

Fremington Parish Council Chairman's Report
March 2023

The last year has been a busy and productive year for the Parish Council.

I am really pleased to see that the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field, Tews Lane has been successfully delivered recently using Section 106 Funds specially allocated by the North Devon Council for this purpose. The MUGA is a fantastic addition to the site and already appears to be well used.

As you may be aware the Parish Council has been working on a project to complete the pavilion at Tews Lane, however, the Parish Council is struggling with the significant rise in build costs and lack of funding available to complete the project. There is currently around £450,000 available through Section 106 funding but with an estimated cost of somewhere between £2k m² and £2.5 m² for materials alone and with a footprint of 329.86 m² on the current approved plans, we are currently looking at a shortfall of between £210,000 and £375,000 for materials alone. The Tews Lane Committee has been investigating options and the feasibility of these options to deliver the project, as I am sure you can appreciate funding options in the current climate are almost non-existent.

I know my fellow Councillors will share in my frustration that the MUGA at Riverside Park is still not open for public use. The Parish Council agreed to accept the transfer of the facility back in November 2021 the legal process appears to have been held up by the developers for unknown reasons, the Parish Council continues to try and apply pressure to speed the process up and have expressed our wish for the transfer to have taken place and the facility be open for the community by Easter 2023.

The Parish Council has recently appointed a Planning Committee to respond to Planning Applications on behalf of the Parish Council as a Statutory Consultee. Unfortunately, the Committee's job can be quite difficult in trying to balance the overall impact of a development on the parish whilst also being aware of the lack of presence of a five-year land supply.

We finally received the decision from the Planning Inspector who approved the Application for development at Yelland Quay. So many people spoke with passion at the appeal but unfortunately it did not go our way.

We also have at least three applications in the pipe line which will add to the traffic problems on the B3233.

All Parish Council and Committee meetings are open to members of the public, and I would encourage anyone wishing to know more to attend any of our meetings and engage positively with the Parish Council.

This year also saw the return of our Executive Officer from maternity leave so welcome back Victoria and a fond goodbye and thank you to Eileen who covered for her in her absence.

We also said goodbye to Nigel, the Maintenance and Amenities Operative who moved onto pastures new and welcomed Ian as his replacement, whilst we also welcomed Maddy into the admin section.

Thankfully the Covid 19 situation seems to have settled down and we have all become used to wearing masks and taking precautions whilst getting back to some normality.

I would like to extend my condolences to the Gayton family following the loss of John Gayton. John has been a part of Fremington Parish for a number of years and with whom we have shared a working relationship as the Burial Superintendent at Fremington Cemetery through W.S. Gayton & Son Ltd.

In the last few days, we have also seen the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine. A number of refugees from Ukraine are being housed in the area and made welcome by our community and the Parish Council has flown the Ukrainian Flag over the past year as a mark of respect and support.

In the near future we have the elections for councillors at both Parish and District level so the parish is likely to see new councillors step up and represent the community in Fremington Parish, I would encourage all those interested in standing for Parish Council to get in touch with the Council Offices for more information.

Finally, looking forward we have the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023. This should be a fantastic celebration in which we can all take part whether that is by watching it on the TV and having a street party or celebrating with friends and family.

Cllr Sue Kingdom
Chairman