

**FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2012, MEMORIAL HALL, FRESHFORD**

**Present:**

Cllr Nick Stevens (Chairman), Cllr Hugh Delap, Cllr Claudia Towner, Cllr Roger Paine, Cllr Louise Kirby Garton, Cllr Jean Hawker, Cllr Mandy Knowles  
Clerk: Ingrid Maher Roberts  
Other: Ward Cllr Neil Butters, Members of the public

**Chairman's Welcome:**

Cllr Nick Stevens welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the new Cllrs and Ward Cllr Butters.

**Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr Andrew Orme, Cllr John Alder

**Acceptance of Minutes 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011:**

These were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**Chairman's Report:**

Cllr Stevens offered a review of the past year. It was a year that has seen closer working relationships with Limpley Stoke not only in regard to affordable housing, road safety and as members of the Valley Parish Alliance, but also formally coming together in a joint scheme to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the two parishes. It was clear that this could only happen if it reflected the feelings of a substantial majority of residents of the two parishes and required the active participation of the community in planning it. It was not just about buildings and development but embraced many other community issues. He emphasized that the Community Plan should not be seen as a blunt instrument to rob the two parishes of their individual identities and distinctiveness, but one where pride and sense of place could be preserved.

Thanks were given on behalf of the Parish Council to the many individuals and groups for their time and energy when undertaking work in the community. In particular volunteers in the shop, church, school, FLISCA, Friends of Freshford, Pre-school, Neighbourhood Watch, Ward District Cllr to name but a few.

He also introduced the new Cllrs Hawker, Paine and Kirby Garton and Ingrid Maher Roberts as the new Parish Clerk.

Cllr Stevens highlighted the PC's support in planning matters of the recent Galleries Shop extension and the solar panel application and reiterated the need to remain vigilant in ensuring that any developments that took place were well founded, sensitive to the environment and justified on planning grounds.

He highlighted the continuing work with the VPA on improving road safety and that B&NES Highways department had allocated £5000 for design plans on safety improvements to the High Street junction 2012/13, with £50,000 allocated for the work the following year.

A huge thank you was given to Cllr Delap for the extraordinary effort and care he put into each Bulletin edition and through which flow consistent and reliable local information. Cllr Andrew Orme had also taken over lead responsibility for the revamp of the village website and villagers would get the benefit of the changes to the website in the next 12 months.

Thanks were given to Graham Jenkinson for his work as the Neighbourhood Watch Co-coordinator.

Cllr Stevens discussed the next steps in the Hall redevelopment. It had been agreed a Redevelopment Feasibility Sub-committee would be set up in parallel with the Neighbourhood Plan process to develop a more comprehensive development strategy.

### **Responsible Financial Officers Report**

Ingrid Maher Roberts read out her report detailing the income and expenditure items, the balance in the accounts; the precept for the next financial year and the reserves.

### **Questions and discussions from the floor**

Questions raised included:

Was there a possibility that the fence surrounding the Tynning/Village Green could be removed? Cllr Stevens highlighted that it was a complicated issue, but there was a strong desire for the fence to come down. He felt however that the best approach to resolving this matter was one of negotiation with the land owners and not one of litigation.

### **Questions about the Prince's Foundation Community Planning Report**

NS reiterated the limitations of the report, but many of the ideas could build on the previous village plan.

There was a suggestion to set up a working committee made up of volunteers to help progress the Neighbourhood plan as this had worked very effectively with the previous village plan.

There were concerns raised over the performance of ESHA in the Neighbourhood Planning process. NS confirmed that the relationship with ESHA was now complete and that they had provided the Princes Foundation with an honest evaluation of ESHA.

Villagers present unanimously agreed that the current hub of the village was the village shop and memorial hall.

The question was raised as to whether the Princes Foundation should take a more practical role in the Neighbourhood Planning process and not just one of funding the process. Cllr Stevens confirmed that PF would like to get involved in another Neighbourhood Planning workshop day.

The issue of speeding traffic through the village, particularly along the High Street and along the Hill was raised. Were speed restrictions a possibility? Cllr

Delap referred to the extensive Hamilton Baille report on traffic issues in the village. This report highlighted research showing that streets, which were designed as a shared space with pedestrians worked more effectively to calm traffic than speed restrictions.

The question of poor parking on the corner of Rosemary Lane was also raised as a concern

NS put forward the suggestion that there was nothing to prevent the village from agreeing to raise the Precept to enable the council to do all the road safety improvement works in the village. The community through the PC had the power to raise taxes if residents were willing and saw it as a price worth paying for the work required.

Through a show of hands there was some support for this idea, however the majority of people present were undecided.

The point was made that if the intention was to move forward with the hall redevelopment and shop extension, there was probably not much capacity to do more at present. Many villagers agreed with this comment.

Cllr Butters ended the meeting thanking the PC for the excellent work undertaken in the past year.

The meeting ended at 10pm.

Signed by the Chairman..... Date:.....