

**Cyngor Cymuned Freystrop  
Freystrop Community Council**



**Freystrop Village Hall**

Registered Charity Number 508498

# **THIRD ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2023/24**

# **Freystrop Community Council Annual Report 2023/2024**

*as required under The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021*

## **GOVERNANCE**

Freystrop Community Council (FCC) comprises of six Councillors – the maximum number allowed based on the population within the Community. There were no changes to the structure of the Council during this financial year.



*The Lime Kiln at Little Milford. One of the Freystrop Community's listed buildings*

At the AGM in July Cllr. David Thomas was happy to continue as Chair and was unopposed. Cllr. Esme Utting continued her role as Vice Chair whilst Cllr. Dawn Harries no longer felt she could commit to her role as Co-Vice Chair.

The FCC meetings were all held on a “face to face” basis at Freystrop Village Hall. There were 10 meetings held during the year. The AGM was delayed until July 2023 to ensure all Councillors could attend.

Matters regularly discussed at meetings related to Highways/Planning responses/Community facilities/Finance. Member of the public were also able to attend to raise issues of concern. County Councillor Michael John attended all meetings to update the FCC on county-wide matters.

During the year the standing agenda for meetings underwent refinement. Purely FCC items now take precedence followed by the County Councillor’s report on items relating to Pembrokeshire County Council. A section allowing the Chair to pass on information from his voluntary attendance at national organisational co-ordination meetings is included. Items concerning the Freystrop Village Hall and Playing Field committee are the last items on the agenda. A clear distinction can be kept between the roles and responsibilities of the two “meetings”.

Councillor W D Thomas was forced to stand aside from FCC duties for 7 months of the year because of health issues. During this time Councillor E Utting took over as Chair. FCC was pleased to welcome back Councillor W D Thomas to meeting in January 2024.

### **Liaison with other Authorities and Organisations**

The FCC is represented on the liaison body of Pembrokeshire Town and Community Councils which meet with PCC and third sector bodies, e.g. PAVS and PLANED. These meetings, now entitled “Better together”, are still being held online.

The FCC Chair is Vice Chair of One Voice Wales (OVW) Pembrokeshire Area Committee and is their Representative on the OVW National Executive Committee and currently sits on their Policy Committee. This Committee provides input to and receives feedback on wide-ranging issues related to Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) and Audit Wales.

# **FINANCE**

The FCC obtains the majority of its operating funds from the Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) by way of the annual precept. The application for each years precept is based on a budgeting process prepared in the previous November and after ratification by the FCC submitted to PCC in January.

The precept for 2023/24 was for £6,000. The budget for 2024/25, as detailed in the appendices, was for £9,461. A precept of £9,000 was requested of PCC with FCC using its reserves or underspend to fund the shortfall.

The 2024/25 budget increase relates to inflationary pressures and the adding of a budget line for Community Maintenance. Included is grounds maintenance at Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park, repairs to FCC assets e.g. the bus shelters and ad-hoc items (such as the clearance of overgrowth on the pavement between Freystrop Cross and Silverstream in 2022/23). During 2023/24 the grounds maintenance was funded from the Village Hall bank accounts. Councillors believed this to be incorrect when the playing field is open to the whole community, and used by more people than use the Hall, and therefore should be maintained from FCC coffers.

## **Audits**

FCC is required to submit an Annual Financial Return to Wales Audit. Prior to submission this return is audited by our Internal Auditor and approved by the FCC.

Audit Wales completed the 2019/20 and 2020/21 audits during 2023/24 with no comment. The 2021/22 submission remains extant.

A system of triennial full audits has been introduced and 2022/23 is the first year for FCC to undergo the process. The clerk compiled all the requested documentation and delivered it by hand to the Audit Wales office in Penlleagaer prior to the submission deadline.

## **Banking**

The FCC Bankers are HSBC Bank in Haverfordwest which holds both the current and deposit accounts. Bank charges are imposed on the current account of £5/month plus 40p/cheque transaction. Nominal interest is received on the deposit account. Bank statements are received on a monthly basis.

During 2023/24 unsuccessful moves to reduce the bank charges by changing banking arrangements were made. A halfway house of setting up Business Internet Banking with HSBC was adopted to reduce the monthly charges relating to cheque processing. As a part of the application a review of signatories and extant mandates was carried out.

Responsible managers of the account are Councillors W D Thomas, E Utting, A M Simpson and the clerk, R D Lavis.

HSBC initiated a Safeguard Review of the accounts to be completed before 24 March 2024. The clerk managed the process ensuring all records were correct within the timescale. All issues were resolved.

