

FRECKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Freckenham Parish Council on
Monday 11th September 2023 at 7.30 pm at Freckenham Village Hall

Present: Cllr G Tucker, Cllr F McCoig, Cllr T Smith, Cllr P Brooks, Cllr S Smith

In attendance: Chairman of the NH Plan Group Nick Woolley, Parish Council clerk Jadi Coe and seven members of the public

Cllr G Tucker welcomed everyone to the meeting

23/09/01 Apologies for absence & approval of reasons tendered

None

23/09/02 Declaration of interest in any items on the agenda

None

23/09/03 Members of the public are invited to give their views on any item within the agenda

It was agreed that members of the public would be able to ask questions at the appropriate agenda item.

23/09/04 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor and to receive the Police Reports

Cllr L Stanbury sent his apologies

Cllr D Taylor was absent

23/09/05 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2023

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th July 2023, proposed by Cllr F McCoig, seconded by Cllr A Smith, all in favour.

23/09/06 Planning

6.1 Village classification update

A resident had provided the council an email from Matt Hancock in advance of the meeting, this email was sent to all members and sent to the NH Plan Committee and West Suffolk Council for a response.

Matt Hancock's email:

West Suffolk Council has replied to my letter outlining your concerns. They have stated "Freckenham was a type 'B' village that wanted small development but type 'B' settlement is judged to have so few resources that it cannot have development. Therefore, if Freckenham wants to grow, other than an odd infill, it will have to 'upgrade' to type 'A' even though its resources are borderline. This has all been explained to Freckenham and it is very much down to them to decide whether they want a bit of growth in the village or to remain as they are."

I hope this helps clear up the position of West Suffolk Council.

If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A paper copy of West Suffolk Council's response to Matt Hancock's email was distributed:

Thank you for your email.

I hope the below helps:

Freckenham is identified as a Type A Village in our settlement hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy and what constitutes a Type A and B Village is set out in policy SP5 of the preferred options West Suffolk Local Plan:

Part One: Strategic Policies - West Suffolk Local Plan (Regulation 18) Preferred Options - West Suffolk Planning Policy Consultations (inconsult.uk).

Prior to the preferred options consultation in summer 2022, we wrote to all Parish Councils in September 2021 asking them to complete a services and facilities matrix. Officers also visited each settlement across the district to understand the services and facilities available. It was during this review that it was identified that Freckenham had an early years education provision, village hall, public house and a play area and a red bus service. As a result of this, Freckenham was re-categorised as a Type A Village in the preferred options West Suffolk Local Plan.

During the preferred options consultation last year, a response was received from Freckenham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Group raising concerns with the preferred site identified. The NP group have identified a different site and wished for us to explore their site further. Members have asked to explore and amend the emerging site allocation in Freckenham to align with preferred NP site.

A paper copy of Places 4 People, the NH Plan's planning consultant, response to Matt Hancock's and WSCs email was distributed to all members of the public present at the meeting:

To clarify things as I see it, which might be useful for you on Monday evening:

When we started work on the NP we asked (quite rightly and as identified in Para 67 of the NPPF) for an indicative housing requirement that the Plan should make provision for.

Para 67 states: Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body. This figure should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority

Hence, we got an indicative figure from West Suffolk officers of 10 which we started to Plan for.

Then West Suffolk came out with their Preferred Options Local Plan in May 2022 and identified a site – not the Neighbourhood Plan. The PC was still going through the process of determining a deliverable site.

The PC was proactive in Summer 2022 in asking residents to identify their preferred site and those results, which preferred the site south of Mildenhall Road, formed the basis for the Parish Council's objections to the Local Plan.

The Parish Council also questioned the designation as a Type A village.

Ultimately West Suffolk Council will determine through the preparation of the Local Plan what category it fits in. Residents should object to West Suffolk and the Local Plan Consultation – expected in January 2024 – if they wish to challenge the designation.

There is absolutely no point in objecting to the Parish Council – indeed the draft Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing to allocate any sites for housing. The Parish Council objected to Category A designation and it objected to the Preferred Options site and fed back residents preferred site.

-The Parish Council and Nick Woolley confirmed the following to concerned residents:

-The classification was decided by WSC following the PC completing a Facilities Matrix in 2021, the matrix showed that Freckenham had 3 or more sustainability indicators, public house, play park, bus service and two early years facilities and was then classified as a type A village in draft local plans.

