



FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Office 01983 752000

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
TUESDAY 4th MARCH 2025 AT 6.50PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MEMORIAL
HALL, FRESHWATER**

PRESENT: Councillors: E Cox (Chair), T Armstrong, A Bamford, B Hobbs, D James, C Jarman, S Knowles, B Seeley, K Sloan-Murphy and F Turan .
Members of the public: 0
Clerk: M Gardiner
In attendance Finance Officer – P Blackley

- 1. APOLOGIES: Councillors D Hicklin, Hinton, Thomas, Whyte.**
- 2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 4th FEBRUARY 2025**
The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th February 2025 (having been circulated) were AGREED (CJ/TA)
- 3. TO INVITE COUNCILLORS TO DECLARE AN INTEREST IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA. Councillor Jarman declared an interest (late) in item 13 of the agenda.**
- 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. Report received and circulated from Councillor Spink. Councillor Jarman gave a verbal update.**
- 6. CHAIR'S REPORT (Circulated to Councillors)**

The last month has been challenging for both Officers and Councillors as we continued with the process of replacing the Clerk/RFO to the Parish Councillor. The Personnel Committee will report on this process to the Full Council. I continue to meet with Officers on Wednesday mornings for general discussions and Tuesday mornings with the Finance Officer subject to his availability.

I have received a number of emails, telephone conversations and spoken to residents concerned about the conditions at Freshwater Bay following the last storm. I have begun to investigate those concerns, in particular the Isle of Wight Council's decision not to clear the promenade, leaving it closed to the public and vehicles.

- 4 February** I attended interviews as Chair of the Council in the process of seeking a new Clerk/RFO, Chair of the Personnel Committee Councillor James was in attendance along with Committee members Councillors Bamford and Jarman.
- 7 February** I attended an interview as Chair of the Council as detailed above.
- 10 February** I was invited and attended a Freshwater Bay Residents Bay Committee meeting; I continue to address issues raised by the group.
- 11 February** I met with the Vice Chair Warren Whyte for a detailed catch up meeting, this was considered necessary due to the number of ongoing issues being managed by Officers without the support of a Clerk in position and a loss of work hours available.
- 13 February** At the request of the Assistant Clerk I met with her and we had a 2 hour session to assist her learning and understanding of planning at the Parish Council level. I am available to any Councillor who would like to have a similar session. This is a basic level introduction and Councillors Armstrong and Turan have already participated in a session.
- 13 February** I attended the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils monthly meeting with the Isle of Wight Council Cabinet. Alaster Sims who is the Isle of Wight Council's Service Manager for Climate, Coast and Environment Communities was available to answer questions. We also received clarification on how the elections are likely to proceed for local Community, Parish and Town Councils and County Councillors moving forward. Local elections for Parishes will take place in May 2025, elections for County Councillors are predicted to take place in 2026. Both sets of elections will then take place in 2029 re-aligning the elections for Parishes and County. We were informed by Councillor Phil Jordan that the Isle of Wight Council is looking at ways to help fund the elections which would be an unexpected additional cost for Parish Councils in May 2025. We await clarity of details from the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils for the details. I requested for the meeting in March the Cabinet give an update on the new Committee system replacing the current Cabinet system in May 2025.
- 14 February** At the invitation of the Albion Hotel architects I attended a visit to the hotel. Also in attendance were Councillors Bamford, Hinton, Hobbs and Turan. Assistant Clerk Melanie Gardiner was also in attendance.

The hotel had almost completed the works as detailed in their last planning application. They had also made some minor internal alterations to better serve their clientele. They also discussed their plans for the future of the hotel and the area outside the bar area facing the promenade.

- 17 February I attended interviews for the Clerk/RFO position at the Parish Council. Also, in attendance Chair of the Personnel Committee Councillor James and Committee member Councillor Bamford.
- 18 February I attend the Finance Meeting as Chair of the Parish Council. The meeting was Chaired by Council Jarman who is submitting a written report to the Full Council.
- 18 February I attended the Land Management and Assets Committee meeting and as Chair of the Committee I have produced a report for the Full Council meeting.
- 20 February I attended a Teams Meeting with the Finance Officer and Chair of the Finance Councillor Thomas, we discussed a number of issues including an additional meeting of the Finance Committee in March.
- 21 February At the request of the Chair of the Personnel Committee Councillor James I called an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council for this date at 10 am. I would like to thank the following Councillors for attending the meeting at short notice Councillors, Armstrong, Bamford, Hobbs, James and Jarman. I would also like to thank all Councillors who responded to the request, but who were unable to attend due to the short notice. The meeting was Clerked by Melanie Gardiner who changed her working availability twice in one week to allow the interviews to proceed and to Clerk the extraordinary meeting. I would like to express my thanks to Melaine Gardiner for this flexibility. The meeting was called to accept the recommendations and proposals from the Personnel Committee following the completion of interviews for the replacement Clerk/RFO to the Parish Council.

7. CLERKS REPORT

Internal Audit: The Finance committee have recommended Maxine Warr to carry out the internal audits once again. She has been the internal auditor for the parish for the last 3 years.

MUGA Shelter: Remedial works have been carried out to 'make good' the area of land where the youth shelter was situated.

Trees: The deputy Clerk Emma Carter has received a quote for the two trees identified as needing urgent attention on the tree survey. This has been approved and waiting to hear the date from the contractor as to when the work will commence.

Elections: Councillor Whyte was asked to write to the IWC concerning the election costs. The Deputy Clerk Emma Carter wrote to IWALC requesting an update on the elections. Deputy clerk emailed the information pack received for councillors to stand in the May elections.

