

**Minutes of the Fremington Parish Council Meeting
Held on Monday 5th February 2024 at 7pm at the Beechfield Centre,
Beechfield Road, Fremington**

Present: Cllrs S Kingdom (Chairman), J Bell, F Biederman, J Bridgeman, J Cann, N Denton, D Dixon, D Harris, S Haywood, C McCormack-Hole, B Sherborne, H Walker, M Thomas, R Jones

Mrs Jude Wood, Administration & Projects Manager
Mrs Liz Steer, Administration Officer
4 x member of the public
Cllr Norman

2402/01

Apologies

Cllr S Adams

2402/02

Declarations of Interest

None.

2402/03

Chairman's Announcements

None.

2402/04

Public Participation Period

Members of the public raised concerns about Old School Lane. It has become more of a rat run now since the works to the Cedars Roundabout begun. It was mentioned that they had received negative response from Devon County Highways in relation to introducing a speed sign of 20 miles an hour. There has been damage caused to properties and cars. Cars of residents, have no choice but park outside their homes. Concern was raised that it's going to take someone being knocked over in order for highways to do something about the speeding cars. Members of the public asked if traffic calming measures for the area could be investigated. They did not wish for sleeping policeman to be placed as this could potentially cause noise at night.

2402/05

Minutes

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024 as a correct record.

Committees

To receive, and adopt the minutes, and note the decisions therein, of the following Committee meetings:

- Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 23rd January 2024.

It was **resolved**, with no notes to the contrary to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on the 23rd January 2024.

- Planning Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

It was **resolved**, with no notes to the contrary to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

- Environment & Community Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

It was **resolved**, with no notes to the contrary to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Environment & Community Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

- Fremington Quay Management Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

It was **resolved**, with no notes to the contrary to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Fremington Quay Management Committee meeting held on the 25th January 2024.

2402/06

County and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr Walker & Cllr Cann:

Both attended the Strategy & Resources meeting this morning (5th February 2024) and they are pleased to report that North Devon Council Customer Services will be moving from Lynton House to a hub in Green Lanes which should make it much more accessible and will be open Monday to Friday 9 to 5.

They reported that S & R agreed North Devon Council's budget this morning which still needs to be ratified at the relevant Committees but the council tax value for band D has been agreed at 2.99%. They want to compliment the Finance Officer at North Devon Council on not having to go out to referendum and having to collect lots of extra money from the tax payer.

The have been speaking to members of the public about the works at the Cedars Roundabout and have been asking people to not use alternative routes that are not suitable in Bickington Ward one being Ellerslie Road especially as there are water works taken place along this road as well, unfortunately some of the responses have been quite negative particularly on Facebook. The other thing they have been looking at is the Local Governments Association guidance on people's behaviour via social media towards Councillors and what is not acceptable. They will send the link to the Office to be forwarded to all Councillors.

They mentioned that although not in their Ward that the toucan crossing on the A39 is now operational and has a 40 mile per hour restriction in place. They would like to thank County Councillor Frank Biederman in trying to alleviate the issues being experienced with the works at Cedars Roundabout.

Cllr Denton had nothing to report.

Cllr Norman

Reported that subject to full council budget there is potential funding for street marshals to continue in the town centre. On the 28th February planning for development at old Leisure Centre is going to Planning Committee.

Cllr Kingdom thanked Cllr Biederman for all his help in relation to the Cedars Roundabout over these past weeks.

Cllr Biederman

He wanted to reiterate the things that he has said on social media about the Cedars Roundabout and can only apologise again for the major issues it has caused these past weeks. The situation has improved vastly from the first two days. There is always supposed to be someone on site to manually operate the lights and this didn't happen in the first two days, since day three there has been someone there for 12 hours but the ongoing problem is that there is only one person and during lunch and comfort breaks this is causing delays. For next few days there is another person there and there will be someone on site from 6.30am to 6.20pm. Operator 1 is there from 6.30 to 4.30 and operator 2 is there from 8.30 until 6.30 so that breaks are covered. He is hoping that Devon County Council Highways sort this out as a permanent solution. Weekends are a major problem, it's easier in the week to predict traffic movements. Another option is lights that are controlled by remote control, operator could potentially walk about and down roads/pathways and visually see any tailbacks and adjust accordingly. This is currently being investigated, he will continue to do his best to help ease the traffic congestion. One of the benefits of the Cedars roundabout work is that it was shown that it decreased the traffic time through Bickington by 15 minutes, which stopped a lot of the rat running that was going on School Lane and Tews Lane.

He had a meeting with Stuart Hughes and Rob Hutchings from Devon County Council they looked at the Cedars Roundabout and went around the Parish, they went to Tews Lane with regards to closing it off as they do in Ellerslie Road, then went to Old School Lane and within the space of a few minutes at least 30 cars went by driving at excessive speeds. Rob couldn't understand why the speed limit sign had not been granted he was informed that this was due to missing out on one matrix of the application. Rob picked up on the fact that Mill Hill is 20 mph zone so this would just be an extension to what was already in place, it is hoped now there will be a bit more traction. He had asked for Old School Lane to go on the Agenda tonight as it is felt it would help if all were pushing for the same thing.

In relation to the bus lane off Old Bideford that goes in by Charter Vets, he went with Rob and Stuart and talked about opening that for access to other vehicles and not just buses, DCC will look at formalising that, but there may not be a traffic regulation so it's not enforceable if it is used.

He looked at the Bus gate, which is technically outside of his Ward but he strongly believes it impacts his Ward. Friday the 2nd February we had an

informal highways and traffic orders committee meeting, because they pulled the official one, there were some difference of opinions expressed but myself and Councillor Anderson feel that the bus gate should be suspended. After the meeting officers have been charged with bringing a report to a special HATOC meeting.

