

**Fritwell Parish Council**  
**Minutes of (delayed) Annual General Meeting, held @ Fritwell Village Hall**  
**on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7.00pm**

**1) Apologies:**

No Apologies

**Present:** Cllrs Polly Foster, Gill Simmonds, Sheila Ultsch, Jonathan Boyce, Caroline Westall (Clerk)  
Residents: 22 village residents.

**2) Election of the Chair and Vice-chair for 2021/22**

The Clerk acted as Chair for this part of the meeting.

Election for Chair: Cllr Boyce nominated Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Simmonds. Cllr Foster accepted the role and was duly elected to continue as Chair for 2021-2022.

Cllr. Foster resumed as Chair of the meeting.

II. Election for Vice-Chair: Cllr Simmonds proposed Cllr Ultsch continue as vice-chair. Cllr Boyce seconded. Cllr Ultsch accepted and was duly elected as Vice-Chair for 2021-2022.

**3) Minutes of the AGM held virtually on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. Proposed to accept by Cllr Simmonds, seconded by Cllr Ultsch. Agreed by all. Minutes signed by Cllr Foster as chair.

**4) Matters Arising from those Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2020 meeting

**5) Chairman's Report for 2020/21 (Councillor Foster)**

Cllr Foster presented the Chair's Annual Report. No questions were raised from the report.

*The last year has been like no other we've experienced with hardship and heartache for some but many acts of kindness, generosity and good neighbourliness. Fritwell has shown great resilience during this time.*

*We are very grateful to Helen Metcalfe who stepped in to support the council when our clerk had to step down after only a few months in the job. We now have a new Clerk Caroline Westall who has brought a high level of experience and skills to the role and is fast becoming a very valuable member of our team.*

*We are pleased to see the Village Hall and Playing Fields fully open again, and social events and meetings back in person, although many still lament the current loss of our pub.*

*When covid restrictions eased last Autumn the Lynx bus returned and continues to offer residents a weekly trip to Banbury on Thursdays and Bicester on Fridays.*

*Whilst we have had to say goodbye to some residents this year we would like to welcome the new people who have moved in to the village and hope that they enjoy living here as much as we do. The homes on the George and Dragon site are now all occupied and the Covert Farm homes are finally finished after a long wait for the legal issues to be sorted out.*

*Building of the 28 new homes on the site off Fewcott Road is expected to start early next year.*

*The Parish Council was able to get an allocation from the government's Containing Outbreak Management Fund ('COMF') for the 3Parishes Community Fridge Project and we'd like to thank all the hardworking volunteers who collect and distribute fresh food for all who want it and reduce the waste going to landfill. We also gave a grant to the Playing Fields Committee to make safe the fence around the childrens' play area.*

*We would like to thank all the willing volunteers who keep our village tidy by mowing verges and public areas, picking up litter and emptying bins, cleaning the village gates and signs, and reporting problems through the FixMyStreet online system. It's a shame that some dog owners don't act so considerately by cleaning up their dog mess and putting it in the special dog bins or taking it home to put in their household green bin.*

*There have been other frustrations. We were disappointed that OCC Highways chose to allow a fence to be erected by the side of Raghose Lane, cutting off the grass verge on a narrow road between 2 blind bends and causing a dangerous hazard for drivers, walkers, cyclists, horses and dogs. OCC Highways are also responsible for the lack of action on the poor state of the road in Forge Place and our Clerk is continuing to press them on this issue. Problems with our sewerage system continue to give concern and during periods of heavy rainfall East Street had up to 20 heavy tankers visiting the facility day and night to try to avert flooding and sewerage on land and homes in the area.*

*Increasing traffic and parking issues continue to be a top area of concern for residents. Please park on your own driveway if you can and avoid blocking junctions or parking on pavements or verges.*

*With the help of OCC Cllr. Fatemian's Local Priority Fund, the Parish Council has been able to erect a new trickle-charged SID sign near the school and improve the other sign on Fewcott Road with a solar panel and updated battery system. Funding for another SID sign is now being sought for North Street. Information on traffic numbers and speed is collected by the signs and by the Speedwatch team. New recruits for this group are always welcome. The Parish Council are also pursuing the idea of a 20mph speed limit, weight restrictions and further road calming ideas.*

*The new circular bench around the tree in the cemetery has now been installed, providing an attractive feature and comfortable seating for those who visit. The small gap in the hedge is soon to be filled and during this next year the Parish Council is going to consider ideas for a new area in the cemetery for the burial of ashes.*

*Our contractor Tim Stephens keeps the cemetery grass mowed and hedges trimmed, and looks after Church Lane and the paths across Church View Fields, the Local Green Space in the central area of the village. Other rural footpaths and bridleways rely on volunteer Parish Path Wardens to help keep them clear and report problems. We need new volunteers to take on this role and would urge those who walk these paths to consider if they could help. Our website has been updated, although due to time constraints this is still a "work in progress".*

*The Parish Council has continued to attend various meetings on behalf of the village and to fill in many consultations from the district and county councils and other bodies.*

*Planning remains a big part of our workload. There are threats with new sites coming forward for housing and proposals like the large logistics area at Baynards Green and the Rail Freight terminal near Ardley. New government planning legislation, the Oxfordshire*

*Spatial Plan 2050 and Cherwell District Council's Local Plan Review will bring new challenges with development targets, increasing traffic and threats to rural life.*

*I am proud of how our small council of four has coped with the workload and challenges of the past year and I'd like to thank my fellow councillors for all their hard work, commitment and support and look forward to working together in the year ahead.*

## **6) Financial Report 2020/21 and other matters.**

Cllr Simmonds explained that due to the covid related delay of the AGM, the year-end financials had been presented, reviewed and signed off as part of a (public) virtual meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021. All documents are posted on the website and, where appropriate physically for public review.

A question was raised about the size of the financial reserve and if any of this had now been spent. Cllr Simmonds explained that the new bench in the cemetery had been purchased and that additional money (above the specific grant amount from OCC councillors Local Priority Fund) had also been taken from the reserve to allow the purchase of the Speed device (SID).

A further question was raised about the tendering process for the purchase of the bench. Cllr Boyce confirmed that three tenders had been received in line with process.

## **7) Next Parish Council meeting.**

Cllr Foster stated that the next meeting would be October but specific date would be advised nearer the time as the Parish Council had only 4 members and quorum is 3, it was therefore important to ensure that all councillors could attend.

Member of the public advised that he would like to join the parish council and was asked to contact the clerk via email.

## **8) Close of AGM 7.25pm**