Play Equipment: The Deputy Clerk Emma Carter is currently waiting to hear back from 3 companies, to see if they will come to the Isle of Wight and visit Stroud to provide a quote for replacement play equipment.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

There were three items of correspondence.

- i) A request has been received for the planting of an additional tree at Granny's Meade in celebration of a 50th birthday. It was proposed to accept in principle, the planting of a new tree in Granny's Meade, subject to confirmation of the details (type of tree/location etc) and agreement of the Parish Council (DJ/CJ) – **AGREED**
- ii) An email has been received from Alex Chalkley, Director of Random Worlds Ltd to inform of the possible expansion of their business into Freshwater. It was proposed to invite the business owners to a meet with the Parish Council to further discuss any potential business relocation and future plans. **AGREED**
- iii) Survey received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in conjunction with the London School of Economics regarding emergency planning. It was proposed that Councillor Sloan-Murphy will be sent the link for completion. (CJ/DJ). **AGREED**

9. FINANCE

- a) **TO AGREE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT (LIST CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS FOR INFORMATION) – AGREED (AB/DJ)**
- b) **TO AGREE THE BUDGET FORECAST FOR 2024/25 - AGREED (CJ/DJ)**
Councillor James congratulated the Finance Officer on his prudent banking choices (bank interest earned).
- c&e) **TO AGREE THE RINGFENCING OF RESERVES FOR THE COLWELL BAY BUOYS/TO AGREE THE RINGFENCING OF RESERVES FOR 2025/26. AGREED (AB/DJ)**
- d) **TO REVIEW COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**
 - i) The application from the West Wight Sports & Community Centre was agreed to be void due to non-compliance.

- ii) **Dimbola – the Chair gave a verbal update. There is currently an outstanding amount on the previously agreed funding and the Parish Council are awaiting further details from Dimbola as to how this will be used. It was proposed that if no response is received by the end of the financial year that the application be voided. (CJ/AB) AGREED.**

- 10. TO AGREE TO THE COSTINGS FOR THE NEW MULTI USE GAMES AREA (MUGA) LIGHTS** It was proposed to accept the Officers recommendation proceeding with option one from Minervo – (AB/DJ) AGREED

- 11. TO RECEIVE THE FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GRANTS**
 - i) **White Surf – recommended for refusal due to lack of information. (CJ/DJ) - AGREED**
 - ii) **Men in Sheds – made an application for the purchase of a laptop. Councillor Jarman (Vice Chair – Finance) has a laptop available via the FTY CIC, along with peripheral accessories and carry case with superior specifications to the laptop requested which can be made available to Men in Sheds. It was proposed to accept the recommendations of the finance committee – (DJ/AB) AGREED**
 - iii) **Natural Enterprise – the Parish Council is unable to carry out works on land that is under the Statutory Authority of another body (and this has been established to be this case in this application) and therefore the application is void.**

- 12. TO AGREE TO THE RISK REGISTER (PAPER COPIES GIVEN TO COUNCILLORS AT THE 4th FEBRUARY MEETING.**

Councillor Cox requested an amendment to the section titled Financial Controls and Records- that the entry be amended from ‘one Councillor.....’ to ‘two Councillors and the RFO/Clerk’ for the checking and signing of cheques and invoices. It was proposed to accept the risk register (subject to the amendment) and once updated the register to be circulated to all Councillors. (EC/DJ) AGREED

- 13. REPORT ON THE MEMORIAL HALL – COUNCILLOR JAMES**

Councillor James gave a verbal update. Councillor Armstrong thanked Councillor James for his erudite explanation and the work that he is undertaking on behalf of the Parish Council.

- 14. REPORT FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE (SEE APPENDIX) Councillor Whyte was unavailable to give a verbal update and submitted a written report. Councillor Cox gave a brief update on the condition of the library.**

The library roof is in need of repairs following a leak during the bad weather. In addition, the fire risk report has highlighted additional outstanding works and an up-to date Electric Condition report is also required. It was proposed that all Parish Council assets would benefit from a quinquennial report, starting this year with the library in order to create a proactive management plan for each of the Parish Council assets. (EC/TA) AGREED

- 15. TO CONSIDER THAT THE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE FOLD AND COME UNDER LAND MANAGEMENT It was agreed that this matter be deferred until after any elections are held. Councillor Hobbs was elected as Chair of the Committee. (BH/AB)**

- 16. TO INVITE ALL COUNCILLORS TO JOIN SUB COMMITTEES (CIRCULATED TO COUNCILLORS)**

No further additions to sub committees were made.

- 17. TO AGREE THE FRESHWATER BAY BOAT PARK APPLICATION FORM, MANAGEMENT POLICY AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**

Application Form: It was proposed to accept the application form (EC/DJ)

Policy: To be amended to include commercial trailers.

Boat Park fees for boats will rise from £50.00 pa to £60.00 pa

Commercial Trailer fees will rise from £300.00 pa to £360.00 pa

It was proposed to accept the policy and terms and conditions subject to the amendments (DJ/EC) AGREED

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.

- 18. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER TENDERS
Grass Cutting – It was proposed to accept the tender from ERM (DJ/TA)
AGREED**

Cleaning – It was agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting in order to obtain further information.

- 19. TO RATIFY THE RECOMMENDATION BY THE CHAIR OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE IN THE MATTER OF EMPLOYING A NEW CLERK/RFO – AGREED (DJ/KSM)**

The meeting ends at 9.06pm