

What has Freshford Parish Council been up to since the last Annual Parish Meeting?!

Quite a lot actually...

May 2023 saw six residents stand as Parish Councillors, so all were appointed to the PC without an election. During the year another councillor resigned and one resident has been co-opted on to the council.

We've had three councillor vacancies on the PC since May! This impacts the work that the Parish Council can do. We've undertaken advertising and promotion of the role and we'd love to welcome more residents to the Parish Council to help out. Please talk to any councillor or the Clerk if you'd like to know more about the being part of the Parish Council and helping your community.

We've produced two editions of the Freshford Newsletter. Councillors have sought sponsorship and advertising and these funds cover nearly all of the costs of producing the Newsletter. The next Freshford Newsletter is due out in early Autumn, so look out for requests for articles.

We've helped campaign for the continuation of the number 94 bus service through Freshford, when the removal of some of the funding put the future of this service in doubt. Parish Councillors worked alongside our Ward Councillor to campaign to B&NES and WECA for the continuation of this service as funding was cut. The service now has funding in place for the next year.

Eleven street lamps have been upgraded to LED lamps. This work has just been completed and we'll see how well received these lights are before making any decisions about future actions with street lighting. The move to LEDs will help reduce energy consumption and running costs.

A wide range of Highways and transport matters have kept the PC busy. We've been monitoring the data from a radar speed device, purchased to help combat speeding through the village. Councillors have liaised with B&NES about fixing potholes, repairing road surfaces, repainting speed roundels on the roads and providing feedback on proposed diversionary routes. The results of a community consultation on whether yellow lines should be considered at the bottom of Staples Hill were mixed, so yellow lines are not being pursued at the moment.

Councillors have met with National Highways about crossing point proposals for the A36 and will continue to monitor this.

We've supported Freshford Primary School to explore ways of minimizing the impact of 'school run' traffic and promoting active travel to School, including a Playing Out event held in March.

A new public waste bin has been installed by the Memorial Hall.

We're working on a potential Renewable Energy Project with Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) and although it's still at an early stage, good progress is being made. Hinton Charterhouse and Limpley Stoke parish councils are also involved with this.

We've considered the difficult issue of the future of the temporary matting on The Tynning. Having considered a range of factors, the PC had decided to remove the matting as per the original intention when it was installed. However, having listened to a range of views from residents, councillors are going to undertake further consultation about the matting's future.

We've worked with Winsley Parish Council to hold a Nature and Local Environment meeting involving local parish councils and nature/climate organisations to consider the potential for working together on environmental projects. A summer river festival is being considered for summer 2025.

Approved a Dark Skies policy to help raise the community's awareness and to be considered during PC discussions of planning applications and street lighting.

Made a financial contribution towards the clearing of a blocked drain in The Galleries / Hall car park that was causing problems with surface water and ice in cold weather.

Discussed the future of the Neighbourhood Plan with the Chair and Clerk of Limpley Stoke Parish Council, as they're exploring the possibility of creating their own Neighbourhood Plan, separate to the current joint Freshford and Limpley Stoke NHP. Planning Officers from B&NES have confirmed that the joint plan would remain in place for Freshford whatever Limpley Stoke PC decide to do.

As well as the day-to-day stuff...

Considering and commenting on planning applications.

Maintaining the community website and community emails.

Completing the annual financial audit process.

Managing the grass cutting of The Tynning.

Working with volunteers to maintain the Cemetery and benefit wildlife.

Arranging repairs to street lamps in Freshford owned by the Parish Council.

Overseeing the Village Steward contract to undertake general maintenance across the village, such as keeping pavements, footpaths and drains clear of debris.

Want to know more? Visit freshford.org.uk for information about the community and parish council, including agenda and minutes of all Parish Council meetings.