



FRAMSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 9th January 2025 at Framsdén Village Hall

Attendance	Glen Buckingham (GB) (Chair)	Neil Mellor (NM)	
	Dominic Vaughan (DV)	Nicola Whitmore (NW)	
	Sarah Clare (Clerk)	Matthew Hicks (MH) County Councillor	Nick Hardingham (NH) District Councillor

Public present at the meeting: 6

FPC 25-01-01 Apologies for Absence

None

FPC 25-01-02 Declaration of Interests

GB declared interest in FPC 25-01-09 f) being an employee of the Helmingham Estate who currently rent the land at Tollgate Corner under the Farm Business Tenancy.

FPC 25-01-03 Public Forum

A parishioner raised queries about recruitment of councillors and asked about why members of the Council have resigned and what the Council are planning to do to recruit and retain members. GB explained that there are various reasons why councillors have resigned and there is no requirement for these reasons to be made public. The Council is aware of the need to recruit more members and is looking at ways to do so.

A number of questions were raised by a parishioner about the plans for the Village Hall, fundamentally asking why the planned improvements have now been put on hold and what grants had been applied for. NM replied that the matter was discussed fully at the last meeting and the estimated cost of the plans were considerably higher than had been anticipated. No grants have been applied for, as until a fully costed project had been produced and three accurate quotes obtained, grants could not be applied for, but the Parish Council and the Village Hall Management Team have decided that that it was not economically justifiable to spend £200K of public or charitable money on a hall that does not actually belong to the Council. The plan is now to look at alternative ways of providing better facilities within the existing hall.

In response to the Flood Investigation Report for Framsdén that had been published in early December, a parishioner asked whether the local landowners would consider creating a buffer strip on the farmland at the back of properties along The Street from Tollgate Corner to Jocky's Lane. GB replied that such a strip would have been unlikely to have had any meaningful benefit during an event of the level of Storm Babet, but that local landowners are actively looking at ways to reduce water flow with plans being formulated, but funding needs to be sourced.

A parishioner noted that a request for an Emergency Plan for the village had been made a few years previously and that this was now a recommendation in the Flood Investigation Report. The Council acknowledged that the review/creation of an Emergency Plan is a standard action for any Parish that has had a Flood Investigation Report enacted and this will be done in due course.

FPC 25-01-04 To Receive District Councillor's Report – District Councillor Nick Hardingham (NH)

The most recent report from the District Councillor was presented to the Council and is now posted on the village website <https://framsden.onesuffolk.net>

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33

NH brought attention to the following:

The next full District Council meeting will be taking place later, but budget update proposals for the general budget were approved in the Cabinet meeting in December. Currently figures show surplus funds, an pleasantly unusual position for a District Council, in part due to expanding housing developments and income being generated from the Gateway 14 development. This means that there is no plan to increase the District Council's portion of Council Tax.

In terms of expenditure £500K of investment into Stowmarket area health and education facilities is able to go ahead using money from Community Infrastructure Levy, along with £188K in funding for Thurston Community College to help with the increase in demand generated by the new housing in Thurston.

There have been big changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, more details will be released soon, but essentially it means mandatory housebuilding targets for local councils with priority on brownfield sites. As a result, the District Council will be reviewing the Joint Local Plan.

Finally, NH advised that a planning contravention notice was served on Stonham Barns in mid-December, currently awaiting the outcome. GB asked what the notice was for, NH explained that there are multiple reasons and the process is likely to be lengthy. Planning enforcement are also investigating planning breaches at other caravan sites in the area and the alleged residential use of a pub in Earl Stonham.

A member of the public asked NH whether CIL funding could be available to help redevelopment Framsdén Village Hall, NH confirmed that this would be a suitable reason use of CIL funding and the village could apply..

FPC 25-01-05 To Receive County Councillor's Report – County Councillor Matthew Hicks

The most recent report from the County Councillor will be sent out soon, circulated to the Council and posted on the village website <https://framsden.onesuffolk.net>



MHi brought attention to the following:

The budget has been approved, figures have gone up and again a large proportion of the spend is on Child & Adult Social Care, with 77p in every pound going on these two areas. Suffolk has an aging population, which impacts on the local authorities care responsibilities, along with a significant increase in children needing help since COVID. Currently there are about 9,000 children in the county needing SEND support. There is a recognition within Central Government that the current model for Child & Adult Social Care is not sustainable, but there is no quick and easy solution, so currently the situation is that there is only 23p in the pound available for the Council to provide all the other services it is responsible for. There is uncertainty around the Central Government settlement, but it has been made clear that Counties are being expected to apply the fullest possible Council Tax increase to ensure that all frontline services are unaffected.

