

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 17TH FEBRUARY 2020, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT: Chairman: Peter Newell
Vice-Chairman: Robert Crocker
Councillors: Bill Phillips, Mary Ann Canning, Tim Webster, Peter Foster, Matthew Ruddle
District Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 9.30pm)
County Councillor: Liam Walker (from 9.05pm till 9.30pm)
Clerk: Lisa Smith

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No member of the public was present for this session.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Vero McCoy – away, Marilyn Davies, - book writing.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT:

3.1 TO RECEIVE ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no amendments to the Register of Members' Interests.

3.2 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COUNCILLORS FOR MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING

Mary Ann Canning (personal) as a member of Freeland Charitable Foundation.

Robert Crocker (personal) as a member of Freeland Charitable Foundation (FCF) and as having a local business.

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

Matthew Ruddle (personal) as caretaker of the Little Free Library and as a member of 1st Hanborough/Freeland Scouts Committee.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 20th January 2020

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 20th January were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Mobile coverage in Freeland – to receive an update on progress to improve mobile signal

Peter F gave a brief report. The new site in Freeland that was currently being explored was awaiting confirmation of whether it was a viable option. Peter had also been in contact with BT (who also owned EE) regarding the poor mobile coverage in the village. After initially stating it was fine and following further complaints, they had agreed to investigate further and survey the village properly. A meeting had also been held with the Programme Director of OCC who was responsible for the provision of digital high-speed broadband across the county. An agreement was due to be signed to ensure coverage was provided to all areas. 5G was included within this agreement so this should help to improve the mobile signal.

Peter would keep the Council updated on any further developments.

6.2 Freeland Methodist Church: To receive an update on future of Methodist Church

There was nothing further to report on the sale of the church. It was suggested writing a letter to Rev. Rose Westwood to seek reassurance that the Methodist Church building was being properly maintained whilst it was closed as a valuable listed building to ensure it was not going to be left to fall into disrepair. Council agreed to this suggestion and the Clerk would write as above.

Action: Clerk to write letter as above.

6.3 Little Free Library – to update on progress in repairing current library and on transforming phone box into a new library

Matthew had met with three volunteers who were willing to assist in helping to run the new little Free Library by the Village Hall. The invoice for the vinyl signs had been received and was listed on the invoices to be paid this month. Matthew had arranged an official opening of the new library with the Teddy Girls (so they could be officially thanked for raising the funds) for Saturday 7th March at 3.00pm. One query raised by the volunteer helpers was having some sort of storage bench to put the books in and where people could drop books off. It was agreed that ideally a wooden bench box would be best, and Matthew agreed to investigate options and report back next month.

Action: Matthew to investigate options for a wooden storage bench as above.

6.4 Parish Councillor Profiles – to update on progress

Robert's profile had been done and was due to appear in the March Grapevine and so that just left Tim's which would appear in the April edition. Tim would get this done and emailed to Matthew so that it could be published.

Action: Tim to write profile and email it to Matthew.

6.5 The Big Lunch – to update on progress

The Hall had been booked for Sunday 14th June and helpers would be required to set up the Hall.

6.6 Annual Parish Meeting – to finalise topics for meeting and to organise refreshments, plus to approve the printing in colour of APM flyers via local printing firm (approx.cost £135)

The Hall had been booked for **Friday 17th April** and the meeting would start at 7.30pm, Councillors were asked to be there for 6.45pm to help set up.

Topics currently put forward were as follows:

- **The environment** – Eynsham Green Tea Group have confirmed they will attend to speak about climate change, and encouraging people to live a more sustainable lifestyle;
- **Planting additional trees in Freeland** – encouraging residents to plant more trees (the appropriate species and in the appropriate location);
- **WODC Plans for Environment** – to discuss what the WODC are doing to reduce their carbon footprint and to discuss the District's environment strategy – Merilyn and Alaa to include this in their talks;
- **Blenheim – plans for monitoring systems for environment pollution** –Dominic Hare, Chief Executive has confirmed his attendance.
- To consider **declaring a climate emergency** in Freeland following the APM;
- **New play equipment** – to ask for residents' suggestions/ideas for new item of play equipment to replace Multiplay with tyres.

It was also agreed to invite a member of the Hanborough Environment Group to the meeting to talk about what they are doing at a local level to help with the environment. The Clerk would extend an invitation to them. Council also agreed to write to Savills regarding whether trees could be planted on the field on the corner of Pigeon House Lane.

Council also **resolved** to approve the printing costs for the flyers which would cost in the region of £135.

