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Issue No. 130
January 2016

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

IT took a member of the public to say it – but what Frodsham Town Council needs at the moment is a referee. Someone big enough to take control.

Local resident Mike Collins was speaking from the public gallery at December's remarkable council meeting.

In fact, the council had a strong leader until former chairman Mark Warren resigned in November. But he found the stress too much to bear after four and-a-half years. He said he was sorry he had been unable to protect council staff and other councillors from bullying, from both inside and outside the council.

Now the council needs another strong leader and, perhaps, contrary to Mr Collins' belief, there may be a couple of candidates. Certainly it is to be hoped so, because if there isn't there will be a real danger of more resignations.

One councillor told the meeting there was a danger of the council being made to look ridiculous. He was right – except for being too late. The council was already looking ridiculous.

But members of the public should not be too critical of councillors. It should be common knowledge, but

apparently it isn't, that town and parish councillors are not paid. They put themselves forward for public office because they want to do something for the community.

They are not, as one councillor was accused by a Frodsham resident, "lining their pockets."

Sometimes they get things wrong, but the person who never made a mistake never made anything.

By-elections apart, the public will not get an opportunity to elect another council for more than three years. There will be by-elections – two at least – but they are a costly and unsatisfactory way of changing the make-up of a council. Frodsham will have to make do with pretty much the council it has

got.

There is no reason why that should be a bad thing – if the one person apparently out-of-step with the others can learn to articulate differences of opinion without causing offence.

Another comment from the public gallery is worth repeating. Cheshire West and Chester councillor Lyn Riley was sitting in on the meeting and said: "You are looked upon as the democratic leaders of the town but you are doing too much navel gazing."

Deadline for the February issue of Frodsham Life is January 26

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All set for 'Wild West' Frodsham Panto

FRODSHAM Panto Group's annual extravaganza sees the traditional story of Snow White set in the unusual setting of the Wild West.

"Snow White and the Magnificent Seven Dwarfs" by Damian Trasler, David Lovesy and Steve Clark of TLC Creative, by arrangement with Lazy Bee Scripts, will be staged at Frodsham Community Centre from January 10-16.

The story starts when Billy, Nanny, Tornado and Sheriff Vince come 'a calling' to visit the birthday girl, Snow White.

It is clear that the Widow has her sights set on him and therefore she consults her pet Indian Medicine Man only to discover that she is no longer the fairest in the West. As a result, the bounty hunter, One-Eyed Slim, is charged with disposing of Snow White.

At the party everybody is having a great time, however, the guest of honour is nowhere to be found. The Widow suggests that Snow White has run off with the bounty hunter but nobody can believe this, so Tornado is despatched to go and find her. The bounty hunter captures Snow White and leaves her for dead since he can't bring himself to kill her.

Tornado then finds Snow White and takes her to an empty miners' camp. They are both exhausted, so they settle down for the night.

The miners return to the camp after a heavy day's mining, to

discover Snow White curled up asleep. They wake her and introduce themselves and Snow White explains her predicament. They agree that she can stay with them, but since they are not as reclusive as one would suspect, they decide to disguise her so regular visitors don't recognise her.

To find out what happens - check out the panto!



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Councillor suspended as Mayor leaves meeting in tears

OUTSPOKEN councillor Tom Reynolds has been suspended from membership of all committees of Frodsham Town Council following an emotionally-charged meeting during which Mayor Fran Sutton, who was acting chairman, left in tears and did not return.

Cllr Reynolds was accused of bullying council staff and fellow councillors, of making almost daily visits to the council offices to harass staff and of being a "cyber bully."

After months of rumour about a culture of bullying at the council, it was the first time councillors had publicly named Cllr Reynolds as the person alleged to be responsible.

Ironically, for the second month in succession, the cameras which record the meeting for webcasting, failed to function.

Last month, former chairman Mark Warren resigned from the council alleging a "systemic culture of bullying." This followed the resignation some two months earlier of town clerk Jon Wilde – believed to be for similar reasons.

Cllr Sutton, as Mayor, chaired the meeting, but made it clear she did not wish to become council chairman.

Referring to the resignation of the former chairman, she said she believed he had done his best to protect staff and fellow councillors from bullying by Cllr Reynolds. Numerous complaints had been made about the Castle Park ward councillor by other councillors and staff.

Bullying, she said, and particularly cyber bullying, spread like a cancer. It was unacceptable behaviour and had to stop.

