



FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Office 01983 752000

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 7th MAY 2024 AT 7.35 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MEMORIAL
HALL, FRESHWATER**

PRESENT: Councillors: A Bamford (Chair), C Bray, E Cox, B Hinton MBE, B Hobbs, D James, C Jarman (from 7.45pm after item 8), N Thomas (until 9pm), F Turan and W Whyte

Members of the public: 0

Clerk: H Rowell

1. **APOLOGIES:**
Councillors: J Medland, G Kennett and D Hicklin.
2. **TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 2nd APRIL 2024.**
The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April (having been circulated) were agreed (EC/BH).
3. **TO INVITE COUNCILLORS TO DECLARE AN INTEREST IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA.**
None
4. **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS ON THE AGENDA FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (UP TO 15 MINUTES).**
None.
5. **TO ACCEPT WRITTEN REPORTS FROM FRESHWATER WARD COUNCILLORS.**
No reports have been received.
6. **CLERK'S REPORT (CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS).**
Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
There are some damaged base boards that need replacing as they are starting to rot. The Facilities Officer is going to replace and repaint as necessary.

Website Accessibility

The Clerk attended a Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) webinar about website accessibility, the retention of documents on the website. There is a lot of work to be done to ensure all of our documents are accessible to people who use specialist software due to the nature of their disability to ensure we are compliant with changes that come into effect in October 2024. It is also possible that by 2025 all councillors will be required to use .gov.uk email addresses.

7. CORRESPONDENCE.

None

8. TO AGREE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - LIST CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS FOR INFORMATION.

The accounts were approved (EC/CB).

9. ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS REPORT – CLLR BAMFORD.

The recent Topic Meeting was on housing and the problems associated with homelessness with advice being provided on how to conduct local housing surveys to understand local housing need. Cllr Thomas requested that IWALC consider hybrid meetings to enable more people to participate. Cllr James suggested that live streaming enabling people to contribute through the chat might be a simpler solution. Cllr Bamford will take these suggestions back to IWALC.

10. REPORT FROM THE SKATE PARK AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA.

This item was deferred to the next meeting, as the Chair of the Committee had sent apologies.

11. PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL – CLLR BAMFORD.

“A parish, town or community council strategy should be aspirational, but it can be inspirational too. It needs to be a developing living document. In addition, it needs to have feelings, in the form of values”. (SLCC)

The Strategic Plan helps to ensure that the Parish Council can take a planned approach on achieving its development priorities: maintaining its existing facilities and services; setting its budgets, prioritising its resources, and achieving value for money.

It all starts with a strong Mission Statement.

It was agreed to move forward with this proposal and to start with a working group from the Parish Council and then opening it up to the wider community for consultation and participation. Cllr Bamford will draft out a structure/framework for the next Parish Council Meeting.

12. LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT – CLLR BRAY

The following actions were proposed by the Committee:

- To consider what play equipment on the Stroud needs replacing within the budget available.
- Develop a detailed management plan for Stroud Coppice with the advice of an arborist.
- Granny's Meade – 2 memorial benches and 3 oak trees. Exploring the idea of an event on the Meade.
- Nurturing trees for Freshwater and Yarmouth School as well as providing daffodils for planting.
- Library gardens planting scheme.
- Tree Survey in 2024/25
- Some tidying in Jubilee Field
- Shrub work at Gate Lane Toilets
- Spinfish – awaiting a report following the site visit.

13. MEMORIAL HALL AND LEISURE COMPNAY REPORT – CLLR BAMFORD

As the main item for consideration is the quotes which are to be discussed later on the Agenda.

14. COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP PROPOSAL – CLLR COX

Freshwater Parish Council currently has a number of committees which do not meet regularly and from which we do not receive written reports. I am concerned that we are not pro-active, and we are relying on a small number of councillors to carry an unfair level of responsibility. My concern is that if some current councillors left, we would find it very difficult to function because we are not developing councillors to fill in future roles. I therefore would suggest we alter the way we conduct our business to attempt to address this situation.