Action: Clerk to invite representative from Hanborough Environment Group as above and write to Savills (Sarah Fenton), and to arrange APM flyers.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received: None.

One application had been received since the meeting papers were sent around:

20/00333/FUL

OVERSTONE, THE GREEN, FREELAND.

Conversion of existing detached outbuilding (currently used as an art studio) to create self-contained living accommodation for Mr Andrew Bain.

After viewing the above planning application, Council agreed that they had no comments or objections that they wished to make about any of the proposed changes to the property.

7.2 Applications Approved:

19/03499/HHD

10 CHURCH VIEW, FREELAND.

Single storey rear, side, & front extensions for Mr P Panting.

Erection of garden room (Retrospective) for Mr & Mrs Rogers.

19/03491/S73

LAND ADJOINING 1 PARKLANDS, FREELAND.

Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 18/03385/FUL to allow the construction of external chimney stack to both properties for Mr Paul Cox.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn:

19/03528/HHD

69 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Raise wall height and increase roof pitch (including insertion of front and rear dormer windows) to provide first floor habitable space and replace existing pitched roof over single storey rear extension with a new flat roof and roof lantern, formation of verandah and installation of stove flue. Construction of single storey front extension for Mr Simon Horner.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

19/03094/HHD

GLEBE FARM, THE GREEN, FREELAND.

First floor extension for Mr R Crocker.

19/03419/HHD

176 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of single storey side extension for Mr James Eaton.

19/03370/FUL

FREELAND HOUSE, WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Construction of three timber cabins for use as staff accommodation for Mr Mahesh Patel.

7.6 Receipt of S106 Funds - To update on S106 funds associated with the Mears development

The Clerk had received confirmation from WODC regarding the S106 funds associated with the Mears development and the final amounts were as follows:

Play Facilities contribution: final amount **£39,273** (index linked from £33,538, increase of £5,735)

Public Art contribution: final amount **£5,164** (index linked from £4,410, increase of £754).

Both of these amounts had been received by WODC and the Parish Council had to provide WODC with a quote to show what the money will be spent on (there was no requirement to spend it before receiving the money).

Council now needed to decide how to spend the funds. The picnic table and new safety surfacing/ play equipment could be funded using the Play Facilities contribution.

The new storage shed, and the car park tarmacking would be paid for using the Sports/Recreation contribution that had already been received (**£52,236**).

7.7 Review of Permitted Development Regulations – to note any update from Robert Courts MP regarding request for review of Regulations

The Clerk had chased up a response with Robert Courts MP and a response had been received. Robert Courts had sent in a letter received from Luke Hall MP, who had advised that the Government would be publishing a Planning White Paper in the coming months which would make the planning process clearer, more accessible and more certain for all users. It was hoped that Freeland Parish Council would be able to contribute to the White Paper when it was published, and so it was agreed to write back to Luke Hall MP to ask for the Parish Council to be notified when the White Paper was due to be published. It was also reported that WODC had looked at the role of the Planning Department and the Regulations surrounding Planning and had written to the Government to request tighter regulations/measures are put in place to make the approval of applications easier and enforcement of those that breach the rules.

Action: Clerk to write back to Luke Hall MP as above.

7.8 Cotswold Garden Village Framework response – to receive any update/discuss any actions arising from informal meeting

An informal meeting was held on 13th February with the Project Team from Grosvenor and Four Communications and members of the Parish Council. A brief update was given about this meeting.

Following submission of the Parish Council's response to the Garden Village Masterplan Framework, there were 5 key points that needed to be addressed which were:

- landscaping and screening of the site (including the provision of more woodland,);
- retaining the rural character of Cuckoo Lane and provision of a green corridor;
- traffic deterrent measures, including a change in priority at the turning on Cuckoo Lane near Bowles Farm and a possible 20mph speed limit introduction for Wroslyn Road;
- provision of surfaced cycleways to link Garden Village to Hanborough and Freeland;
- the positioning of buildings on highly conspicuous high ground near Cuckoo Lane.

All of the above items were discussed, and the Council pushed hard to request more wooded areas be added into the Plan. Grosvenor were proposing a new area of green infrastructure (on average over 200m wide) to form a buffer between the development and the landscape to the north. A new area of woodland to the east of Cuckoo Lane was also proposed.

However, concerns were raised that more woodland was required to envelope the site in addition to the current existing trees that were to be retained. Grosvenor stated that predominantly the area was farmland rather than woodland, and they wished to continue this theme as some fields around the site contained nationally recognised species of uniquely available arable plants. It was their intention therefore to retain as much of the grasslands as grasslands as possible, and not to include more woodland. They also mentioned that woodland would not be appropriate around some of the site boundaries due to the drainage strategy that had been designed. Council still felt that more woodland was required but this was strongly resisted by Grosvenor.

