FRETHERNE WITH SAUL PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Fretherne with Saul Parish Assembly held at Saul Memorial Hall at 7pm on Wednesday 15th May 2024.

Present: PCSO M Treble, Cllr B Findlater (Chairman), Cllr C Bierer, Cllr L Jeffries, Emma Goodwood (Memorial Hall), Parish Clerk K Brown, PCSO M Treble

- **To receive apologies:** Cty Cllr S Davies, Dist Cllr R Brown

- **To approve the minutes of the meeting 24th May 2023**
  Proposed, seconded with all in favour

Chairman B Findlater moved to change the order of the agenda to enable PCSO Treble to deliver his report first.

- **Police Report – PCSO M Treble**
  PCSO advised that the period from the start January to beginning of May, crimes in the Parish were down to seven. These were 1 x assault causing injury, 4 x public fear, alarm or distress, 1 x assault without injury, 1 x car theft (unauthorised taking).
  Between January and May there have been 5 emergency response 999 calls made from within the Parish for assistance for a grade 1. These were all genuine calls, no hoaxes.
  Otherwise, there are no major concerns in the Parish, patrols will continue in areas where they might be concerns.
  Staff cover in the area include PCSO Treble, Sgt Sarah Robinson, a new Inspector will be announced shortly.

- **Fretherne with Saul Parish Council report – Chairman**
  The year began with repairs to the Council owned play equipment on the Memorial Hall Playing Field, the last inspection had identified repairs were required which came at great cost. There are still items being inspected, ROSPA are due to carry out an interim inspection.
  Progressing work on the disused section of the Stroudwater Canal at Upper Framilode has been difficult to say the least; the Water Vole presence has interrupted everything that was being done making sure that no damage was caused to either animals or habitat as the legal implications that this highlighted would be of a great expense to the Parish in total because the section of canal is owned by the Parish. The Volunteer work that was done was very much appreciated but the Parish Council had to suspend any work being carried out until the survey was carried out in October 23. The report was received in November but it raised more questions than there were answers. Responses to questions were received in January 24, which identified areas of work which could be done and what was needed to restore health to the environment. The report has now been shared with the Volunteer Group who will propose a plan for work in the coming months.
  Remembrance Day Poppy Wreaths were laid at each of the Churches in the Parish by Councillors.
  Christmas on the Pound had a very good response to the evening which had been arranged. The Christmas Bauble entry was very good and all the entrants were awarded a selection box. Very big thanks to Longney Choir who serenaded everyone throughout with Christmas Carols which was nice background music to the occasion. The lighting of the trees on the Pound received a number of compliments, the only down side was in the high winds later that month it blew many of the baubles off the tree.
  To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, three English Oak trees were purchase to represent Fretherne, Saul and the Framilodes. Finally, after a frustrating search to find a suitable place to plant them, they have been planted along the hedge row at the Memorial Hall Playing Field and the hope is that they will flourish for future generations to enjoy and see for many years to come. Thanks to the Memorial Hall Committee for permitting the Parish Council to place the trees in the grounds. The plaque is yet to be placed.
  The allotments is a thriving community within the Parish; there have been a number of changes to tenancy but they are mostly let. Vacant plots are advertised on the community facebook page. The trees around the allotments continue to be managed through out the year, some branches which require attention due to damage from high winds.
  Internal Drainage Board (IDB) pump at Upper Framilode is now back online and being monitored/managed remotely. This is important item to be reinstated as it had a period of time where

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it was not being managed. This is invaluable during high tides coinciding with high water levels. Members of the Parish continue to check the pump is working at peak times.
There are a number of projects in the pipe line for 2024/25 which include installing solar lighting in the phone box housing the defibrillator, a noticeboard installation along the canal at Framilode and various small biodiversity projects but we need help in managing and organising these plans. The Parish Council is at the minimum number of Councillors required to operate efficiently, it is very important that seeing the amount of enthusiasm for the Christmas party on the Pound, it would be nice if some of that group would volunteer to come forward and join the Council so that they can be involved and help the village evolve.
Twenty planning applications have been reviewed over the past year. The Parish Council does not grant planning permission but can comment on any applications with any relevant local information.
Our District Councillor John Jones stepped down at the end of his current term of office, not standing for re-election. The Parish Council would like to thank for his help, advice and guidance over the 22 years at Stroud District Council. Stephen Davies has also stepped down from District Council, although he is still hoping to be part of County Council after the elections.