## **Freystrop Community Council Accounts**

- Bank Balances at 31 March 2024 were
  - Current a/c £3,785.44 with bank charges for year of £63.60
  - Deposit a/c £10,501.68 with interest for the year £180.20
    - A total of £10,270 is reserved for specific purposes
      - £1,500 Elections Fund
      - £4,770 Playing Field
      - £4,000 Speed limiting signs

## **MAJOR ITEMS OF NOTE**

### **Highways**

FCC continued to be concerned about speeding problems in the area particularly at Freystrop Cross, along Targate Road past the Playing Field, New Road and at Lower Freystrop. This also remains a constant complaint from residents.

The 20mph speed limit introduced during 2023 has alleviated some issues. FCC requested that PCC review the maintaining of the 30mph limit between High Freystrop and Maddox Moor. This is clearly an unsafe road at anything above 20mph.

FCC continue to encourage all residents to report incidents to 101. Traffic monitoring will only take place when reports from individuals become significant. The clerk to FCC has application forms for any resident to apply to volunteer to join the Community Speedwatch Scheme.

The costs of installing radar speed signs have been investigated by Councillors. These have been found to be far more than the costs of signage. Infrastructure, installation and planning vastly increase the costs. Funding will be sought in 2024.

An issue with pavement and roadside parking along Targate Road had become a bone of contention with pedestrians and drivers. FCC are working to find a solution suitable for pedestrians, residents and road users.

### **Community Review**

Pembrokeshire County Council are reviewing community management within Pembrokeshire as part of their statutory duties.

Initial proposals would see the merger of several Community Councils in 2027. Freystrop Community Council is one that could be affected and would become a part of Hook Community Council. Both Hook and Freystrop Community Councils are opposed to this merger.

The Boundary Commission for Wales carried out a consultation ending on 13 December 2023. A strong proposal to maintain the status quo was submitted in writing by Freystrop Community Council to The Boundary Commission. Final decisions will be made during 2024/25.

## **Planning**

Retrospective planning submission is outstanding on major works undertaken at Middle Hill Quarry. This continues to be chased up with PCC officers due to concerns about the safety of work done.

There were no other items of note in the planning applications submitted during the year.

## **Community**

The “Warm Rooms” initiative was enjoyed by all attendees over winter 2022/23 and it was decided to hold five once monthly sessions over the autumn and winter under the banner of “Freystrop Community Get Together”.

This has proved to be popular. There are a number of regulars that attend monthly with others coming when they can. It has been great to see people from different parts of Freystrop come together for a few hours.

We have been delighted to welcome a resident who has been generously repairing and altering clothes for villagers. Her sewing skills and boxes of buttons, threads, etc. have sparked a number of interesting conversations.

Cakes & biscuits have been enjoyed along with tea and freshly brewed coffee. A coffee machine and mugs have been kindly donated by members of the community and make a lovely addition to the hall.

Initially planned to take place between November 2023 to March 2024 two extra dates were added for April and May with the possibility of continuing further into the year if attendees wish.

## **Littering in the Freystrop Community**

Like so many other areas in Pembrokeshire Freystrop suffers from a huge volume of litter.

The main problem areas are the road verges with litter being thrown from cars passing along our roads. The litter includes fast food packaging, bottles and cans of alcohol, disposable vapes, plastic bottles and so much more.

There are a number of villagers that have taken it upon themselves to regularly collect litter. This can be a thankless task when more is dropped almost immediately however it is also rewarding and some areas have seen a big reduction in the amount of litter being left.

The Freystrop community is lucky to have volunteers who have taken it upon themselves to remove the debris where it is safe to do so. Hopefully the more this is tackled the more the problem will reduce in the future.

# **VILLAGE HALL & PLAYING FIELD**

The FCC has a subsidiary role in maintaining and operating the Village Hall and the Playing Field for the benefit of the Community. FCC Councillors and the clerk are assumed to be members of the Village Hall & Playing Field Committee at present. The committee is always open to approaches from residents wishing to join the management team.

Following the AGM in July 2023 David Thomas and Esme Utting continued their roles as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Anna Simpson was confirmed as Treasurer and Russell Lavis as secretary.

## **Freystrop Village Hall Charity**

The Charity Commission registration for some time had only one Trustee recorded putting the management of the charity at risk. An additional three Trustees were added during the year to safeguard its future. Freystrop Village Hall Charity Trustees are now W David Thomas, Esme Utting, Anna M Simpson and Russell D Lavis. Freystrop Community Council remains the Corporate Trustee.