The approach from the north along Cuckoo Lane was to have a green corridor retained to provide an area of open green space to create a rural approach to the Garden Village. This would include a new area of woodland, allotments, and playing fields and the site would be set back from Cuckoo Lane with the provision of a green corridor either side of the lane.

Again, Council felt more could be done to screen the development from the road in terms of hedging and tree planting and having some kind of green shelter belt all around the development, but Grosvenor did not seem keen to screen the site completely and wished to just soften the edges to integrate it into the landscape.

Grosvenor had earmarked the higher ground for education facilities and the main village centre to optimise public views from the site outwards.

Grosvenor confirmed they were committed to providing some sort of designated cycle route along Lower Road to link Church Hanborough and the railway station at Long Hanborough through to the Garden Village and the new Park and Ride. An existing bridleway had been identified that runs from Freeland directly to the north west corner of the Garden Village which could link into the proposed cycle and pedestrian routes proposed for the village, but Grosvenor did not own this land so their engineers were currently investigating what could be done. One of the key challenges with this was to find some sort of surfacing that would suit both cycles and horses which was proving rather difficult. Council were also advised that OCC's long-term strategy was to close the existing access to Cuckoo Lane by the A40 and have a new access by the new Park and Ride instead, which would be via a roundabout off the A40 and would be for school and resident access only. It was also noted that instead of providing a footbridge across the A40 to Eynsham, OCC were now considering an underpass which was met with disapproval from Councillors.

Various ways to provide traffic deterrent measures, village threshold features and a possible introduction of a 20mph speed limit at either end of Wroslyn Road were also being investigated. However, one of the key challenges in amending the priority for Cuckoo Lane/Wroslyn Road junction is that it was difficult to achieve adequate forward visibility. However, it was felt that something could be done to detract usage of Wroslyn Road by changing the signage and providing a gateway to

Freeland, which could include a 20mph speed limit subject to OCC and police approval (as well as local residents wanting this).

Grosvenor were continuing to work with OCC to come up with an agreeable solution.

Councillors also pointed out strongly the need to retain Freeland's dark skies and to ensure the Garden Village did not have street lighting, or to have very low-level lighting. This was strongly resisted by Grosvenor as they felt that residents would not feel safe with no lighting. However, this was strongly argued against, as it was felt that existing Freeland residents felt very safe walking around with a torch in the dark, and that the local police had confirmed many times that one of the reasons crime rates were lower in Freeland was partly due to the lack of street lighting.

The next key steps were to submit an Outline Planning Application (OPA) in Spring 2020 and hold an OPA public exhibition in Spring 2020. In Autumn 2020 the Area Action Plan was to be examined in public and hopefully adopted, with a decision on the OPA also expected in Autumn 2020.

Things were changing all the time and Grosvenor advised that they would keep the Parish Council informed of next steps and further developments as and when they happened.

7.9 Planting trees in the village – to consider asking Pye Homes/Blenheim to extend the woodland behind Wroslyn Road or plant trees elsewhere in village

A suggestion had been made by a resident about asking Pye's/Blenheim to extend the woodland behind the back of Wroslyn Road to offset the concrete they were using to build the housing development on the Witney Road. Manufacturing of concrete was a major generator of carbon dioxide and so the idea was that Freeland would gain a new woodland for residents to enjoy, and Pye's/Blenheim could promote their new innovation towards carbon neutrality and use this in advertising their new homes. It was also noted that Blenheim had a carbon positive strategy so this would fit well within that. The woodland area was part of a mitigation plan last year by Pye Homes for a development in Eynsham (which had the appeal dismissed), so it was felt to be worth mentioning this in the correspondence. Council agreed to write to Dominic Hare, Chief Executive of Blenheim and copied to Graham Flint of Pye Homes.

Action: Clerk to write to Blenheim/Pye Homes as above.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

Alaa gave a brief update about the Precept and how it had been calculated. He had spoken to the Accounts Department at WODC and last year as a village Freeland had been undercharged, as the tax base had been spread across a larger number of houses that ended up not being built or occupied in that year (the 41-house development was expected to be completed and occupied but this had not happened).

This coming year, this had been amended and would be reflected in the precept for Freeland for 2020/21 with the tax base being decreased by 7.23%. This meant that although the Parish Council had only increased the precept by 2.47% for 2020/21, it was likely to show on the Council Tax bills as a much higher increase due to the reduction in the tax base.

