

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2015, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Peter Newell
	Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
	Councillors:	Tim Webster, Jane Linnell, Matthew Ruddle, Bill Phillips, Janet Dalton, Mary Ann Canning.
	District Councillors:	Not present
	County Councillor:	Not present
	Clerk:	Lisa Smith

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Four members of the public were present for this session – Amy Jackson, Graham Oldfield and his son, Martin Oldfield plus one other. The residents were asked if any of them wished to speak during this session, but this was declined.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None.

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

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

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

Mary Ann Canning (personal) as member of Freeland Charitable Foundation (FCF) and as having a local business.

All of them signed the book accordingly.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 20TH JULY 2015

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 20th July 2015 were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings

4.2 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 2ND SEPTEMBER 2015

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 2nd September 2015 were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings (after a minor amendment to the item numbering).

In view of the residents present at the meeting and their interest in the planning applications, it was agreed to bring forward item 7 (Planning) to be taken next.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions

The application below was shown on the projector and Councillors discussed the details of the proposed changes.

7.1 Applications Received:

15/03385/HHD

13 PARKLANDS, FREELAND.

Erection of two storey front extension for Mr Alan French.

After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** not to make any objections to the proposed changes to the property.

7.2 Applications Approved:

15/02703/HHD

169 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of sunroom to existing garage with attached walkway to main dwelling for Mr J Soanes.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn:

15/02740/FUL

**LAND BETWEEN WYCHWOOD HOUSE AND MALVERN VILLAS,
WITNEY ROAD, FREELAND.**

Residential development of 8 dwellings, including associated access and landscaping for Daniel Family Homes.

The Chairman gave a brief update on his attendance at the WODC Uplands Planning Committee Meeting where the Daniel Family Homes application was discussed. The WODC Planning Officer's report recommended approval of the application, mainly due to the affordable housing element. The Chairman pointed out to the planners that the 8 house scheme that had been applied for and since withdrawn contained no affordable housing element at all. The applicant has since stated that their preferred option is the 29 house scheme, although there would be only 2 guaranteed purchases for Freeland. The District Councillor present at the Planning Committee Meeting suggested a site visit, so the application has been deferred until 5th October after the site visit has taken place. It was also reported that a recent article in the press suggested that the Government will be changing its policy on Great Crested Newts so that they are no longer a protected species.

7.5 To discuss a suggestion from a resident regarding housing with community advantage

A letter had been received from a resident who had suggested that the Parish Council set up a scheme to build houses (bungalows) for elderly people by setting up a charity and selling any vacated homes for a 10% charge. The money would then be held by the charity until sufficient funds were available to enable another bungalow to be built which could be rented if the occupant was not able to buy. After careful consideration and some discussion, Council **resolved** that they did not feel their current funds and capabilities would be sufficient to support such a scheme, but they would keep this in mind if things changed in the future. The Clerk would respond to the resident.

Action: Clerk to write to resident as above.

7.6 Old shop site – update

A brief update was given on the old shop site in Parklands opposite the school as it had been noted that many of the shrubs on the site had been pulled up. The Clerk had spoken to John D Wood Property agents and the site was now currently under offer, although no contracts had been exchanged yet as searches were still being carried out. A local Witney based company were buying the land with a view to keeping the planning permission for a shop/flats – the Clerk would ring back in a few weeks to confirm the situation.

Two residents then left the meeting at 8.45pm.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Memorial trees – to receive an update on the ordering of the stakes, plus to note two additional sponsorship cheques received over the summer

The oak stakes had been ordered and received. An example of the stakes was shown to the Councillors and this was very well received. Council **resolved** to approve the payment of £220 +VAT to MH Joinery for the stakes, and thanked Robert for purchasing them. Councillors also thanked Robert for the 50% village discount that he had given for the bus shelter base. Robert would arrange the installation of the stakes to coincide with Remembrance Day in November.

Action: Robert to install the stakes.

5.2 Mobile phone coverage in Freeland – update on response received from Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal

The Clerk had chased a response from Vodafone but as yet no reply had been received. It was agreed to chase them up again and to copy in David Cameron if deemed appropriate.

Action: Clerk to chase response from Vodafone again as above.

5.3 Memorial Bench by Busby Close – to discuss if any further sponsorship requests have been received and to discuss any action required to request for bench

A suggestion had been made to name a bench in memory of a particular resident and Mary Ann had contacted the resident's family who were in favour but felt the bench would be more suitably positioned on the field rather than outside of Busby Close. However, it was reported that the WI wished to sponsor a bench and that the Clerk should contact Rosemary James to discuss this.

Action: Clerk to contact Rosemary James as above.

