

# FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## NOTES FROM THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held at 7pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Cllr John Adler, Chair of Freshford Parish Council, welcomed everyone and introduced the meeting.

Councillors introduced themselves.

Councillors Annabel Batchelor-Wylam, Jean Hawker and Ben Walters were standing down at the May council elections and were thanked for their work on the council.

Ward Councillor Neil Butters was standing down at the May council election after a long period as a Ward Councillor and was thanked for his help with Freshford matters.

Simon Coombes, Chair of FLiSCA, provided an update on The Galleries

- Money had been raised and work undertaken to extend the Galleries café.
- Outlined details of The Galleries financial situation, noting difficulties caused by inflation and the significant rise in electricity prices.
- Solar panels would be installed to help offset energy costs.
- The Galleries were undertaking a marketing strategy to better understand customers.

David Wright, Chair of the Freshford Village Memorial Hall Committee

- Works had been undertaken to reclad, reglaze and replace the heating system in the Hall.
- These measures were intended to reduce the carbon footprint of the Hall by 90%, with the benefit of reduced energy costs.
- Phase 2 works were being undertaken to improve the inside of the Hall.
- A Social Secretary was sought to help make the Hall a village hub.

Cllr John Adler provided an update on Parish Council activities

- A survey of trees on The Tying and in the Cemetery had been undertaken and works were being undertaken as a result of this.
- A survey had been undertaken in relation to the project to reduce the environmental impact and costs of street lamps by reducing the number street lights in Freshford.
- The Freshford Bulletin had been relaunched as the Freshford Newsletter, to be published twice a year.
- The Parish Council was monitoring the situation with the number 94 bus service and had received verbal reassurance that the service would continue until the end of August at least.
- A new Village Steward contract had been set up.
- The Village Agent scheme was there to provide support to any resident that needed it.
- Residents were encouraged to use the Report It function on the website, e.g. to report potholes to B&NES.
- Speed limit roundels had been repainted across the village.

- Consideration was being given to the future of the matting on The Tynning, which had been installed as a temporary measure during Covid. Various points were noted in discussion, including:
  - o The need for consultation with the community
  - o The need to check Village Green legislation
  - o The impact of plastic on The Tynning or in landfill
  - o The lifespan of the current plastic matting
  - o The level of support for preserving clear footpaths on The Tynning

CLLr John Adler provided an update on a community energy project with Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE)

- The project involved three phases: scoping study; feasibility study and development.
- Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse and Limpley Stoke parish councils were involved with the project.
- A potential site had been identified, confirmation of grid capacity would be sought and planning permission would be needed.
- IF given the go-ahead, BWCE, a not-for-profit community benefit society, would raise funds for a solar panel installation and would then generate funds from the power produced.
- Surplus money would go into a community fund to provide grants for local projects.
- The intention was to work with the community on this project.
- BWCE designed solar sites to increase biodiversity.
- Currently, local energy could not be sold back directly to local residents, but BWCE were lobbying the government about creating local energy supply networks to enable this.

Discussion

- A Willow tree that was leaning over the path to the Galleries had been reported to B&NES but there was concern that action had been delayed due to a request by the Parish Council to preserve the tree if possible. The Parish Council was awaiting an update from B&NES on this matter.
- An additional sign at the top of Dark Lane warning that the Lane was unsuitable for large vehicles was requested.
- A resident reported a continual humming noise by the station; Network Rail were investigating.

A number of points were raised about the proposals to turn off some street lamps, including:

- Will the overall cost of the project save money?
- Had a risk assessment been undertaken?
- Could the trial period be shorter?
- Safety concerns about removing street lights.
- Had trip hazards been taken into account?