Alaa advised that he was happy to place a note in the Grapevine to explain this, but he needed the Precept figures from the last 3-4 years. The Clerk would email these across to him. Alaa was also continuing to work on various environmental issues.

Councillors offered their congratulations to Liam on his appointment to Cabinet Member for Highways Delivery and Operations. Liam's report included details of the OCC budget which had recently been passed and was the first budget in 9 years to have no cuts to services. Two key parts to the budget to note were an extra £30m had been allocated for adult social care, and an extra £30m allocated to Highways. The Councillor Priority Fund was also due to continue.

A new programme was being introduced to have "Super Users" on Fix My Street, who would be specially trained members who could report potholes and highlight them for repair.

The dualling of the A40 was now within Liam's remit as Cabinet Member and he was relooking at whether the currently proposed positions of the dualling and bus lanes were the best options.

The various queries under Highways reports were discussed with Liam and he would look into them and report back.

Alaa and Liam were thanked for attending the meeting and both left at 9.30pm.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 31st January 2020 and the receipts and payments received or paid out in the last month. The bank statement was checked as agreeing with the figures on the finance sheet and was signed by Bill.

9.2 To approve renewal of Community First Oxfordshire annual subscription

After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to approve the renewal of the annual subscription to Community First Oxfordshire.

9.3 Approval of invoices for payment

The Council approved invoices for payment as listed on the invoices for payment sheet distributed with the meeting papers.

Council therefore **resolved** to approve all of the following invoices for payment:

Cheque Number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)		
102604	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 17.02.20	12.50		
102605	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary Feb 2020	902.57		
102606	G Hill & Sons Ltd	Tarmacking of rear VH car park	13,646.40		
102607	Oxford Sign & Print	Vinyl signs for Little Free Library (phone box)	100.00		
102608	Starboard Systems Ltd	Accounts software annual licence renewal	416.40		
102609	Pete Bunting	Installation of paving at GOR entrance	695.00		
102610	Community First Oxfordshire	Annual subscription renewal	70.00	Subject to approval	
		Total:	15,842.87		
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £67.64 (employee & employer contributions). £38.65 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for February salary payment.				

9.4 Any other financial business – The Clerk reported that she was having some issues with her laptop which meant she often couldn't either send or receive emails. It was likely the PC would need everything taken off and reinstalling from scratch. Council agreed to her getting a quote to get this work carried out.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

10.1 Play areas/Playing Field – to receive any reports:

The Chairman had the pink book and there were no problems to report. The book would be passed to Mary Ann.

10.1.1 Play area reports – to update on trampoline tile gluing

With the ongoing wet weather, the trampoline tile had still not been glued. Mary Ann had the trampoline tile glue and would get this done shortly.

Action: Mary Ann to glue tile. Robert to provide temporary fencing around trampoline if needed.

10.1.2 New storage building on field – to update on progress in obtaining quotes and to update on planning application submission

Mary Ann was finalising the planning application which would be submitted to WODC Planners shortly. Three quotes were being obtained and it was hoped to have these ready for discussion next month. One quote received so far had quoted for the base for the shed separately and it was felt this was rather expensive, so Councillors thought it best if the base was carried out in house.

Action: Mary Ann to submit planning application, Tim/Mary Ann to collect quotes.

10.1.3 Picnic bench on field – to receive an update from Picnic Bench Working Group re location for installation of a new picnic bench on the playing field and obtaining quotes for additional safety surfacing

Mary Ann was still chasing up a third quote which she hoped to receive soon. It was agreed to go for recycled plastic rather than wooden benches as these were more environmentally friendly and would last longer than wood.

Action: Mary Ann to try and obtain a third quote.

10.1.4 Tractor – to update on getting a winter service carried out

Robert had not had chance to contact the company regarding the quote but would do so this month.

Action: Robert to liaise with supplier to see if price for winter service can be reduced.

10.1.5 Replacement of Hornbeam trees on the playing field – to update on replacement of the dead Hornbeam trees on the playing field

Robert agreed to take a look and would probably replace all three trees which were looking pretty dead.

Action: Robert to replace Hornbeam trees on field.

10.1.6 Replacement of the Fenland Leisure Products Climbing Frame – to receive an update from Picnic Bench Working Group regarding suitable alternatives for this equipment

It was agreed to ask the residents at the APM for suggestions/ideas for replacing this equipment.

Action: Clerk to add to APM agenda.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports

10.2.1 Highways reports – to receive any reports:

North Leigh/Barnard Gate signpost leaning

Concerns had been raised that the post for the above sign is leaning – the Clerk had reported this to Highways.

