

News from The Parish Council – January 2024

In recognition of their many years of service to our community, the first ever awards of “Freedom of The Parish of Acol” were presented to former Councillors Jon Inchley, Iris Osborne, Sheila Bransfield and Dave Hayfield at a reception attended by Sir Roger Gale, MP. Their names will be the first featured on a new Roll of Honour to be displayed in the Village Hall.



Freedom of the Parish is the highest honour that a parish council can bestow. In the past, Freedom of a Parish would have given recipients the right to graze sheep or cattle on common land and “to walk troops through the parish with drums beating and colours flying”. Although it now carries no such powers, rights, or privileges, those who receive the honour can use the title of Freeman or Freewoman. From 2024 the Parish Council intends to annually invite the nomination of any villager who has rendered exceptional service to the community to be honoured with Freedom of the Parish and will establish an Awards Committee to consider nominations.

The main agenda item at the Parish Council meeting held on 21st December was agreeing the budget for the next budgetary year, commencing April 2024. In view of the harsh economic circumstances and the expectation that our County Council and other precepts are bound to increase markedly, Members agreed to cap its budget to avoid increasing its own precept, which will require some spending from reserves, or raising finance from other sources. This should enable us to maintain a full programme of work in the coming year, although we noted that this must be a strictly one-off measure, we should pursue any opportunity for savings or achieving grant funding. Draft minutes of the meeting, and the budget, will be posted to www.acolparishcouncil.org.uk/ early in the new year.

Please note that you can subscribe to email alerts from the News section of the website. It is planned that you will be able to subscribe to other topics, such as (Highways) road closures, soon.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Prosperous 2024, from Chenice, Gavin, Sarah, Wendy, and me.

Richard Steel (Chair)