There has been a significant uptick in the volume of goods failing safety checks at the Port of Felixstowe, the cost of living crisis means that many people are looking to buy cheap, but this comes with significant risks.

Suffolk is seeking a new Armed Forces Commissioner, it is a non-political voluntary role, but key to supporting the Armed Forces community in the County. There are currently 30K veterans in Suffolk and the appointment will be for three years.

The County Council met on 9th January to discuss the new devolution plans. Central Government wants all two-tier authorities to cease and reinvent County Councils as Unitary Authorities led by Mayors. Suffolk and Norfolk are likely to be one Unitary Authority and will be applying together to be in the first tranche. The view is that it is better to be involved in the process early and help to mould the solution. A question was raised about the delay to County Council elections that has been suggested. MHi explained that the business case for the Unitary Authority will need to be ready by Summer 2025 and it is unlikely that the authorities can manage this and an election, but the final decision will be made by Central Government on whether elections can be delayed. District Council elections are currently planned for 2027, the County Council elections may be delayed to either 2026 or 2027, but no firm decisions have been taken yet. When the Unitary Authority is created all Councillors, both District & County will have to reapply to be part of the new authority, there is no decision yet about how many seats there would be, but it will be less than the current total across the two authorities.

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GB asked about how planning applications and enforcement would work under a Unitary Authority. MHi was of the opinion that this may help, as it would be a one stop shop for all matters, instead of currently some being dealt with at District level and some at County level.

DV asked about the Flood Investigation Report for the village, noting that the Parish Council has an action to produce an Emergency Plan and whether there was a template. MHi said to make contact with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit who could provide this information, the Clerk confirmed that templates are available and has worked on an Emergency Plan for another village.


GB enquired about whether the County Council has any funding for the works suggested in the Report. MHi confirmed that Suffolk County Council currently doesn't have the funds to meet the recommendations even for the suggested highways work from all the reports issued so far, but has asked Central Government for help. GB said that at a recent farming conference various funds were discussed which landowners could apply for and he understood that the Environment Agency has some money, but only for certain areas. MHi noted that MP's in the County can lobby the Environment Agency to get works done and suggested this might be a good starting point.

FPC 25-01-06 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14th November 2024 as a true and accurate record, were proposed by NM, seconded by NW and **WERE SO RESOLVED**. The Minutes were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

FPC 25-01-07 Matters Arising and Action Points from September minutes

1. Check Hansard for mention of Framsdén. DISCHARGED - Following the discussion about housing and Framsdén being mentioned in the Houses of Parliament, it was noted that Framsdén is listed alongside a number of other villages that suffered flooding during Storm Babet. It does not say any housing is planned, but goes on to talk about the flood risk of further development should housing continue to be built on farmland in Suffolk.
2. Re-send parish level request for flood information out to village email group. DISCHARGED
3. Obtain quote for editing of the Framsdén Footpath map ready for consideration at the next meeting. ONGOING
4. Seek advice on pros and cons of infrared panel heating for the Village Hall. ONGOING
5. Remove rotted bench from Play Area. DISCHARGED
6. Circulate image of VE Day 80 flag. DISCHARGED GB reported that he had spoken to the church about the size of the flag that can be flown, but expressed concern that to purchase the flag would cost £90 and it would be specific to the one day. Councillors felt that this would not be an appropriate use of funds and decided not to purchase a flag. GB reported that he has registered that the village is going to take part in the celebrations with the pageant master, plans currently include fish, chips & mushy peas and lighting the beacon on the evening of 8th May 2025.
7. Submit responses to planning department at District Council as agreed. DISCHARGED
8. Circulate draft of Councillor recruitment leaflet for consideration. DISCHARGED
9. Contact SALC for advice on pros and cons of merging with a neighbouring parish. To be discussed later in meeting.
10. Advise District Council that the Parish would still like to proceed with the purchase of Tollgate Corner if possible. To be discussed later in meeting.
11. Publish re-adopted policies on the village website. DISCHARGED
12. Make changes as agreed to bank mandate. ONGOING
13. Advise funding application outcomes. DISCHARGED

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35

14. Advise SALC that NJC pay settlement as been accepted. DISCHARGED
15. Contact Community Action Suffolk to start the move to a gov.uk domain name and email system. ONGOING
16. Review Village Hall Major Repairs budget. DISCHARGED
17. Circulate V2 Draft Budget ahead of January meeting for comment. DISCHARGED
18. To distribute payments as approved at the meeting. DISCHARGED

FPC 25-01-08 Planning

- a) To consider planning applications that had been submitted since the last meeting: None
- b) To consider any planning applications which have been submitted since agenda published: None
- c) Updates and outcomes on previous planning applications:
 - i. DC/24/04337 – Full Planning Application – Demolition of existing barn (with prior approval for change of use to dwelling under ref: DC/23/05748) and construction of new build dwelling with driveway/parking area. Boundary Farm, Boundary Corner, IP14 6LH - Granted


FPC 25-01-09 Parish Council Activities & Projects

- a) To consider co-option to Council, including circulation of recruitment leaflet and email to village - Nobody came forward for co-option. The Clerk confirmed that there are now three vacancies published on the village website. The Clerk had circulated a leaflet to Councillors in a similar vein to one circulated in another nearby village to encourage people to come forward to join the Council. NW felt that the leaflet was too wordy and needed revising, offering to take a look at it and recirculate a second version.
- b) VHMC Report to include:
 - i. Village Hall Garden Maintenance – NM reported that a volunteer from the Village Hall Team has taken on the role of maintaining the garden at present. NM thanked the previous volunteer for the detailed outlines of what has been done in the past, these will be very helpful. A further volunteer has also offered to help and will receive some mentoring from the previous volunteer.
 - ii. Village Hall Five Year Plan – NM had circulated an updated plan which includes estimated budget amounts for modifications for the hall.
- c) To consider Flood Investigation Report – The Suffolk County Council Section 19 Flood Investigation Report had been published on 2nd December. The Parish Council has been listed with a short-term action of needing to establish a Community Emergency Plan that includes plans to manage future flood events and will need to liaise with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit. The Clerk has a template for an Emergency Plan from another Council and will make contact with the Unit to start the process.

NW had been contacted by parishioners with concerns about the bridge at the eastern end of The Street, as two of the three arches are blocked with silt and debris. It was agreed that the Parish Council will contact the Environment Agency and request that the area is inspected and necessary work carried out, at MHi's suggestion the area's MP will also be copied into the request.

NW also enquired about who would be responsible for clearing ditches, GB confirmed that this work would be the responsibility of the relevant landowner under their riparian duties.

- d) To receive first Operational Play Area Inspection report from Sovereign Play and consideration of quote for recommended actions – Councillors had been circulated the report and noted that the only recommended actions were for cleaning of a few items of play equipment. A quote had been received, but was felt to be too excessive, so a volunteer working party will need to be arranged. The Clerk will send out an email seeking volunteers to help.
- e) Update on Framsdon Footpath Map – GB reported that he is still awaiting a quote for the editing part of the work.

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36

- f) Update on Tollgate Corner – Councillors felt that a three-way meeting between the Helmingham Estate (as the current tenants on the land), the District Council and the Parish Council would be the best way forward. Since the last meeting the District Council has now offered the option of offering a lease to the Parish Council at £150 per annum for ten years, but the issue of the fenced area would need to be resolved before any final decision can be taken.

NW voiced concern that if the land was only leased it would still potentially restrict what the village could do with the land, but if the village can't afford to actually purchase the land this could be a viable option. NW suggested that a working party be formed to look at ways of funding the purchase and that a further public meeting would be the best way to find out whether there was appetite for a lease instead of a purchase. A date was agreed for a meeting to be held on 13th February at 7.30pm and the Clerk will send out an invite to the village.

The Clerk will contact the District Council and explain that as their offer has now changed, they Parish Council will need to consult with residents, also any funding applications are likely to take several months to complete. NH commented that as the Parish has been trying to get the District to discuss community use of the land for the last twenty years it was not unreasonable that the Parish now expects some time to gather opinion and consider the various options, particularly as the options have changed again.