Dug out verge on Eynsham Road very deep

Highways had dug out various points along the grass verge on Eynsham Road as you exit the village towards the A40. However, a resident had raised concerns that the dug outs are extremely deep and dangerous to a pedestrian or a cyclist who may stop and not realise the depth of the holes within the verge. They were also concerned that once the grass starts to grow on the verge these holes will become more concealed making them more dangerous. The Clerk had emailed around some photographs before the PC meeting and these concerns were passed onto Liam Walker. However, he advised this was standard practice with verges to relieve flooding and therefore no further action was deemed necessary.

30mph repeater signs worn and need repainting

Two 30mph repeater signs near Heritage Cottage had not been repainted so the Clerk had requested these to be done via Highways.

Parking problems in Hurst Lane

A resident has raised concerns about parking problems in Hurst Lane. As this was a civil matter the Clerk had referred them to the local PCSO for assistance.

Tree down in Pigeon House Lane

The fallen tree in Pigeon House Lane had been removed and Councillors passed on their thanks to Robert for getting this done.

10.2.2 Parking near the Church – to discuss any response from Witney Town Charity re suggestion of leasing their field as a temporary car park

There was nothing further to report. The Clerk had tried phoning but still had received no response. She was chasing up a response to get an update but was not having much success. The Clerk would keep trying.

Action: Clerk to chase up a response.

10.3 Footpath & Bridleway matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports plus:

The rota was complete for this year – Robert would pass the book to the Clerk to retain until the Spring.

Action: Robert to pass footpath book to the Clerk.

10.3.1 Cherry tree branch overhanging footpath

The cherry tree branch that had been reported last month by a resident had been removed. Thanks were passed to Tim for getting this done.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports

No reports had been received.

10.4.1 To receive an update on the construction of the base for the timber storage cupboard and outstanding archway work

Mary Ann had chased up the sawmill again and met with someone re the outstanding archway work and a quote was awaited. In the meantime, Tim had placed some slate chippings underneath the archway which looked much better. Tim, Mary Ann and Nigel Green had tidied up the garden before the second interment of ashes took place on 14th February.

The new base for the litter bin and storage cupboard had been completed and the litter bin, dog waste bin and new plastic storage cupboard had all been installed. Tim confirmed that he would be replacing some of the box hedging shortly. Council passed on their thanks to Tim and Mary Ann for tidying up the GOR before the interment took place. It was noted the dog waste bin needed moving back further towards the wall, so it was away from the entranceway, Robert agreed to get it moved.

Action: Mary Ann to continue chasing up sawmill re archway, Tim to replace box hedging, Robert to move dog bin.

10.4.2 To review the GOR rules and consider some slight alterations to wording with regards to plot sizes/locations

Following the second interment of ashes at the Garden of Remembrance and upon meeting with the relatives it had become apparent that it may be necessary to amend the wording of the GOR rules in relation to sizes of stone tablets and options to choose plots. The GOR Working Group would arrange to meet and review the rules and report back to the Council.

Action: GOR Working Group to arrange meeting re reviewing rules, Clerk to attend.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

There was nothing much to report. The AGM had been held and nothing had changed with regards to Committee membership. The Village Hall photo competition had been discussed but there was no interest in taking this further.

10.5.1 To update on installation bike racks by the Village Hall

This had not been done but would be done now that the tarmacking had been completed.

Action: Robert to install bike racks by the Village Hall.

11. CORRESPONDENCE – To discuss and agree any actions arising from:

- (a) OALC – January update – details had been emailed around.
- (b) OCC – Minerals and Waste Site Drafts Plan consultation – details had been emailed around.

Plus, additional items received since agenda sent out:

- (c) Diversion of buses through Freeland – request to ask OCC not to divert buses through Freeland when A40 is closed – details had been emailed around. Liam had a meeting with Stagecoach later that week so would discuss this with them.
- (d) Hanborough Environment Group – Climate Change talk – details had been emailed around.
- (e) OCC Community Transport Newsletter – details had been emailed around.

12. CIRCULATION

No February circulation.

January circulation – returned.

No December circulation.

November circulation – still out.

No October circulation.

September circulation – still out.

July circulation – still out.

13. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

There was nothing further to report. The school were investigating plans to set up a school library.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

Salt bin– A salt bin was required by the village hall car park. Tim agreed to fill up a box and place it by the car park ready for any cold weather.

Elections– Matthew advised of his intention to not stand for re-election at the forthcoming Parish Council elections. Councillors thanked him for all his work over the past 5 years.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next ordinary meeting would be held on **Monday 16th March 2020, 7.30pm in the Newell Room.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.10pm.