there will be a public consultation, however the Parish Council is keen to ensure that a public consultation does not take place until restrictions allow for physical consultation events to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to have their say.

The small group that forms the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has worked incredibly hard on the draft plan to-date and on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank them for their commitment and contribution. If anyone would like to join the Steering Group please do contact the Parish Council Offices.

Mrs Victoria Woodhouse
Executive Officer

CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING PARTY



After a year of finding its feet and a lot of discussion of many potential issues, the CEWP now has a workable action plan with which to proceed.

Much effort went into planning a Climate Emergency Open Day event for last spring, the aim of which was to engage with residents to raise awareness of the climate emergency and discover ways in which we can all contribute, but unfortunately this became the victim of the

Covid 19 pandemic. There is hope this event can be revived and held as soon as conditions allow. CEWP members contributed greatly to developing the neighbourhood plan and influenced the leasing of a hybrid vehicle for council use, with the intention of going fully electric when the lease is renewed.

The CEWP encouraged the council to join many others in declaring support for the cross party private members Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and respond positively to the Litchardon Cross solar development planning application.

Priorities for this next year are exploring installing solar PV panels for council properties and other energy saving measures as well as encouraging more cycling and less car use locally.

On the Ecological front, plans for supporting insect populations with wide scale summer wildflower planting are being developed and will be trialled in the autumn.

From an initial start of many members the CEWP settled into a regular group but has been hit by the resignation of key councillors from both the council and the CEWP due to personal reasons. A key task this year will be looking at recruiting new members to provide a wider input.

Stephen Jarvis, Chairman

**Fremington Parish Council
Income & Expenditure Account (Unaudited)
1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

(Current) Year Ended
31st. March 2021

Income

Administration	72,734
Parks & Playing Fields	18,324
Allotments	2,122
106 Funding from NDC	24,126
Cemetery	11,488
Fremington Quay	23,860
Salaries & Inland Revenue	1,000
Insurance	0.00
Parish Paths	450
The Beechfield Centre	4,327
Riverside Park/Water's Edge	0.00
Precept	247,739
Dog Bins	40.65
Grants	4,028
Loans	0.00
Earmarked Reserves	714
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	410,955

Expenditure

Administration	34.141
Parks & Playing Fields	50,711
Allotments	2,026
106 Funding NDC	23,816
Cemetery	5,527
Fremington Quay	8,647
Salaries	126,859
Riverside Park/Water's Edge	11,737
Parish Paths	315.
Loans	16,708
Insurance	7,753
The Beechfield Centre	22,110
Dog Bins	2,964
Grants	5,251
General Reserves	1,800
Earmarked Reserves	2,153
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	322,521

Balance Carried Forward	260,328
Minimum Reserve	<hr/> 50,000
General Reserves	9,487
Transfer/Allocated to Earmarked Reserves	<hr/> 184,069

Parish Councillors

Fremington/Bickington Ward

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Cllr Carol McCormack-Hole 01271 343176

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Parish Council Officers

Mrs Victoria Woodhouse BA (Hons)

Executive Officer

Mrs Jude Wood, Administration & Projects Manager

Mrs Liz Steer, Administration Officer

Miss Nieve, Wuttke-Keary, Administration Apprentice

Mr Nigel Tounson, Maintenance & Amenities Operative

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