-At every consultation the PC has objected to this decision, based on there is no longer an early year's provision and that the bus service is extremely limited.

-The PC have done everything they can to get Freckenham classified correctly as a type B village, but the decision is still with WSC. The next WS Local Plan consultation is expected in January 2024.

It was suggested residents may want to get together to object to the classification by writing a well written, strong letter to WSC, and have residents sign and send the same letter/email to WSC detailing their concerns.

6.2 To review and approve the draft Neighbourhood Plan for the pre-submission stage public consultation

Nick Woolley, Chairman of the NH Plan group, confirmed the importance of a NH Plan and the timeline of the plan:

- The Parish Council to approve to proceed to the Pre-submission stage public consultation – September 2023
- Drop in event – 20th October 3:00pm -7:00pm and 21st October 10:00am - 1:00pm (a few paper copies will be available to take home)
- 6-week consultation period – 20th October to 4th December 2023
- Parish Council to approve plan for submission with table of proposed changes - TBC
- Referendum – Summer 2024

A resident asked whether the plan detailed the quantity of housing development and the incorrect village classification by WSC and if it didn't, could it.

Nick Woolley confirmed that the Draft NH plan did not refer to quantity of housing development, but did state that the Parish Council had objected to the village being classified as a type A village, as it lacked the necessary facilities. He did say that he would enquire if anymore could usefully be done at this time.

The Parish Council reviewed and approved the draft Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to the pre-submission stage public consultation. The Chair of the Parish Council to approve any changes required to the Plan as a result of the potential changes to national planning policy published between the Parish Council meeting and the launch of the public consultation, this was proposed by Cllr G Tucker, seconded by Cllr A Smith and agreed by all.

6.3 To consider any planning applications

None

23/09/07 Recreation Ground and other assets

It was agreed that the park and recreational ground both look lovely and are being well maintained.

Cllr A Sith confirmed he has repaired the goal posts however new nets are required and he would obtain prices for the next meeting.

A resident reported that there was a social media post discussing the addition of new play equipment for younger children.

The clerk confirmed she had received no correspondence in regard to this.

23/09/08 Highways issues, including purchase and funding of a SID

The clerk reported that the first action to take when considering installing a SID is:

Download and complete Site Suitability Checklists for each individual site; complete and submit to Suffolk Highways via SafetyandSpeedManagement@suffolkhighways.org, with written evidence that local residents do not object to location of SID/TVAS, SCC staff then review the sites, they then confirm if it is suitable and they will then return the copies of the counter-signed Checklist.

The clerk to forward checklist and draft letter to councillors, in order for councillors to complete. A resident volunteered to help with any letters on Elms Road.

23/09/09 Emergency plan

The Emergency Planning Officer has contacted the Parish Council as the Community Emergency Plan (CEP) appears to not have been reviewed since 2017.

The plan was reviewed and amended where appropriate.

23/09/10 Remembrance Sunday

The church has confirmed that the wreath from last year is still in good condition and will be used for the Parish Council to lay. Cllr G Tucker confirmed he was away and would not be able to lay the wreath, Cllr F McCoig offered to lay the wreath in his absence.

23/09/11 Financial Matters:

11.1 To consider any quotes received

None

11.2 To confirm payment of invoices

It was resolved to pay the following invoices, proposed by Cllr Tucker, seconded by Cllr McCoig, all in favour

- SALC, Pauls training £61.20
- Gipping Press, Parish Pump £229.00
- Community Heartbeat Trust, replacement battery £267.00
- Anthony Smith, fuel £89.26
- West Suffolk Council, election fee May £81.91
- West Suffolk Council, election fee June £101.34
- Gallagher, annual insurance policy £1,023.08

23/09/12 Correspondence Received

An email was received asking when the memorial bench would be installed. Cllr Tucker confirmed he needed a generator for this.

A resident asked whether two public rights of way (PROW) could be reinstated; Isleham Road to North Street and Chippenham Road to The Old Rectory and that Cllr M Peachey from West Row could help advise on this.

23/09/13 Parish Pump

The article deadline for the winter edition is Friday 10th November.

The Pump would be delivered to Cllr G Tucker, and the distribution list updated.

A resident offered her help with the deliveries on North Street.

23/09/14 Urgent Business

None

The meeting closed at 9:00

Jadi Coe,
Clerk to the Council