

## FRITHELSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Frithelstock Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at 6.45pm in The Village Hall, Frithelstock.

Present: T Warrington, M Baker (Vice Chairman), A Hardwick and E Hunkin.  
Also in attendance: Mrs K Graddock - Parish Clerk and 2 members of the public.

### **FP36 Apologies**

Cllr Chris Stevens, Cllr Mark Thomas and Cllr Felicity Sluman.

### **FP37 Declarations**

None.

### **FP38 Minutes**

- Signage has been ordered.
- The Bus shelter has been looked at and as it's Perspex and there is no way of cleaning then.
- Email Felicity re: Highway Notes.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

(NC)

### **FP39 Reports from outside bodies**

#### **a) To receive a report from Devon County Councillor, Cllr A Saywell. Main updates across DCC**

**Budgets** - You will probably have seen the media coverage now about this. The projected £40m overspend for this financial year has been brought down to £6m... but that has been achieved through having to make savings on existing budgets this year and postponing long term projects in IT and recruitment etc. However the Children's Services Budget continues to overspend and every possible effort is being made to contain and reverse the overspend but it is not easy.

Nonetheless, we should be able to balance the books for this financial year... the challenge is going to be next year. At the moment we are looking at a projected budget gap of £60m, which on top of the £15m planned savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, means that we are looking at overall projected savings of £75m.

Unlike a lot of central government institutions, local government has to balance our budget every financial year by law. If we do overspend, then that has to be covered from reserves or some other external income stream. If we can't, we have to issue what is called a Section 114 notice which, in effect, means the local authority becomes bankrupt.

Needless to say, a bankrupt council cannot help anyone. The £75m savings can be achieved but it will mean deep and painful cuts as the Council Leader has already outlined.

This is not a problem that is unique to Devon. It is a national issue, from speaking to colleagues across the country their budget problems are similar, and many actually are worse! Cornwall's budget deficit for next year is £62million (they are smaller than Devon), Plymouth is facing similar problems. Further afield, Norfolk County Council has a £60m budget gap for this year. Kent's is £70m.

Inflation has been the main driver for a lot of these cost pressures, with some sectors such as Highways actually experiencing hyperinflation.

Initial analysis of the Autumn Statement is that it is more favourable towards local government, or at least upper tier authorities with more help for social care etc. However – devil will be in the detail and work is ongoing analysing the full impact.

### *Non Budget Matters*

- **Cost of Living Help** – Devon has received a further £5m funding to help households weather the rising costs of living, with help to pay for food, energy and other essential items. More information about this is online here - [Councils to receive additional funds to help support households with rising food and energy costs - News \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Support for Children during school holidays** – Free holiday activities with hot meals are now available for children during the Christmas 2022 holidays. All children are eligible to register, although priority places will be given to children aged five to 16 years old (or four-year-olds, if in reception), who are eligible for and receiving benefit-related free school meals and their families. More information available online here - [HAF providers – Christmas 2022 – Education and Families \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy** – A public consultation is being held on the draft Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy. This consultation aims to find out your views on the draft strategy and its recommendations. Information about the Strategy can be found online here - [Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy - Have Your Say](#)
- **Recruitment of Chief Executive** – Shortlisting for the Chief Executive position has now taken place with 4 candidates going forward to final rounds and interviews on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November. Today has been the first round of interviews and presentations. All being well we will appoint tomorrow on the 24<sup>th</sup> with a start date for March/April next year.

**b) To receive report from Torridge District Councillor, P Pennington.**  
Report attached as Appendix 1.

**c) To receive report from Police.**

There has been no crimes for the area and although you have had 10 incidents 7 of these were regarding the same person/location of no concern to the general public, there was one rtc, 1 neighbour dispute and 1 abandoned 999 so no huge impact on the parish.

**FP40 Public Participation**

- Bridge Parapet is starting to come away – Member of the public to report.
- Signage needs cleaning within the parish.

**FP41 Highways**

Members are waiting for minutes from Cllr Sluman before making a response to DCC re: Highways concerns in the Parish.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk chase Cllr Sluman for this information.

(NC)

**FP42 Finance – Payments and Receipts**

**a) Payments and Receipts**

**PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS.**

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>CHQ NO</b>
1	All Coast Media	£180.00	Bacs
2	Zurich – Insurance	£558.01	Bacs
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£738.01</b>	

**RESOLVED:** That the payments are accepted and approved.

(NC)

**FP43 Grants**

Work on a no win no fee but if successful then the company would get 10%. Members would like to replace and repair equipment located at the Playing Fields.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk explore this option further and report back to a future meeting.

(NC)

**FP44 Playing Fields Association**

Members discussed whether the funds for the playing fields association comes into the Parish Council and the funding is brought into the parish council going forward but any funds going forward should be earmarked for the Playing Field but there continues to be the Friends of the Playing Fields Association to Clean, Paint and fundraise. At present there is £4,374.00 in the Playing Fields Association funds which will be transferred to the Parish Council and ringfenced for spending at the Playing Field Association.

**RESOLVED:** That the funds are transferred to the Parish Council account but are ringfenced specifically for the Parish Playing Field.

(NC)

**FP45 Frithelstock Charity Trustees**

Members discussed and it was

**RESOLVED:** that the following trustees are appointed, L Goaman, M Poole, M Poole and M Short.

**FP46 Insurance**  
**RESOLVED:** That the insurance is renewed with Zurich for £558.01.  
(NC)

**FP47 Christmas Lights**  
Cllr Warrington will be unavailable from 2-12 December and asked for volunteers to ensure the christmas lights are put up. Cllr Baker mentioned that he would donate a tree depending on budget and it was **RESOLVED:** That a small budget is set aside for a Christmas tree depending on costs.  
(NC)

**FP48 Budget 2023/24**  
The Clerk spoke on the current draft budget and gave a run down on items to date. It was noted that this would be further discussed in January but members were aware that the precept would rise.

**FP49 Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda**  
None.

Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

**Fristhelstock Parish Council**

**Date 22nd Nov 2022.**

**Torrige District Council (TDC) report by Phil Pennington**

**Budget:** Like all local authorities TDC's budget is under pressure: In the first quarter of the year the deficit was £1.081 million. At the end of the second quarter this has reduced £ 659K, however members agreed to release £552k from reserves. A long hard winter ahead.

**Housing/Homeless.** TDC has a duty to house homeless households who demonstrate a local connection. At the end of Sept there 71 households being housed compared with 33 at the same point last year. This trend is not uncommon when comparing local authorities.

TDC is trying to take action.

1) A £1.5 million fund set with a 3 way partnership. £500 from central govt. levelling up fund, a similar amount from TDC and a third partner called Resonance who have specialise in identifying suitable property for refurbishment.

2) TDC members have asked officers to further 11 council owned land sites with a view to provide social/affordable housing.

**Rural England Prosperity Fund.** Central govt, under the levelling up agenda are making £110 million available for rural areas. TDC is bidding to secure £995k to be delivered both officers at TDC and North Devon Plus. It is capital grants. Projects can come from the private, public and voluntary sectors.

**Planning:** Sept planning meeting agreed 750 houses at Winsford, north of Abbotsham Rd and a further 400 at Cornborough. The Planning Inspectorate allowed 215 houses on land north of Abbotsham Road. Members feel powerless in the light of support services already being overstretched. North Devon District Council and TDC are meeting tomorrow on the formation of the next local plan which will run from 2031

**Cabling route through the district:** TDC are now in discussion with a project to bring solar and power from Morocco via cabling which will land at Cornborough. Very similar route as under the Atlantic Array in 2013. The route will run to the Alverdiscott connection point to the national grid.