5.4 Little Free Library – to receive an update on launch of library

The launch party for the Little Free Library had gone well with 30 people in attendance. Matthew had been interviewed by Radio Oxford and for the local Oxford TV station. There had been a high turnover of books so far and the library was proving popular with residents with some very positive feedback being received. Councillors passed on their thanks once again to Matthew for setting up this fantastic village asset.

5.5 Pond – to consider any further quotes for bulrush removal at pond

No further quotes had been received and it was proving difficult to find someone suitable to carry out the work. Tim agreed to liaise with Robert to get the work completed. There was currently no water in the pond so it was a good time to carry out the bulrush removal. Council passed on their thanks to Tim and Robert for agreeing to do this work.

Action: Tim and Robert to remove the bulrushes.

5.6 Risk Assessment Statement – to note the updated version and to approve signing off by the Chairman

The updated Risk Assessment Statement had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and Council approved the final version and it was signed by the Chairman.

6. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

6.1 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

6.2 Play areas/Playing Field/Play Equipment Book – to receive any reports

Robert had the book and only minor things had been identified that had already been highlighted in the RoSPA report which would be monitored. The book was then passed to Bill.

A quote had been received for the de-rusting and painting of the junior slide and this amounted to £600. It was agreed that Tim and Robert would review the slide to see if the work could be done in house, and if not to accept the quote.

A report had been received that the hopscotch area in The Blowings needed some attention as the nettles and bushes were very overgrown over the footpath. Council agreed to ask Nigel Green to take a look and trim it back.

A concern had also been raised about dog's mess on the playing field where the footballers play, and it was agreed to place a note in the Grapevine asking dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Action: Tim and Robert to review slide, Clerk to place note in Grapevine and to speak to Nigel Green.

6.2.1 Play park development – update on progress to develop the park

Mary Ann gave a brief update on the plans to develop the park. The WREN grant application had been successful and £47K would be awarded - Councillors congratulated Mary Ann on the successful application. A query had been raised with WODC as to whether planning permission would be required and a response was awaited. Mary Ann had been in contact with neighbouring residents and most were happy with the plans, although one concern had been raised about the children sitting on top of the youth shelter and being able to see into neighbouring gardens. The work would now be put out to get three quotations and Mary Ann would ensure the village primary school would be kept involved with the project.

6.2.2 Design of the new shed on the playing field – to receive an update on the initial designs for the new shed

Some plans for the new shed were circulated at the meeting and were met with approval from the Councillors. The shed was quite large in size, with the dimensions being 6.2m length, 3.8m depth,

with 2 x 1m doors to allow the tractor to be stored there. It was a lean-to design to be attached to the existing garage on the field. The plans needed to be tidied up and Mary Ann agreed to work with Robert to finalise the plans so that the work could be put out for quotations. A query was also raised as to whether planning permission would be required so Mary Ann agreed to check with WODC.

Action: Mary Ann and Robert to finalise plans and Mary Ann to check re planning permission.

6.2.3 Cricket pitch rolling – to receive an update on the rolling of the cricket pitch

A brief update was given. A roller had been hired on two occasions to roll the cricket pitch and the invoice had been received, the total cost for the hire was £96.39, this was approved by the Council. It was noted that the existing roller on the field required some work to get it up and running and Robert agreed to take it to a local tool hire company for the work to be done, although it was noted there was no urgency for this as the cricket season had now finished.

Action: Robert to take roller to local hire company to get it working.

6.2.4 Cricket Square on field - to discuss and approve the purchase of wooden stakes and rope for the Cricket Square on the playing field

The orange fencing and metal stakes that had been placed around the shed and were used each year to fence off the cricket square over the winter had been removed and were now missing. The Football Club had arranged to purchase some replacement rope and metal stakes and Council **resolved** to approve this expenditure – a cheque had been prepared to reimburse a member of the Football Club who had purchased the rope and stakes.

6.2.5 RoSPA Play Area Inspection Report – to discuss if any actions are required following receipt of the RoSPA report

The RoSPA report has been circulated to Councillors for their information prior to the meeting. No high risk items had been identified. All items were identified as low risk that required monitoring.

Action: Items in report to be monitored.

6.2.6 Park Complaint – complaint received re football goals stored in cricket nets

The Clerk had received a complaint about the football goals being stored in the cricket nets before the end of the cricket season. The complaint had been passed onto the Football Club who had responded and apologised to the complainant. No further action was required.

6.3 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports

One report had been received this month: an area of broken pavement outside Cooks Corner Farm had been reported to Highways by a resident. The Clerk would monitor this and follow up if needed.

6.3.1 Minor pothole repairs - to update on whether a different contractor is able to assist

Colin had agreed to pass on the details to the Clerk of a suitable contractor. No details had yet been received so the Clerk would chase this up. It was also suggested asking OCC Highways for a list of approved contractors who could work on the Highway – the Clerk would request this.

Action: Clerk to contact Highways re list of approved contractors.