## **Village Hall**

The Hall continues to be extremely well-used. Activities such as Pilates/Tai Chi/Craft/Painting Group/Canine Club are held every week. There are also monthly bookings by the FCC itself for its meetings and the Women's Institute.

Anna Simpson took on the additional role of Bookings Clerk during the year and a public Google Calendar was set up to allow prospective users easy access to forward planning.

Follow the bit.ly link or scan the qr code to the right for access

<https://bit.ly/FreystropVillageHallCalendar>



A dedicated Facebook page was created to promote the Hall. This is open to the public without the need for a Facebook account.

Follow the bit.ly link or scan the qr code to the right for access

<https://bit.ly/FreystropVillageHall>

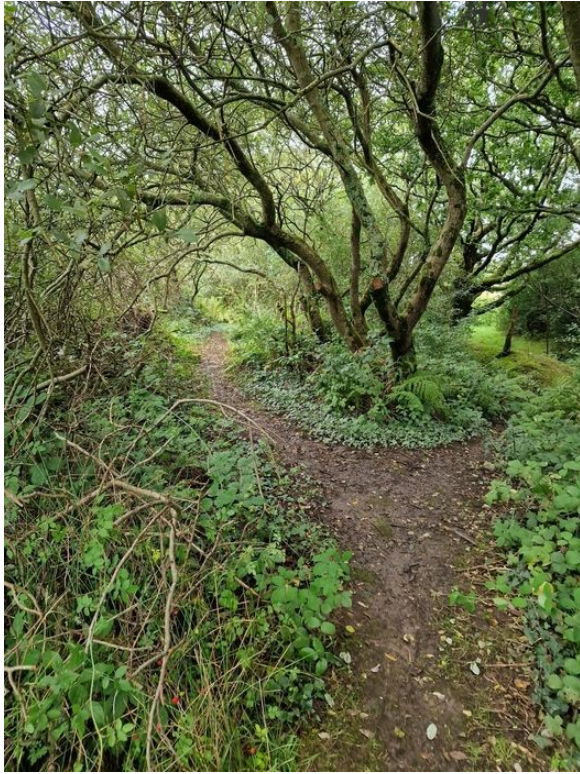


During a project to carry out internal improvement works to the Hall major subsidence has been observed in the Hall's structure. Insurers have refused to cover the cost of the substantial repairs required citing evidence of problems existing for over 15 years. Advice from builders was that a significant cost would be involved to make the structure safe before carrying out changes to the interior. The works planned for 2023 have been abandoned. FCC is determined that Freystrop will not lose a hall as a valued community asset and is working hard to provide the best solution.



*An example of the subsidence*





## **Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park**

### **Grounds Maintenance**

Meadow Garden were contracted to cut the grass on the pitch area of the field through the year. The regular mowings kept the area tidy and it was well used. As a gesture of goodwill they also did extra cuts in the children's play area.

Paths were regularly mown by a volunteer using the donated mower. We are very grateful for this assistance.

The picnic bench funded by the Outdoor Connections Fund was installed and was an immediate hit.

A second wooden park bench donated by a resident was installed with views southwards over the field.

New native fruit trees were planted in the wild area.

These and various tools, benches and bulbs were obtained via the Keep Wales Tidy Local Places for Nature Project.

Our monthly Working Parties made great progress tidying up and enhancing the whole field.

### **The Woodland Walk**

In July 23 - The entrance to the new walk through the trees in the North East corner of the field was created. This walk had been worked on for a while, the main work had been carried out earlier in the year by volunteers so it was great to be able to get it opened up.

In September 23 - The field had been visited by a Local Places for Nature Officer and the Regional National Forest Officer from Natural Resources Wales. They were able to make many suggestions and gave some really useful advice on how to manage the site including the management of the woodland.

The path through the trees was extended, thanks to various volunteers. Trees have been pruned and a number of willows removed to give the oaks more light.

Bluebell, snowdrops and wild garlic bulbs were planted in the Spring of 2024. Hopefully these will spread over the years.

Free Wildlife boxes have been received and will be put in place soon. There are 2 insect homes which we plan to place at the two new entrances to the woodland walk. Two hedgehog homes will also be put in place.

The paths have proved to be popular with regular use.

## Freystrop Village Hall Accounts

- Income & Expenditure 2023/24
  - Income of £6,173.47
  - Expenditure £6,007.21
- Bank Balances as at 31/03/2024
  - Current a/c £6,007.21
  - Deposit a/c £16,835.54 with interest for the year £181.67

## PLANS FOR 2024/2025

### Community Council

The precept for 2024/25 has been agreed at £9,000 – based on budget. See appendices.

The AGM will be held in June 2024.

The training programme for the Councillors and Clerk will be reviewed.

The pembstcc.co.uk website currently used by FCC, and other town and community councils, to post statutory documents will be discontinued by PCC on 31 March 2025. A new website solution has to be implemented before then.

### Village Hall

The completion of the car park at the Hall, to be carried out by BDS, is still awaited.

The AGM will be held in June 2024.

A long term solution to provide a safe Village Hall will continue to be a project. The favoured solution is to carry out the plan to build a new environmentally friendly hall at Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park. This has been a plan for over 20 years with the last community meeting agreeing to this being done in January 2017.

### Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park

The monthly Working Party Events will continue at the recreation park.

Funding will be sought to create multi-use paths around the acreage for exercise inclusive of those with mobility issues.

Pledges have been made by residents to fund seating and tables in resting areas of the recreation park and we will be seeking to secure money for further units.

We will look to progress the purchase and installation of new play/exercise equipment for children and exercise equipment for youths and adults.



## Appendix A

## CONTACT DETAILS OF CLERK AND COUNCILLORS

Details at 11 March 2023

Dawn S Harries	Maddox Moor	<a href="mailto:dawnsharries@gmail.com">dawnsharries@gmail.com</a>
M Ross Harries	Moorland Road	<a href="mailto:ross@mrhcs.co.uk">ross@mrhcs.co.uk</a>
Rebecca A Beeden*	St Clement's Park	<a href="mailto:beccasgemspyro@yahoo.co.uk">beccasgemspyro@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Anna M Simpson	Moorland Road	<a href="mailto:stackrocks24@gmail.com">stackrocks24@gmail.com</a>
W David Thomas	New Road	01437 890297 <a href="mailto:wd.thomas1@btinternet.com">wd.thomas1@btinternet.com</a>
Esme Utting	Freystrop Cross	<a href="mailto:gutting@pobroadband.co.uk">gutting@pobroadband.co.uk</a>

## Clerk

Russell D Lavis      Sivalrid      07812508202      [freystropcc@yahoo.com](mailto:freystropcc@yahoo.com)  
Moorland Road  
Freystrop  
SA62 4LE

## Pembrokeshire County Councillor – Llangwm Ward

Michael J John      Millbrook House,      01437 890175      [Michael.john2@btinternet.com](mailto:Michael.john2@btinternet.com)  
23 Main Street  
Llangwm  
SA62 4HP

\* Councillor R A Beeden resigned from Freystrop Community Council on 11 March 2024

## MEETING ATTENDANCE 2023/24

Meetings are held 10 times in the year. There are no meetings in August and December.

Freystrop Community Council Attendance 2023/24

Councillor	Meeting										Attendance	
	17/04/23	15/05/23	12/06/23	10/07/23	18/09/23	09/10/23	13/11/23	08/01/24	12/02/24	11/03/24		
Harries, D S	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Present	Absent	Present	6	60%
Harries, M R	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Absent	7	70%
Simpson, A M	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9	90%
Thomas, W D	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	7	70%
Utting, E	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	9	90%
R Beeden	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present	8	80%
Clerk	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	10	100%
County Councillor	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	10	100%
Members of the Public		1	1	1						3		

## Appendix B

### Freystrop Community Information and Interaction

The Community Council is interested to know what you want from your Council. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future projects please do get in touch or if there is an issue that needs attention, please let us know. You may contact the clerk, a Community Councillor or your County Councillor.

Freystrop Community Council posts statutory and other items of interest to the noticeboard outside Freystrop Village Hall. Some items may also be placed on the noticeboard inside the Hall.



Statutory documents only are posted to the [pembstcc](https://www.pembstcc.co.uk/home) website. Documents from other Community Councils may also be viewed there.

<https://www.pembstcc.co.uk/home>



The [Freystrop Community Council Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/FreystropCommunityCouncil) is accessible by all with internet access. A broad range of items from FCC and other organisations are posted.

<https://www.facebook.com/FreystropCommunityCouncil>



[Freystrop Village Hall](https://www.facebook.com/FreystropVillageHall) has its Facebook page posting items related to the Hall and its users, accessible by all with internet access.

<https://www.facebook.com/FreystropVillageHall>



The calendar of events for Freystrop Village Hall can be viewed here:

<https://bit.ly/FreystropVillageHallCalendar>



[Parc Hamdden Freystrop Recreation Park](https://www.facebook.com/FreystropPark/) imparts pictures of activities, events happening and recreation related posts to its own Facebook page, accessible by all with internet

access.

<https://www.facebook.com/FreystropPark/>

A private [Freystrop Community group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/freystrop/) can be found on Facebook. Access is restricted to Facebook users and membership has to be approved by admins.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/freystrop/>

#### Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) Matters

Please note that the following matters fall to PCC and, as such, the Community Council can lobby for action or change but it has no power to act directly, or to insist!

- Highways including road surfaces and potholes
- Street sweeping
- Refuse and Recycling
- Road Signs
- Verge grass cutting
- Council Housing
- Education
- Social Services
- Planning

The PCC switchboard number is 01437 764551. Emails should be directed to [enquiries@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@pembrokeshire.gov.uk). PCC have a MyAccount facility which can be set up and managed on their website at [www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk).

Appendix C

**CYNGOR CYMUNED FREYSTROP/FREYSTROP COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**2023/24**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD**  
**1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024**

	£	£	£
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>			
PCC	6,000.00		
Grants	1,500.00		
Interest	180.20		
Other	-		
		<b><u>7,680.20</u></b>	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>			
Clerk's Salary	3,526.40		
Bank Charges	63.60		
Elections	-		
Subscriptions	134.00		
Allowances	1,436.00		
Insurances	241.00		
Training	-		
Audits	461.00		
Newsletters	225.00		
Donations	300.00		
Miscellaneous payments	870.20		
Other Payments		<b><u>7,257.20</u></b>	
<b><u>SURPLUS for YEAR</u></b>			<b><u>423.00</u></b>

**BALANCE SHEET**

**Balances on Hand**     **31/03/23**

Current Account	3,542.64	
Deposit Account	10,321.48	
Petty Cash	-	
<b>Total Funds</b> <b>31/03/23</b>	13,864.12	
Excess of Expenditure over Income	423.00	
<b><u>TOTAL BALANCES</u></b> <b><u>31/03/24</u></b>		<b><u>14,287.12</u></b>

**Represented by:**

**Balances on Hand**     **31/03/24**

Current Account	3,785.44	
Deposit Account	10,501.68	
Petty Cash	-	
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<b><u>14,287.12</u></b>

**ASSETS (Less depreciation)**

As detailed on in the Asset Accounts

**218,198**

## Appendix D

### FREYSTROP VILLAGE HALL

#### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

##### **RECEIPTS**

Bookings	5,434.30
Grants	-
Interest	181.67
Receipts for Recreation Park Project	-
Other - Donations & Fundraising	208.50
Other - Marquee use	200.00
Other - contra FCC	149.00
	<u>6,173.47</u>

##### **PAYMENTS**

Welsh Water	262.00
Electricity	1,425.12
Subscriptions	30.00
Maintenance & Minor supplies	1,490.19
Insurance	506.70
New Equipment	-
Payments for Recreation Park	2,144.20
Other	-
Other - contra FCC	149.00
	<u>6,007.21</u>

**Surplus /(Deficit) for Year** **166.26**

##### **Balances on Hand 01/04/2023**

Current Account	4,235.03
Deposit Account	13,616.37
Petty Cash	7.76
Petty Cash Rec Park	107.00
Total Funds	<u>17,966.16</u>
Excess of Receipts over Payments	166.26
TOTAL	<u>18,132.42</u>

##### **Represented by:**

##### **Balances on Hand 31/03/2024**

Current Account	1,138.26
Deposit Account	16,835.54
Petty Cash	51.62
Petty Cash Rec Park	107.00
Total Funds	<u>18,132.42</u>

## Appendix E

### FREYSTROP COMMUNITY COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2024/2025

#### **Freystrop Community Council**

#### **Budget for 2024-2025**

##### **Item**

Clerk/RFO Salary Gross	3,160	Assumes 4% increase in April 2024
Councillors' Annual Allowances	1,236	£3/week, no increase for 2024/25 in IRPW draft report
Chairman's Allowance	1,000	Maximum allowable, allowance value to be voted on by Councillors
FCC Fiduciary Insurance	300	
Subscriptions	135	
Training Fees	150	
Donations	300	
External Audit Fees	300	Proposed £260 AW fee for basic audits
Internal Auditor's Honorarium	50	
Annual Community Newsletter	250	
Future Elections Build-up	500	
Bank Charges	80	
Community Maintenance	2,000	

##### **Total**

**9,461**

A precept of £9,000 was approved at the 8 January 2024 Meeting of Freystrop Community Council  
Minutes Item 14.v Proposed by Councillor D S Harries, Seconded by Councillor E Utting