- **County Council report – County Councillor S Davies**

Cty Cllr S Davies submitted a report in his absence: The good news is that your County Council is solvent and has passed a budget that sees investment in Adult and Children Services, as well as further investment in Highways. The County element of your Council Tax has increased by 5.99%. Our Finances were particularly helped by the £15m for Electricity generated by the Energy from Waste Facility at Javelin Park.
The Autumn Financial statement also allocated money specifically to Potholes, the Gloucestershire County Council share of this is £87.9m. Highways have purchased new equipment and new systems, particularly "Fix my Street" which automate the reporting of potholes but also allows members of the public to track the progress of any resolution. Highways have also introduced "Find and fix" gangs as well as introducing the common sense policy of not only fixing the serious safety defect pothole but also those in close proximity that will need fixing shortly.
On Climate Change the County has recently publish an update to its plan and is continuing on an ambitious tree planting program. We are in the middle of the tree planting season but expect to have planted over 100,000 trees this year. We have installed the first 100 EV chargers of the 1,000 plus planned and have secured £6m for Zero Emission Buses.
In the last year the Fire Service has been inspected and though found inadequate, was judged to be good at putting out fires, but faces issues of diversity that are being addressed.
We have recently had an Inspection of our Special Education Needs program which identified issues that are common nationally but recognised out plan to address them.
Finally our "Front Door" process in Children's Services was inspected where we were found to be doing a good job and working well with other partners.
More locally I have been working with parents to address the issue with School Bus transport which is an issue of availability to non catchment schools, i.e. those not provided by the County Council as well as an concern over costs.
I am also lookng at the issue capacity at Secondary schools in the area. The issue here is the base line school age population is declining and any increase is driven by where new houses are built, which is decided by the Stroud District Local plan, which is sadly delayed by a year at the moment.
If you have any questions on any of these topics or any other questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.
Stephen Davies
County Councillor
Stephen.davies2@gloucestershire.gov.uk

- **District Council report – District Councillor**

No report was submitted by newly elected Dist Cllr R Brown.

- **Memorial Hall Committee**

Fretherne, Saul & Framilode Memorial Hall and Playing Field - Annual Update, FY2023

1. Committee Members

In April 2023 Jane Bolton, volunteer Treasurer/Booker stepped down after over 16 years of service. Jane has been the driving force in the community with her endless energy and commitment. Jane has spearheaded and managed most of the significant improvements over the years, including:

- In 2010 securing £40k+ of funding from the government to build a children's play area within the playing field.
- Obtaining Tesco funding to build a mud kitchen, sand pit, and renovate other areas within the park.

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Easter egg. Additional sales from cakes, a raffle, tombola, and other stalls, helped to achieve a fantastic £740 profit to go towards the upkeep of the hall and playing fields. Thank you to everyone who made the day such a huge success.

Comments from locals who attending included:

> "What a great afternoon, thank you to the amazing team for such a well organsied event and making money for Saul Hall and Playground"

> "It was fab, well done to you all for all your effort … it was a lovely afternoon .. can't wait for the next"

> "Amazing event .. we all had a lovely afternoon .."

The committee are busy planning the next fundraiser event, a summer extravaganza in mid August. We hope to run another great day, with bouncy castle, BBQ, stalls and the usual fun and games. Watch social media and adverts in the local area for more details coming soon. We hope this event, along with the Easter event, will help cover some of the shortfall in our Memorial Hall annual finances.
Other events being consider are running a 100 Club style fundraiser and Autumn fundraiser events such as a quiz or bingo.
Over the past 12 months the committee has applied for four grants from various funding sources. We have been unsuccessful with two applications and are waiting to hear on the outstanding two.
We are always looking for grants and funding opportunities. We welcome ideas or support from the local community should people wish to get involved.