6.3.2 Speed activated signs – update on progress in installation of VAS sign near school

One VAS sign had been installed near the school and some positive feedback had already been received. One concern had been raised about a few tree branches blocking the sign from a distance, so the Clerk agree to speak to the residents concerned about trimming back the branches that were obscuring the sign.

Action: Clerk to speak to residents re tree trimming.

6.3.3 Signage request on Pigeon House Lane – update on installation of new signs

The two new signs had been installed at the Freeland end of Pigeon House Lane. Councillors passed on their thanks to Robert for installing the signs.

6.3.4 Notice boards by Village Hall – to discuss a proposal to purchase a new wooden notice board with glass doors to be placed inside the bus shelter for PC notices, and for the old PC notice board to be re-erected in a suitable location (key on a chain) for village use and the open style wooden notice board be removed.

A proposal was made to purchase a new notice board to be placed inside the new bus shelter for Parish Council notices, and for the old board to be re-erected in a suitable location for village use.

The Clerk knew of a local carpenter who had made the open style notice boards so Council agreed to obtain a quote for a new board. Robert would measure the old board and pass the information to the Clerk who would contact the local carpenter.

Action: Clerk to contact local carpenter to obtain quote for new notice board.

6.3.5 Uneven road surface – complaint received re dangerous road surface on Broadmarsh Lane

A concern had been raised by a resident regarding the uneven road surface just past the entrance to Webster's Close in Broadmarsh Lane. The Clerk had reported this to Highways, but they had recently responded to advise that it didn't meet with OCC's criteria for defects so no action would be taken. The Clerk would inform the resident accordingly.

Action: Clerk to advise resident as above.

6.4 Footpath & Bridleway Matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports

Matthew had the book and there was nothing to report. The book was passed on to Janet. It was reported that there was a fallen tree on the bridleway past Vincent's Wood, and this had been reported to the Footpath Officer at OCC.

6.5 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.5.1 To receive an update on the initial plans for the design of the Garden of Remembrance

Some updated plans for the Garden of Remembrance were shown at the meeting. Mary Ann had spoken with a stonemason regarding the size and materials of headstones. A concern was raised about not being too prescriptive about the type of headstone that would be permitted – this was duly noted. It was noted that it would be necessary to consult with the village about the plans and it was agreed to have them ready for the December meeting which would be changed to be held in the Village Hall and publicised to the residents. Some possible future plans which included reducing the size of the car park were also shown although no agreement was reached.

6.5.2 To discuss the reinstatement of the test hole at the Garden of Remembrance site.

Following a brief discussion, and the circulation of the water table figures which was duly noted, Council agreed to fill in the test hole at the Garden of Remembrance site. Robert agreed to carry out the work.

Action: Robert to fill in test hole.

6.6 Allotments – to receive any reports

A brief report had been received from the Freeland Allotment Association to advise that their AGM had been held on the 15th September with Tina Hollis as the Chair. 18 members were present. Their new Plot Agreement and Rules were approved by the membership as were some small changes to the Constitution so they were ready to start the new allotment year as tenants of the Association on 29th September. Unfortunately four resignations including the Chairman and Treasurer had been received so volunteers were being sought for the Committee. Some suggestions ranging from distributing surplus produce to needy villagers, the siting of a communal shed and a calendar of events to encourage a community spirit were also discussed at their meeting.

6.7 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

A brief report was given. Consideration was being given to having cycle racks installed outside of the Hall. Wi-Fi was now up and running in the Newell Room, and a code would be displayed in the room. The installation of the new gates and fencing between the Hall and the changing rooms was due to be done imminently. There were ongoing problems with the water system in the Newell Room and new guttering was being fitted to the Hall. A Sports Club Liaison Officer role had been advertised in the Grapevine but no response had been received. Good communication with the sports clubs was a priority that was being reviewed regularly.

7. PLANNING – already covered at start of meeting.

8. INSURANCE RENEWAL – APPROVAL OF THE INSURANCE RENEWAL PREMIUM - TO INCLUDE REVIEW OF LEVEL OF FIDELITY GUARANTEE COVER

Details of the insurance renewal documentation had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The renewal premium is quoted for 12 month's cover as **£1,679.35**, and is based on the sums insured and cover detailed in the 2014/15 schedule, and these have been index-linked by 3%. This also includes 6% insurance premium tax and takes into consideration our long-term agreement and includes our annual 5% no claims discount. The Policy excess remains at £250 for each and every claim and the Fidelity Guarantee cover is currently insured at a level of £250,000.

The Council's long-term agreement (LTA) is due to expire on the 30th September 2016. The renewal premium can be reduced by 5% to **£1,595.38** if the Council wished to enter a new LTA until the 30th September 2018.

Council **resolved** to approve the insurance renewal premium as detailed above, keeping the Fidelity Guarantee cover at £250,000 and entering into a new long term agreement until 30th September 2018, reducing the premium to **£1,595.38**.