The only sanction the council could take against Cllr Reynolds was to suspend him from all committees and

working groups. She proposed this course of action and it was seconded by Cllr Sarah Wakefield.

Later Cllr Sutton left the meeting in tears and Deputy Mayor Cllr Mike Pusey took over the chair.

Cllr Reynolds protested that he himself was a victim of bullying. He had been attacked at the very first meeting he attended after being elected in May, when it was suggested he was to blame for Frodsham Foundation failing in its bid for lottery funding for the Goods Shed project. This was later proved to be incorrect.

At the time he joined the council he believed it was being manipulated by a few councillors. He had helped prevent the council from making some "disastrous decisions" – not least the proposal to sell the Park Lane play area by auction. He had strong views and he had stood his ground. But he did not like Cllr Sutton being placed in such a difficult position, nor seeing her leave the meeting so upset.

Several councillors admitted having respect for Cllr Reynolds who often made useful contributions to council work. But there were complaints of abusive emails sent at midnight and in the early hours of the morning.

Cllr Caroline Ashton told Cllr Reynolds: "I don't think you know how to conduct yourself."

Cllr Alan Oulton said the ongoing situation was bringing the council

into disrepute. The chairman and the clerk had resigned and there was a danger other councillors would resign. Something would have to be done, or he could be one of them.

Cllr Frank Pennington, who was himself suspended by the council last year for an unrelated issue, warned against suspending Cllr Reynolds.

"You will make him famous overnight. You will make him a hero," he said.

Cllr Richard Knowles said there was a danger of the council looking completely ridiculous. Inappropriate behaviour had to stop. But he was

opposed to excluding Cllr Reynolds from committees permanently as this would mean his knowledge and experience would be lost.

But several members had used the word "resignation" and he did not want to see the council falling apart. It would be a waste of talent.

He proposed that Cllr Reynolds be suspended for one month, with the situation reviewed at the next meeting on January 11. This would allow a "cooling off" period.

The council voted by a majority for a one month suspension, with one vote against and two abstentions.



Mayor Cllr Fran Sutton.

Windfarm liaison panel 'an affront to democracy'

THE liaison panel that considers issues to do with the construction of the Frodsham Wind Farm looks set to be "an affront to democracy" according to CW&C councillors Andrew Dawson and Lyn Riley.

Small communities like Ince and Elton have been given representation on the panel equal to Frodsham – despite the fact that all the wind turbines will be in Frodsham and more than 46 per cent of the affected population live in Frodsham.

"Personally, we consider this to be outrageous and an affront to democracy," say the two councillors.

Peel Energy, who are building the wind farm, have already consulted the public on the £120,000-a-year community benefit fund arising from construction of the windfarm.

But few people got to hear about the consultation, according to the councillors.

Only 432 people responded from a population of nearly 20,000

"We feel strongly that we need a mechanism that allows for a local vote on how the funds are to be allocated each year," say the councillors.

"Whilst the rules for allocating the funds are yet to be devised things don't look good.

"We'd like to see all the communities come together to agree on projects that benefit all of us. Again though, the signs don't look good.

"Peel's community benefit fund

for the Ince incinerator scheme is being managed by the Ince and Elton Councillors - and they have chosen to bar Frodsham and Helsby from benefiting from those funds for at least the first two years.

"In our view Peel is failing to take account of the fact that Frodsham makes up 46 per cent of the affected population for the windfarm scheme.

"If they won't bring a sensible consultation to your door, we will."





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Frodsham slimmers get a weight off their chests!

MEMBERS of Frodsham Slimming World have lost more than a whopping 3 stone between them – in bras!

The slimmers are donating their bras to the charity Smalls for All which aims to provide underwear to many poor African communities. The lack of underwear can cause not only health and hygiene problems but underwear is seen as a status symbol and offers a degree of security. Women who can afford underwear tend to be seen as having someone who cares

for them – a husband, brother or father and are therefore not seen as vulnerable.

A total of 172 bras weighing 3 stone 4lbs have been donated by members of Slimming World in Frodsham – that's a fantastic 129 metres of support to young African women.

Slimming World member Jenny Harper, who organised the 'bra-

athon' said "It's a fantastic response from Frodsham slimmers, I'm totally overwhelmed and would like to say a great big thank you to all."

Consultant Julie McMorran, who runs four Slimming World groups in Frodsham, added "Our super-friendly slimming groups have been really keen to support this charity and their generosity is brilliant – they have done us proud."

Slimming World offer six groups each week in Frodsham. Julie runs groups on Mondays and Thursdays at 5:00 and 7:00pm at Frodsham

Community Centre in Fluin Lane. Fellow consultant Tracey Iwaniuk runs two groups on Mondays at 9:30 and 11:30am at Frodsham Youth Association, also in Fluin Lane.

For more information about Slimming World visit www.slimmingworld.co.uk or contact Julie on 07977 214153 or Tracey on 0703 805010.

Further information about Smalls for All can be found at www.smallsforall.org

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Slimming World Consultant Julie McMorran (left) and Slimming World member Jenny Harper (right) with just some of the bras donated.



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Emily, 10, wins MP's Christmas card contest

A 10-YEAR-OLD pupil at Frodsham CE Primary School won the annual competition to design a Christmas card for Weaver Vale MP Graham Evans.

Mr Evans visited the school to give a delighted Emily the news that she had won the contest.

Her picture, which shows the Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge in winter, was used on the front of the MP's Christmas card, sent to

thousands of homes across Weaver Vale.

Emily said: "I was surprised to win, as I don't usually win anything. I decided to do a winter scene as well as the swing bridge for my picture, as something different. My

Mum and Dad will be happy for me."

Hundreds of children from across Weaver Vale took part in the contest.

Mr Evans said: "The standard of the entries was incredibly high and

very, very Christmassy! I'd like to thank all those who took part and all the teachers who sent in the works of art. They were all fabulous, it was a very tough decision to make and shows just how artistic our local school children are!"

'Little Gem' award presented

FRODSHAM Mayor Cllr Fran Sutton was joined by Junior Mayors Lily Brook and Josh Chow to present the "Little Gem" certificate awarded to the Cottage Tea Shop as part of this year's Cheshire Community Pride competition.

The award was one of five picked up by Frodsham in the competition. The Cottage Tea Shop does fund raising for the Royal British Legion and when the Mayor and Junior Mayors visited the shop – and the staff – were all dressed up in 1940s style.



Spanish music through the ages

SPEAKER at the monthly meeting of Frodsham Recorded Music Society was a long-standing friend of the group, Graham Hill, from London, who has extensive experience of music recording and the technical world of sound reproduction.

His subject was "The Spaniards" and he outlined the evolution of Spanish music from the time of Moorish occupation in AD 954 to the 20th Century.

Through thorough research, he was able to present recordings of music which had been heard in many of those eras, always seeking to show the characteristic elements present.

This took the group into at times quite unfamiliar territory, with composers from Moorish, Sephardic, Gypsy and Spanish Christian origins. The evening gave an opportunity to hear many delightful excerpts of the unfamiliar but also some surprisingly familiar music.

Eric Jennings thanked Graham on behalf of the group, expressing the hope that despite his long journey, he would consider returning in the future.

School street dancing contest

A SCHOOL street dancing competition held at Helsby High School drew entrants from Frodsham, Helsby and a number of other villages.

Winners on the night were the Key Stage Two team from Frodsham Manor House School.



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Frodsham Mayor to have ceremonial robes?

FRODSHAM'S Mayor could soon be wearing ceremonial robes when on official duty.

The Town Council is to investigate the cost of providing robes – and also the availability of “second hand” robes which may already exist in the Cheshire West and Chester area.

One possibility is that the council could acquire the robes worn by Mayors of the former Vale Royal Borough which are said to be “sitting in a cupboard, gathering

dust.”

But Cllr Mallie Poulton said he was opposed to the idea.

He said: “It’s bad enough being the charity shop capital of the North West without also being known for having a Mayor who wears second-hand robes.”

The monthly meeting of the council was told that Frodsham was the only Mayoralty in Cheshire

West that did not have Mayoral robes.

Cllr Poulton said he wore his Frodsham Town Council badge with pride. He believed Mayoral robes would help promote the town.

They would be particularly appropriate at the proposed Mayor’s Parade planned for later this year.

Several members expressed concern at the likely cost – and Cllr Poulton suggested it could be

anything from £1,500 to £15,000.

Ex-Mayor Cllr Andrew Dawson – one of Frodsham’s representatives on Cheshire West and Chester Council – suggested money could be raised by asking all former Mayors to contribute £100 each.

Local schools could be asked to make Mayoral badges – at no cost to the public purse.

It was agreed to investigate the likely cost of acquiring Mayoral robes.

New Year won't bring much good news, warn councillors

FRODSHAM councillors Andrew Dawson and Lyn Riley are urging local people to take part in Cheshire West and Chester Council’s “Let’s Talk” public consultation exercise before it ends on January 6.

There is, the councillors say, plenty to talk about but not much good news for the New Year.

CW&C wants views on the future of local services as it budgets for the next four years and significant changes for Frodsham are being predicted by the two councillors.

The introduction of parking charges and the future of Frodsham’s tip are both under discussion.

Cuts to grants that have been passed directly from Government to Frodsham will reduce the Town Council’s spending power by £27,000.

The special expenses regime for council’s that run their own Christmas lights and pay for their own PCSO is under threat.

Councillor grants, which Cllr Dawson and Cllr Riley have in the past made to many community groups and projects, are also to be cut.

New planning fees are being considered that would double the premium for new building and development in Frodsham but won’t apply in Ellesmere Port, Northwich or Winsford.

All in all, it is looking as if Council Tax will rise but services will be reduced.

The Let’s Talk consultation ends on January 6 and residents can take part online at www.cheshirewestandchester.go.uk or get a copy from Frodsham Library.



Pupils entertain with ‘shine Star Shine’

PUPILS from Kingsley Primary School’s nursery and reception classes presented a nativity play, “Shine Star Shine” which delighted an audience of friends of the school and parents.



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Conference highlights problem of mutilation

ABOUT 120 lawyers from across the North West attended a conference which highlighted the problem of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and offered ongoing legal training.

The Cheshire and Merseyside Family Law conference, organised by Ruth Hetherington (pictured), partner within the family department at FDR Law, Frodsham was held at the Best Western Fir Grove Hotel, Grappenhall.

One of the speakers was by Dorcas Akeju, chairman of the Liverpool FGM Group and the FGM/Multi-Cultural Women's Advisory Group lead.

She was the midwife lead for FGM at the Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust, where she offered support and counselling for women who have been circumcised (FGM) and continues to campaign against the practice.

Ruth Hetherington said the event offered ongoing legal training in the light of the recent introduction of the new legislation.

Doctors, nurses, midwives and teachers are now legally required to report cases of FGM to the police.

"Dorcas was able to share her wealth of experience in this field and talk to delegates to raise awareness generally within the legal and social work arena,"

Dorcas Akeju said: "FGM is a serious and sensitive subject of which we need to raise awareness amongst both the legal and healthcare communities. It is vital that we are able to identify cases quickly and effectively and work together with communities to bring about swift and appropriate action."

The event was sponsored by Cheshire and Merseyside Family Justice Forum.



Pupils enjoy German exchange trip

A GROUP of 20 Year Nine and Year Ten pupils from Helsby High School enjoyed the first leg of an exchange trip with pupils from Hilden, in North West Germany.

They spent some time at school and went on trips to Dusseldorf and Cologne, went ice skating and on a tour of Hilden itself, generally having plenty of fun with their hosts, their families and their friends.

Highlights included a trip to the top of a 168m high TV tower, watching people celebrate Karneval in Dusseldorf and the ice skating.

The German youngsters will be coming to Helsby in February and good friendships will be renewed.

Two teachers accompanied the Helsby party.



Art students visit Tuscany

ART students from Helsby High School are back home enthusing about a visit to Tuscany... "one of the best experiences of our lives."

The trip gave them the opportunity to view artwork in the environment in which it was produced as well as developing a wide range of skills inspired by the Tuscan landscape

They visited Siena and Florence, went on the Piero Della Francesca trail and visited Monterchi Arrezzo and San Sepulcro.

The trip also enabled them to meet students from others schools sharing similar interests, learn from each other and broaden their skills as artists.



Apprenticeship award for local company

HELSEBY-based Heat Trace Ltd was highly commended at the North West final of the National Apprenticeship Awards.

The company came runners-up in the region for the Medium sized Employer of the Year award.

Excellence

Now in their 12th year, the awards are run by the National Apprenticeship Service and recognise excellence in two areas: businesses that grow their own talent with apprentices and apprentices who have made a significant contribution to their workplaces.

Managing director Dan Berrisford said: "The National Apprenticeship Service are the experts at knowing what makes a good apprenticeship scheme so, this is a major accolade for Heat Trace and reflects our commitment to developing young professionals within our organisation."

Commitment

"I would like to especially thank Nicola Scappaticci-Fletcher, our HR Manager, for all her hard work and the apprentices for their commitment and enthusiasm."



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Manor House pupils remember the fallen

FRODSHAM Manor House Primary School have gone on their first residential trip abroad - taking 53 children from Years 5 and 6 on a four day visit to France and Belgium.

This included a day of Remembrance visiting the trenches and dug outs at Passchaendale Museum, followed by a time of reflection at Tyne Cot Commonwealth and Langemark German cemeteries, then the laying of a wreath at the Menin Gate in Ypres.

They also experienced a French cultural day which included a tour of a chocolate factory, meeting and eating snails at a farm, town trail and shopping in Bolougne sur la Mer and making crepes.

The school values the importance

of residential experiences and will be continuing with visits to Llandudno in Year 2, Outward Bound activities in Anglesey for Year 5 and the London residential to complete Year 6.

Head teacher Ian Devereux-Roberts said: "We are looking forward to repeating our visit to France and Belgium in 2016 and in the meantime are busy preparing for our French Café evening for parents where pupils will show a film and share memories of their visit."

"As always we are exceptionally

proud of the behaviour and positive attitudes of all the children, especially those who were anxious about leaving the UK for the first time."

The visit was organised by Year 5 teacher Rebecca Smith who is also the French and History Co-ordinator.

The school presented her with a large pottery snail to remind her of the snail tasting extravaganza and to thank her for all the work such a visit entailed.



A magical Christmas jigsaw

THE annual Key Stage One Nativity Play at Frodsham Manor House Primary School told the story of a magical Christmas Jigsaw.

Piece by piece, the musical play re-told the story of the nativity to a modern family as they built a jigsaw on Christmas Eve.

All the children in Reception, Year One and Year Two took part, joined by the Playden pre-school and assisted by the Year Six singing leaders.

Our pictures show pupils playing the roles of sheep and Romans.



Don't have a will? Your family could live to regret It

By Nikki Barnes from Rowlinsons Solicitors

Over two-thirds of the UK population don't have a will, yet this important document could save your family considerable heartache in the event of your death. There are many reasons why people choose to put off making these arrangements but the reasons for making a Will make compelling reading.

Protect Your Business - If you own a business it is essential to consider practically how the business would be affected by your death. Could it continue to operate without you? Could it be sold so that your family benefit from the sale proceeds? If so, who will run the business in the time between your death and its sale? Business people should give consideration to including powers in their will for their Executors to run their business. Alternatively you can appoint separate Executors specifically to deal with your business whilst your personal executors deal

with the rest of your estate.

Make Sure Your Own Children Don't Lose Out - Family life can be complicated, and we often see people who are married or in a relationship but have children from a previous relationship. Often they want to provide for their new partner, but are concerned that their children could lose out as a result. Careful Will planning can deal with this scenario and protect all parties involved.

Finding a Home for Your Pet - Many people worry about what would happen to their pets if they die. You can indicate in your Will who

you would prefer to look after your pets for you, and you can even leave a gift of a sum of money to cover the costs of their care. If you have nobody you would wish to look after your pet, several animal charities run specialist schemes designed to solve this problem.

These are just a few of the many reasons to make a Will. Download our booklet '27 Reasons to Make a Will' at www.rowlinsonssolicitors.co.uk to find out more.

At Rowlinsons Solicitors you can be sure of a quality service accredited by the Law Society's prestigious Wills and Inheritance Quality Scheme (WIQS) which recognises high quality in Will writing, probate and estate administration services. We are one of the few legal practices in the local area that has this prestigious accreditation. As

members of WIQS, we must adhere to strict guidelines and recommended best practice at all key stages of the Wills and probate process ensuring you receive an exceptional service.

Contact Nikki Barnes on 01928 736637 or Hannah Butterworth on 01928 736719 to make an appointment for a FREE 30 Minute Consultation where we'll advise you on the benefits and costs of making a Will.



Nikki Barnes

Jobs for today

1. Wash the car ✓
2. Go to the bank ✓
3. Jane's birthday ✓
4. Food shopping ✓
5. Make a Will ✓

Making a Will should be top of your list

Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today

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For a limited time only we are offering **10% off our standard Will charges**. To take advantage of this offer, cut out this advert and bring it with you to our office or contact **Nikki Barnes** on **01928 736637** or **Hannah Butterworth** on **01928 736719**. Offer valid until 31.01.15

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