5. Maintenance & Improvements

The committee obviously wishes to maintain the current facilities within the hall and playing field. However, maintenance costs are often significant. Having a large amount of play equipment that is now over 10 years old means there is a long list of ongoing maintenance required.
The annual overheads and £1.5K annual shortfall, does not take into account any monies for maintenance or improvements to the current facilities.
We would like to say a big thank you to Mitch Workman, for funding the play-sand for the sand pit recently. And a big thank you to Sue Slate for moving the large pile of sand from the top of the driveway, into the sandpit. We love our community angels!
We are now focusing on repairing the mud kitchen and willow tunnels. We would love to hear from anyone who has time or equipment they can donate to support these activities over the spring or summer months.
There are plans to hold a 'Spring clean' session in the park; we would like volunteers to help us tackle the overgrown flower beds, hedges and general weeding. Information will be posted on social media soon asking for helpers.
In 2023 we installed Wifi in the hall. This has been a great addition to the users.
We have also recently replaced two broken blinds within the hall. This helps keep the building private when not in use.
The committee has setup a Gofundme site for general donations to support ongoing maintenance and improvements, (search for: Saul Memorial Hall and Playing Fields Future Fund). The fund currently has £80 of kind donations.

6. Public Notices

We continue to have a small issue with some dogs fouling in the playing field. New notices have been displayed to highlight the issue.
It has also been reported that some cars and/or mopeds are driving down the lane into the car park at speed. This is very dangerous. New notices have been displayed to highlight the issue. We are also exploring if it is possible to install speed bumps on the driveway, similar to those at Eastington Village Hall. The committee would like to discuss this with the Parish Council to see if there is any council funding that can be used.
Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to the local community for their support over the years. We are passionate about keeping the Memorial Hall and playing field a central place for community use for years to come.

Meeting closed at 19:35

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Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in exercising any of its functions: Equal Opportunities

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- Persuading Gloucestershire Environmental Trust to fund wildlife areas and provide sessions for the playgroup within the community.
- Securing grants from Frampton Court and The National Lottery to help make play areas inclusive for all.
- Starting a drama club and the Get Grubby Gang, both for local youngsters, and helping run Saul Severn Belles (WI), from the memorial hall.

Jane worked non-stop to raise the profile of Saul Memorial Hall and Playing field. In 2023 Jane received the Gloucestershire Playing Field Association Community Achievement Award,for her work and achievements.
We are sure the Parish Council will join us in thanking Jane for her outstanding contribution to the community over the past two decades. *The Parish Council added their thanks to Jane.*

Additionally in 2023 Malcolm Smith stepped down from the committee. We thank him for his time and support over the years.

We also welcomed three new committee members in 2023: Ruth Bartlett, Jess Slate and Sarah Brock.

The committee now comprises of five volunteer members:
Duncan Carter (Chair), Emma Greenwood (Treasurer), Ruth Bartlett and Jess Slate (Bookers/Fundraising), and Sarah Brock (Pre-School/Fundraising).

We are always looking for new committee members; welcoming enthusiastic volunteers who would like to get involved in their local community to make a difference to residents.

2. Memorial Hall Bookings

The Memorial Hall is still trying to recover from the covid period. Sadly, since covid, several of our weekly club bookings have stopped trading. The number of private party bookings is also down from pre-covid years.

The committee is talking to a number of potential new clubs/activities who are interested in hiring the hall for regular sessions later in 2024.

The playgroup being run from the Memorial Hall pre-covid sadly also stopped trading in 2022.

In early 2023 we welcomed a new pre-school to the Memorial Hall, The Saul Montessori Preschool run by Sarah Brock. The pre-school has gone from strength to strength during the first year.

To help increase bookings, the Memorial Hall is now being advertised within the local Frampton magazine, published quarterly.
The Memorial Hall and Playfield facebook page is being kept updated, with regular postings from committee members to maintain interest and share progress on park investment and fundraising events.
Further advertising is being planning within the surrounding community and online to help increase the footfall to the playing field and hire of the hall facilities.

3. Finances

The average annual overhead cost of running the Memorial Hall and maintaining the playing field is £7.5k.
The overhead costs include (but not limited to): Heating, Waste, Water, Wifi, Summer mobile toilet hire, Cleaning, Insurance, Grass Mowing, Fire/Safety testing.
The average annual income from the Memorial Hall hire is £6k.
There is an average annual shortfall of £1.5k. This must be found from donations, fundraising or an increase in private hires. In 2023 the hall hire price was raised slightly, but it had not been increased for over 10 years.
The committee has a concern that with overhead costs increasing each year, without support from the Council, local community and external supporters, the Memorial Hall and Playing Fields will be unsustainable in future years.

4. Fundraising

2023 was a year of change for the committee. There is now a big push in 2024 to increase fundraising effort.

In March 2024 an Easter Egg Hunt event was held within the hall and playing field. It was a great day, helped by an unusual dry weekend that saw over 70 children successfully crack the Easter hunt code to win an

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(race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.

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