

# **Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Framfield Parish held at the Village Hall, Blackboys, on Tuesday, 28 May 2024 at 6 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors - Keith Brandon (Chairman)  
Trishia Blewitt  
David Jenner (Vice Chairman)  
Maria Naylor.

**In attendance** Ann Newton - Clerk  
Marie Owen – RFO.  
Members of the public - none  
Councillor Chris Dowling (ESCC)  
Councillor Ann Newton (WDC)

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Tony Hall.

## **2. Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 16 May 2023**

It was agreed that the minutes from the Annual Assembly held on 16 May 2023 having been circulated, be approved, adopted and signed as a correct record (KB/MN).

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

Keith Brandon made the following report – a copy of which will be put in the next available copy of the Parish Magazine and website.

“Over the past year, the Parish Council has encountered several challenges, with one of the most significant being its dealings with East Sussex County Council. This year, a formal complaint was lodged concerning the condition of roads and footpaths across the parish. While some issues have been addressed, potholes and hazardous road surfaces persist, causing damage to vehicles. The complaint has been upheld, although not to the satisfaction of the Parish Council. Full correspondence regarding it is available on our council's website.

Over the past year, extensive footpath clearance work has been undertaken. Through regular communication with our County and District Councillors, pressure from us and residents has been applied to the respective authorities to improve the safety and accessibility of our footpaths. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that living in a rural area means our footpaths are subject to more debris and foliage issues than those in urban areas. If you encounter areas of concern, please report them to ESCC and obtain a reference number so that you can follow-up if remedial works are not forthcoming or delayed.

The replacement and reopening of Gun Road and Shawford Bridge are now expected in late June. Although delays occurred due to poor weather earlier this year, significant progress is being made. The quickest way to get updates is via our website and social media pages.

We are aware of concerns regarding faulty street lighting throughout the parish. While the Parish Council owns the street lighting, ESCC contractors maintain it on our behalf. Unfortunately, due to their organisational changes, some contractual processes have significantly altered. The Parish Council has not yet been able to sign the required contractual agreement due to concerns about liabilities. Numerous meetings have been held to resolve these issues, and a resolution has just been agreed, which will allow for the repair or replacement of faulty lighting. We are now awaiting quotations for the works, so that repairs and replacements can be made.

The Parish Council remains financially sound, although planned works such as street lighting will require significant expenditures.

The village market continues to thrive, thanks to the hard work of the market team and stallholders. The market is a hub for the local community, offering a place to buy local produce and goods, whilst serving as a social gathering spot. Sadly, we must report that Lillian, who baked cakes and helped run

a stall for many years, recently passed away after a short illness. We offer our deepest condolences to her family; she will be greatly missed.

As Sole Trustees of the village halls, the Parish Council is pleased to announce that the project to replace all lighting in the halls with modern LED fixtures has been completed. This upgrade helps reduce our carbon footprint and energy costs, whilst enhancing safety and security with improved emergency lighting.

We still have much to accomplish over the rest of the financial year. We appreciate the community's supportive comments and constructive criticism. However, it is distressing to report that we have received some derogatory, abusive, and libellous comments. Whether known or anonymous, we urge everyone to think before engaging online. Councillors and staff are human beings, and we encourage anyone with genuine concerns or grievances to approach us directly and work towards a common goal, as the majority of our community does. Abusive or inappropriate behaviour towards staff and councillors will not be tolerated, and action will be taken if necessary.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff and councillors for their hard work over the past year in striving to make our community a better place”.

#### **4. Report from District and County Representatives**

- Councillor Ann Newton (WDC) made a short verbal report.
  - The Draft Local Plan Consultation – Regulation 18 – has now closed allowing WDC officers to deal with the responses – some 10,000 of them. Regulation 19, is expected towards the end of the year. This is the final document which will go onto Public Examination with a Planning Inspector next year.
  - A new Leader had been voted in at the recent Council meeting. Although a leader is usually elected for the four-year term, within the Alliance agreement this can be alternated each year.
  - Greenways, Uckfield - a feasibility study on a potential project to place a cycle/footpath adjacent to the currently disused Uckfield/Lewes railway line. This has met with considerable local opposition from those wishing to ensure that there is always the chance that the railway line could be re-opened.
- Councillor Chris Dowling (ESCC) also made a verbal report.
  - He updated Councillors on the various highway-related issues within the Parish – Gun Road bridge, potholes outside of The Grange, Framfield, Gatehouse Lane, Hammonds Green pavement. Also, the recent accident to the east of Pump Lane and asked if there was any feedback from the meeting held with Framfield School Governors.

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

There was none.

*The meeting closed at 6.25 pm.*

**Chairman**.....

**Date** .....