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 28th August 2015 and the receipts and payments received or paid out in the last 2 months. The bank statement was checked as agreeing with the figures on the finance sheet and signed by Bill.

9.2 Approval of invoices for payment

The Council approved invoices for payment as listed on the invoices sheet distributed with the meeting papers. Council also noted that the following invoice was authorised and paid at the Extraordinary Meeting held on 2nd September 2015:

Cheque number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
102218	FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd	WREN grant 3rd party funding - play pk grant	£5,092.70
		Total:	£5,092.70

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

Cheque Number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
102219	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary Sept 2015	£600.42
102220	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 02.09.15 & 21.09.15	£37.50
102221	Nigel Green	Mowing June/July/Aug 2015	£800.00
102222	WODC	Grass cutting on field x 3 invoices	£489.96
102223	Matthew Ruddle	Refund - Little Free Library	£313.18
102224	Playsafety Ltd	RoSPA play area inspection	£88.80
102225	R A Crocker Ltd	Bus shelter base preparation	£528.00
102226	Thames Water Utilities Ltd	Allotments water bill 26.02.15 - 26.08.15	£212.02
102227	EHS (Oxford) Ltd	Roller hire for cricket pitch	£96.39
102228	BDO LLP	Audit Fee 2014/15	£360.00
102229	Witney Horticultural Society	Donation for BK Garden competition judging	£20.00
102230	Broker Network Ltd	PC insurance renewal (amount tbc at meeting)	£0.00
102231	Ben Symonds	Metal stakes & hose for cricket pitch	£24.42
		Total:	£3,570.69

One additional cheque was also approved for payment to MH Joinery for £264.00 for the oak stakes for the memorial trees.

9.3 To note the new pension regulations and the action required to be taken before staging date

The Clerk had been in touch with other local Clerks to enquire which pension scheme provider they were looking to use. A suggestion had been made of contacting The Pensions Regulator to see if a scheme had to be provided where the Clerk (being the only employee) did not wish to join. The Clerk had therefore emailed The Pensions Regulator and was awaiting a response.

9.4 Annual audit – update on progress

The Clerk gave a brief update about the annual audit. The audited annual return had been received and there was one minor issue arising from the audit regarding the allocation of grant funds for the

Precept on the annual return – this was duly noted. Council accepted the audited annual return and the notice of conclusion of audit would be posted on the notice boards for 14 days. Council thanked the Clerk for her work on the audit.

9.5 Any other financial business – None.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

The following were received, noted and/or considered:

(a) WODC Gambling Policy Review – details had been emailed round.

(b) OALC – members update July – details had been emailed round.

(c) OCC - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy

Advance Notice of Consultation on Proposed Submission Document, August 2015 – details had been emailed round.

(d) SSE – Funds for Resilience grant – to consider applying for some resilience funding for the village (eg sandbags, generator for Hall etc) – details had been emailed round. After some discussion, it was agreed to apply for a new generator and an emergency phone for the Village Hall in case it was ever needed to be used as a disaster centre.

Action: Clerk to submit application as above.

(e) ORCC Newsletter – details had been emailed round.

(f) OALC – Roles and Responsibilities training – to be held on Weds 25th November, 9.30am – 3.00pm, Civic Hall, Didcot – details had been emailed round. No-one wished to attend.

(g) ORCC – invite to AGM - to be held on Thurs 1st October, 12.00 – 1.00pm, Kirtlington Village Hall – details had been emailed round, no one wished to attend.

(h) WODC – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – to note minor changes to charging schedule are proposed – details to follow. This was duly noted.

(i) OPFA – invite to AGM – to be held on Thurs 15th October, 2.00pm, Victory War Memorial Hall & Playing Fields in Middle Barton – details had been emailed round – no one wished to attend.

Plus additional items received since agenda papers circulated:

(j) Concerns re uncontrolled dog in field behind The Blowings – details had been emailed round. A resident had raised concerns about an uncontrolled dog in a field behind The Blowings. No owner was spotted by the resident. After some discussion, the Council agreed to advise the resident to contact the dog warden at WODC and to see if any photographs could be taken of the dog and to put up a notice to try and establish who the dog belonged to. The Clerk would contact the resident.

Action: Clerk to contact resident as above.

11. CIRCULATION

September circulation – out at meeting.

July circulation – still out.

May circulation – returned.

12. BEST KEPT GARDEN COMPETITION – RESULTS

The winners for this year's Best Kept (front) Garden were as follows:

Small Garden – 1st: Mr & Mrs Seyer, 22 Church View

2nd: Mr & Mrs Foote, 8 Walkers Close

3rd: Mr & Mrs Steventon, 68 Broadmarsh Lane

Large Garden – 1st: Mr & Mrs James, