

# Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Framfield Parish held at the Village Hall, Blackboys, on Tuesday, 28 May 2013 at 8 pm

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Present : Cllrs Jeff Goggin (Chairman)  
Selina Allen Peter Friend  
Richard Brocklebank Rob Newton  
Myran Eade Ian Paisley

Councillor Chris Dowling (ESCC)

**In attendance** Ann Newton - Clerk Members of the public - five

**Councillor Chris Dowling (ESCC)** introduced himself and was offered congratulations by the Chairman on his recent election win. Chris reported that the Conservatives had lost their overall majority and the Council was now being run on a minority administration. It had been a number of years since the Conservatives had not been in complete control. He commented that there was still huge pressure on budgets with the need to save over £60m over the next three years. The grant from central government is getting smaller and smaller. As a County Councillor he has responsibility for the highways (some £1m has been allocated for pothole repair!), adult social care, children's services (adoption/fostering), education services (there are new academy programmes for Hastings and Eastbourne) with some other fringe services such as library provision etc which he has a personal interest in developing further across the county as part of his new role. He has been heavily involved in the implementation of the traffic calming measures in Blackboys and can happily say that after twelve years of campaigning the work has just been started! One of the members of the public present asked why seemingly inefficient initial repair work was done to potholes, only to then require further work at a later date. Chris explained that with the larger potholes an initial 'first aid' job was often required prior to the proper resurfacing which has to be programmed into a work schedule and takes longer to arrange. Chris was thanked for all his efforts on behalf of the Parish.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Felicity Groves, John Mordaunt and Maria Naylor. David Jenner.

## 2. Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 29 May 2012

It was agreed that the minutes from the Annual Assembly held on 29 May 2012 having been circulated, be approved, adopted and signed as a correct record.

## 3. Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

Jeff Goggin as Chairman of the Council thanked the Councillors for all their work during the year for which they receive no remuneration. He updated the meeting as follows:

**The Memorial Hall Refurbishment** – he reported that the Council had chosen to push ahead as a priority with the Hall refurbishment as the Hall is a multi-user community facility in urgent need of updating. The building regulations application was underway which would pave the way to enable a grant to be applied for in due course.

**Blackboys Traffic Calming** – as mentioned by Chris, after many years the works were now underway which is very good news for the Parish.

**Guideposts** – Jeff explained that negotiations were still underway with ESCC over the ownership of the guideposts which have fallen into disrepair. The ball was back in ESCC's court to decide how to proceed – unless they are handed over to the Parish, even by licence, the Council cannot insure them so any repair work would be wasted if they are immediately damaged without the possibility of a claim being made. The Parish has a large number of the signs and if they are to be handed over to the Parish, they either need to be brought up to scratch or some funds passed across with them. Robert Dann commented from the floor that they are part of the Parish's heritage of which there is no doubt, but current funds do not permit the Council to do a carte blanche refurbishment project which could cost half of the annual precept on something which doesn't belong to them.

**New Village Signs** – Jeff reported that the Council had just agreed a contract to replace the three signs. Unfortunately the original signs had started deteriorating fairly quickly, and as they were made from a form of plastic were not repairable. New signs, made out of wrought iron had been designed which would have a much longer life with very little maintenance. Robert Dann voiced his objection to

the funds being spent on the signs. The Clerk stated that the alternative was to remove them which she did not think would be generally popular – a lot of time and effort had been spent on researching the subject matter for the signs when they were originally erected as a millennium project and are part of the Parish's heritage. Funds had been allocated for the expenditure out of the precept.

**Play areas** – Jeff welcomed to the meeting Julie and Jean who form part of the Committee set up to try and raise the funds towards a new play area for Framfield. A family fun quiz night has been arranged as a launch event for 6 July 2013 in the Memorial Hall. Local businesses are already giving their support. Julie and Jean offered their support to the Parish Council in their attempt to apply for a loan to cover the cost to refurbish all the three play areas – this could ultimately mean a public referendum asking the residents if they wished to incur an increase in the precept to cover the loan. Rob Newton asked the other public present if they thought the suggestion was a good idea and if they would vote 'yes' at the referendum – they didn't disagree. The Clerk asked the two ladies for details of the quotes when obtained from three different play equipment companies so that they could be asked to do something similar for Blackboys and Palehouse Common – a preferential price may be obtainable for three play areas instead of one. Jean stated that she would be the link to the Parish Council. Jeff thanked Julie and Jean for attending.

#### **4. Any Other Parish Business and Questions**

- Robert Dann asked if there was anywhere that one could park if using Blackboys recreation ground. The Clerk replied that the Cricket Club had special permission to use an area of the recreation ground itself when playing and if anyone else used the ground for a large event, no doubt a similar permission would be given. Many visitors walk, and some occasionally park in John Dann Close. Although the parking spaces are private there is no longer any enforcement in place and if the parking is kept to a minimum, this hopefully wouldn't worry the residents too much.
- Robert Dann criticised the Council website for not putting the last meeting's minutes online and for the lack of general content. The Clerk stated that the Council has received much praise from higher authorities on the site. [Post meeting note – all minutes were on the site at the time of the meeting and indeed had been so for sometime].
- Chris Dowling thanked the Council for all their efforts on behalf of the Parish which aren't always appreciated. Indeed as with many other councils, the trend is when everything is running smoothly residents take this for granted, it is only when they feel there is something to complain about that they will get involved.
- Selina Allen thanked the Clerk for all her effort on behalf of the Parish.

*The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.*

**Chairman**.....

**Date** .....