Currently we have the following committees:

Full Council, Finance and Governance, Planning, Staffing, Land Management, Allotments Boat Park (including Freshwater Inshore Lifeboat), Skate Park and Multi-Use Games Area, Library, Community Resilience (including Yarmouth Sea Defences), and Events.

We also have Representation on other committees and organisations:

Memorial Hall Arts and Leisure Company, Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils, United Charities Trust, Freshwater and Totland Memorial Bungalows, and Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners Advisory Committee

I would like us to explore changing the way we do things and I would put forward the following:

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council do not hold similar positions on other committees as they are ex officio on all committees.

No change to Full Council, finance and governance, planning, community resilience or staffing. I believe that the Skate Park and MUGA is or will be a working group.

We should dissolve the Events Committee, in July 2024 it will have existed for 2 years. I am only aware of one meeting taking place and no events have been managed during that time.

Land Management would change by splitting into two committees. I propose these new committees would consist of our natural assets and our built assets for example:

Land Management Committee

Allotments
The Stroud
Jubilee Field
Spinfish
Stroud Coppice
Pound Green
Granny's Meade

Facilities Committee

Boat park
Library
Ambulance Station
Memorial Hall
Gate Lane Toilets
Moa Place Toilets
Parish vehicle

I am sure that this list is not comprehensive and would welcome debate and additional information to complete the lists.

These committees would function to serve the current and future needs of their responsibilities, including annual maintenance/condition checks. Future budgeting requests to the Finance and Governance committee and would be based on 5 and/or 10 plans in regard to facilities and hopefully in the future 10/15/25 year plans for our land management assets.

We would then dissolve the following committees:

Library, Boat Park and Allotments.

We would replace these committees with representatives. The representatives would liaise with the communities and feedback to full council without the need for committee meetings or written reports. This feedback would be used by the appropriate committee to move forward to ensure the ongoing needs of each asset were fully realised and funded. As they would no longer function as committees this would also free up officer time as the meetings would not need to be recorded. If Council felt it was appropriate the allotment day to day running could be left in the responsibility of the Office staff.

This would reduce the number of our committees and enable the new committees to have a larger number of serving councillors without necessarily increasing workloads. I propose the new Land Management and Facilities committees each have 5 members. The Chair and Vice Chair would be ex officio meaning 3 councillors would need to attend for each meeting to be quorate. The committees should probably have 6 meetings a year, some of these meetings could be site visits.

I have further suggestions on how the new committees would work however I feel that we should first establish if councillors feel this set of proposals is worth moving forward with.

E.g. a councillor bio could read

Committee member

Representative/community liaison

Full Council
Planning
Finance

Library
Boat Park

Our web site could direct the public to contact the appropriate Councillor if they had concerns/comments/suggestions.

It was agreed that Cllr Cox will work on this proposal and bring it back to the next full council meeting.

15. TO AGREE PROPOSED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS.

- Proposal to form a new structure for the management of the library finances – Cllr James.
- To review the lease of Moa Place Car Park – Cllr James.
- Update on the drainage at Longhalves Lane – Cllr James

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

16. CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR.

Tony Armstrong was co-opted onto the parish council (EC/BH).

17. STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT – CLLR JAMES.

The Staffing Committee met on the 18th April. Cllr Jarman is undertaking some resource comparison between Freshwater Parish Council and other Isle of Wight Town and Parish Councils

18. INSURANCE CLAIM REPORT.

There are currently two insurance claims against Freshwater Parish Council which are being managed by the insurance company. The Clerk will keep councillors informed of progress.

19. TO CONSIDER THE QUOTES FOR THE WORKS AT THE MEMORIAL HALL.

It was agreed to recommend to the Memorial Hall Arts and Leisure Company that the Quote from Reno Drain is accepted after they confirm that they will fulfil the job as per their recommendation.

The meeting closed at 9.48pm.