

**Minutes of the Fremington Parish Council Meeting
Held on Monday 13th January 2025 at 7pm at the Beechfield Centre,
Beechfield Road, Fremington**

Present: Cllrs S Kingdom (Chairman), S Adams, J Bridgeman, J Cann, D Dixon, D Harris, S Haywood, C McCormack-Hole, B Sherborne, E Smlatic and H Walker.

1 Member of the Public
Mrs V Woodhouse, Executive Officer

2501/01

Apologies

Cllrs F Biederman and N Denton, it was agreed to accept Cllr Denton's apologies for the foreseeable future.

2501/02

Declarations of Interest

None.

2501/03

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that Cllrs Bridgeman and Dixon had agreed to attend the next Parish Forum and there is an opportunity to attend online if any further Cllrs would like to attend.

The Chairman also announced that DALC was holding a meeting for larger Councils to discuss the devolution proposals, Cllr Walker had confirmed her attendance as the Parish Council's appointed representative, DALC has said that due to the importance of the issue they are allowing 2/3 representatives from each Council. Cllr Kingdom confirmed she would also attend.

2501/04

Public Participation Period

None.

2501/05

Minutes

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd December 2024 as a correct record.

2501/06

Committees

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

- Planning Committee meeting held on 28th November 2024
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28th November 2024.
- Environment and Community Committee held on 28th November 2024
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 28th November 2024.

- Tews Lane Committee held on 28th November 2024
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Tews Lane Committee meeting held on 28th November 2024.
- Parks & Open Spaces Committee Meeting 2nd December 2024
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to adopt the minutes and note the decisions therein of the minutes of the Parks & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2024.

2501/07

Co-option (Fremington/Bickington)

Members were informed that no applications had been received for the vacancy.

Cllr Cann expressed her disappointment at the lack of interest especially given some of the comments on social media, members agreed that the lack of interest from the community is disappointing.

2501/08

County and District Councillors' Reports

Cllr Walker/Cann - Bickington Ward

Cllr Walker reported that NDC members had received a presentation on class Q applications and the office would be happy to provide the presentation to the Parish Council, it was agreed to invite the officer to give the presentation.

There had been three cross-party workshops to agree recommendations for the car parks for the forthcoming year. Cllr Walker explained that charges need to be implemented for car parks to ensure there are spaces for shoppers as well as works and funds to maintain the car parks. The cost of long stay permits will increase; however, they still work out at less than £1 per day. The new car park at Seven Brethren will be cheaper to encourage use.

Cllr Walker confirmed that there will be no increase in the cost for green waste this year. There is however, still a blackhole to fill without an increase in spending power, the proposed changes to employer National Insurance contributions will cost the District Council in the region of £450,000 with only £125,000 from the Government to mitigate the impact.

Cllr Walker explained that there had been meetings to discuss the devolution proposals and the recent consultation on whether district councils and county councils wish to fast track the proceedings. The County Council would like to and has put in a request to defer county elections, and the district councils do not agree. Devon County Council would like to take over the remit of the District Council which means that all NDC's reserves would go to DCC as would services which could be in Exeter and less elected members to represent the area, this would also increase pressure on Town and Parish Councils. District members are concerned about the lack of consultation and democracy and how the process is being forced on everyone, it was noted that this happening and by 2027 the district council will not exist as it does now, there will be a strategic authority and a unitary

authority. Concerns were also raised about the cost noting that currently the District Council's contribution of the council tax is only 9%.

Cllr Cann updated members on the Tews Lane Committee's request for a Public Space Protection Order, it was noted that the PSPO in place provides for a total ban on dogs on designated sports pitches which would mean dogs will be banned from the pitches at Tews Lane but can still be walked on a lead around the perimeter, the subject will be discussed further at the next Tews Lane Committee Meeting.

Cllr Cann has followed up the broken fence in the far end car park at Fremington Quay which is believed to be NDC's responsibility.

Cllr Cann is still chasing up on the hedges at Babbages and a new road sign has been installed.

2501/09

Membership of Committees

a) To appoint two members to the Environment and Community Committee. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint Cllr Haywood to the Committee.

b) To appoint one member to the Fremington Quay Management Committee.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint Cllr Bridgeman to the Committee.

2501/10

Parish Council Representatives

a) To appoint a representative to the Fremington Quay Environment Group. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to appoint Cllr Walker as the Parish Council's representative.

b) To appoint a representative for Plastic Free North Devon.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to defer the appointment.

2501/11

Community Governance Review

Members were informed that the District Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review for all of the North Devon District Parishes and has asked for initial feedback from Parish Councils. It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to set up a working party with Cllrs Walker, Kingdom, Cann, Bridgeman and Smlatic to present proposals to the next Parish Council meeting for consideration.

2501/12

Budgets and Precept

It was agreed at the Full Council Meeting on 2nd December 2024 to increase the precept for 2025/2026 to £310,985.76 for the initial calculation and review once the tax base and impact of second homes has been received.

The tax base for 2025/2026 had been confirmed at 4674.62. Members had been made aware that the North Devon Council had agreed to include a premium for second homes meaning that any second homes within the

parish will increase the tax base. The increase on the tax base for the second home premium element is estimated to be 43. This is then adjusted by the collection rate estimate of 97.5%, thus would bring it back to about a 42 increase for second home premium. These figures had been included in the confirmed tax base of 4674.62.

As the tax base had increased the actual contribution based on a Band D property would have been £66.53, resulting in an annual decrease of 2p. Members noted that it was suggested at the recent Parish Forum that the precept request is increased considering the addition of the second homes premium and the parish council could use these funds for further projects. Members had raised concerns several times about the costs involved in maintaining the Parish Council's play areas and it was suggested that additional funds could be put towards improvements.

After consideration it was resolved, with no votes to the contrary, to increase the Parish Council's Precept for 2025/2026 to £317,219.71. Given the increase in tax base this would result in an annual increase of £1.33 resulting in a contribution of £67.86 based on a Band D property.

The additional increase would provide an additional income of £6,233.95, members noted that the Parks & Open Spaces Committee had agreed to undertake a strategic review of all the open spaces, and it was further **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to put the funds into an Ear Marked Reserves for open spaces/play areas but not to spend the funds until the review has been completed.

2501/13

Application for a Marine Licence

Members considered the consultation on application for a Marine Licence reference MLA/2023/00113 (White Cross Offshore Windfarm).

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to make no comment.

2501/14

Councillors Questions

Cllr Cann asked if Stagecoach had been invited to a meeting, it was noted that a letter had been sent.

Cllr McCormack-Hole asked how do we control digging up the road? It was noted that this was dealt with by DCC as the Highways Authority.

Cllr Walker made members aware of the Chairman's Ball if anyone would like to buy a ticket.

Cllr Smlatic asked for the position on Bees and chickens, it was noted that there is no problem with people keeping Bees and there is a right under the Allotment Act to keep chickens as long as they are pets.

Cllr Smlatic asked about the bus shelter in Woodville, it was noted that it had been removed as it was broken, members asked if a quotation could be obtained for a replacement as it is used.

Cllr Dixon asked about the ownership of the bus shelter on Bickington Road which has been vandalised, it was noted that it is not the responsibility of the Parish Council, however, the Maintenance and Amenities Operative had made it safe, and it had been reported.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Signed

Dated

DRAFT