Information to help people make a decision on the matter would be required ahead of the meeting, including how much the process may cost in legal fees (for either lease or purchase) and if the Parish took out a loan for the purchase of the land how much this would cost the Parish. The Clerk noted that at the previous meeting, residents had made it clear that they didn't want to see the cost added to their precept and that a quote for the sum of £32.5K (the price offered by the District Council for purchase) had been obtained from the Public Works Loan Board back in September. The quote would be recirculated to the Council and could be made available to the public at the meeting.

- g) Discussion of parish merge suggestion – GB explained that Helmingham had approached Framsdén about merging, advice was sought from SALC, who have very minimal experience and were not able to provide a clear outline of the process. NH reported that Helmingham had said that SALC thought that it would be very simple to organise and Framsdén would get an increase in precept. Councillors felt that as it was Helmingham who were seeking to merge then it was up to them to make the necessary legal enquiries and to come to Framsdén with the proposal.
- h) Meeting Dates for 2025-2026 - After discussion it was agreed to continue with meetings every alternate month on the second Thursday, unless matters arose which necessitated an extra meeting.

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting for 2025 would be done as a separate event again on 10th April. The Clerk will publish the dates on the village website.

2025 – 13th March, 8th May, 10th July, 11th Sept, 13th Nov – it was noted that the 8th May date clashes with the planned VE Day 80 celebrations and may need to be moved. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

2025 – 8th Jan, 12th March

- i) Policy Reviews – Councillors had reviewed the policies detailed below:

- i. Freedom of Information Policy & Charges
- ii. Equality & Diversity
- iii. Communication Policy
- iv. General Privacy Policy
- v. Privacy Policy for Staff, Councillors & Role Holders

NM proposed re-adoption for the policies. NW seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will publish the re-adopted policies on the village website

FPC 25-01-10 Finance

- a) To review the Financial Statement for the month, as supplied by the Clerk - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Statement for January. There were no queries. DV proposed acceptance, NM seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Chair signed the corresponding Bank Statements to confirm the figures.

Signed (Chair of meeting authorising minutes)

Signed (Clerk)

37

- b) To review and reconfirm for the forthcoming year the Direct Debit & Standing Order instructions on the Parish Council bank account – The Clerk had circulated a schedule of payment instructions. Three were related to utility services at the Village Hall and the payments are currently within agreed budget parameters. Other payments are annual lease/subscription payments for the Hall, Play Area, Website and Data Protection registration. Following review GB proposed confirmation and no changes to be made, NM seconded, all voted in favour and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**.
- c) To Set Budget for 2025-2026 – The Clerk had circulated a V2 draft budget for the Council to consider. After discussion it was agreed to raise the precept by 5.8% overall (£596 across the whole village) to cover increasing costs and to raise the Clerk’s pay to Band 10 on the NJC scale. DV suggested that the item in the reserves noted as VH Lease Legal Fees is just allocated for general Legal Fees, which could be used for the Tollgate Corner purchase/lease.
- GB proposed adoption of the budget as specified, DV seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will arrange for the approved Budget to be published on the website.
- d) To Agree Precept for 2025-2026 – Following adoption of the budget the Precept was set at £10,918 for 2025-2026. An overall increase of £596, translating to a £4.17 increase across the whole year for a Band D property (35p per month). NW proposed, DV seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will complete and return the form to the District Council
- e) To agree payments as detailed on Payment Schedule - DV proposed authorisation, NM seconded and **IT WAS SO RESOLVED**. The Clerk will set up payments accordingly.

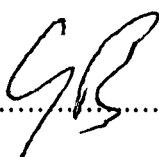

FPC 25-01-11 Matters of urgency to be brought to the attention of the Council

- a) Items for next agenda:
- Emergency Plan
 - Tollgate Corner
 - VE Day 80 Celebrations (including move of Parish Council meeting date)
 - Review and readopt Standing Orders

FPC 25-01-12 Confidential Matters - None

Items for the March Agenda – please notify the Clerk of any further items for the agenda as soon as possible and by Monday 3rd March 2025 at the latest, with any accompanying paperwork ready to be circulated with the agenda upon publication.

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 9.10pm. The next Parish Council meeting is set for **Thursday 12th March 2025** at 7.30pm, in Framsdon Village Hall

Signed  (Chair of meeting authorising minutes) Signed  (Clerk)