The first part of the devolution debate, he stated as Cllrs are a bit sceptical, the governance of it will be that Torbay and Devon working together so each will have three seats and they will share the Chair of it on a two years cycle. So in effect, Torbay will have complete control of this for two years every four year cycle, when you look at the figured Devon has a population of 814,000 and Torbay has a population of 139,000. So they are six times small than us, effectively. It is now out for consultation, he felt as a Parish we should respond along with residents.

Budget is very similar, we did get a better settlement than in previous years as we got the rate of inflation but we have no extra money, the long of the short of it is that there is another £40million of savings to be found. The base budget will £743,382,000, increase of £43 million before factoring in inflation, the government have done the cost of living increase which doesn't affect the Council, but it affects all our contractors, that alone is going to £27,000,000. Integrated adult social care will see a 6% rise, £340 million for adult social care. Children's services, that does not include education, they're going to be £206,278,000 they're going to get a 10.4% rise. Public health £21 million that's 3.5% decrease. Corporate services that's Officers the Council, minus 2.6%. Climate Change, Environment & Transport is a 4.7% rise which in effect is a decrease because of inflation. The recommendation was to increase Council Tax by 4.99% which is 2.99% for general staff and 2% for adult social care. That will mean a rise of £81.54 for band D properties.

2402/07

Police

No report received.

2402/08

Old School Lane

Cllr Kingdom walked up Old School Lane about 18 months ago following an email she had received from a resident, she sent a letter about it to DCC Highways and got no response. Cllr Kingdom said the only wish is that we want a 20mph speed limit in place. Cllr Biederman suggested perhaps chicanes. Cllr Haywood suggested the speed watch campaign, but Cllr Cann says it's not something that can be done by the Speed Watch group as the Police dictate where you can and cannot go to speed watch, generally it is only on main roads and not down side roads or lanes.

Cllr Biederman suggested another letter to be written and it be hand delivered by himself and some residents if they were willing.

Cllr Cann asked if you could reapply for the speed limit sign, Cllr Biederman confirmed he applies every year. Each scheme cost around £25,000.00 to put in place. Having a community speed watch in the area helps towards to the case.

Cllr McCormack-Hole asked if there was any possibility of putting up a sign '20 is plenty' although it's not enforceable she felt that maybe by having a sign up people may think.

Cllr Biederman said that if a resident chose to put a sign up on their property, then that would be there right, unfortunately it was felt though that signs don't really work.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary for the Administration & Projects Manager to work with Cllr Biederman and to write to Devon County Council to pass on the concerns from residents and Councillors in relation to the need for a 20mph speed limit sign at Old School Lane.

Cllr Sherborne left the meeting at 8.00pm

2402/09

Housing Crises

Cllr Bridgeman wanted to discuss the Housing Crises Declaration made by Fremington Parish Council. He felt in many ways that if we have declared a housing crisis, we need some sort of action plan. He has been unable to find anything on our website. He had listened to discussions about new housing estates and how social housing is not going to get delivered in our Parish. The Parish Council have stated on many occasion and voted against development but how can we declare a housing crisis if this is the case, the two statements do not marry up. What are we going to as a Parish?

Cllr Cann felt there was not much as a Parish that could be done until the Government changed the Planning Laws.

Cllr Walker suggested there were a few things we could do as a Parish and one was to identify empty properties and pass them over to the Property Officer at NDC so that they can be brought back in to use. There is currently around 200 people on the housing list that have links to the Parish of Fremington wishing to live in the area.

Cllr Biederman agreed with Cllr Bridgeman. He felt communities were needed and not just houses. He mentioned a Community Land Trust and felt that the Parish Council should look at what land we own or seek local landowners who would be willing to come forward and create our own affordable housing for local residents. He suggested the Parish Council find out officially what the housing figures are and put something out on social media asking if you had a chance of social housing would you take it.

Cllr Cann mentioned rented accommodation as something that other people struggle with as it is so expensive to rent.

Cllr Kingdon agreed with Cllr Cann and added that the lack of rented accommodation is an issue as workers are unable to come in to the area, such as dentists and rent as it's too expensive.

Cllr Jones agreed with the statements from other Cllrs but wondered if there was actually anything we can do?

Cllr Walker mentioned that Registered Rental Providers are struggling to now buy properties that are being built as social housing and feels that a Community Land Trust would be a good way forward.

Councillors decided to look at the draft Neighbourhood Plan to see what actions or polices had been included for social and affordable housing, with particular focus of investigating the Community Land Trust.

2402/10 **To consider Cemetery Charge for 2024/2025**

The proposed charges for 2024/25 were circulated prior to the meeting showing an increase of 5% with is below inflation. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the charges.

2402/11 **Councillors Questions**

Cllr Biederman wanted to let people know that the Air Ambulance Site at Tews Lane is now open.

Cllr Walker wanted to thank the Administration & Projects Manager for organising the celebrations at Tews Lane for the opening of the Landing site. It was a lovely morning and the weather stayed dry for the remainder.

Cllr Denton thanked Cllr Biederman for his help with the Cedars Roundabout and that he supports him 100% on the matter.

Cllr Bell raised concerns over the Parish Council not being made aware of Discharge of Condition application at the Yelland Power Station site. Cllr Biederman confirmed that North Devon Council are not required to consult the Parish Council unless there is a specific need. He advised Cllr Bell to send him an email for him to look in his concerns.

Cllr Bell also asked if someone could look at the footpath along the development site, Cllr Biederman said he would ask the Public Rights of Way Officer to take a look at the footpath, but he has been made aware that he is at the moment investigating laying in some stone.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Signed

Dated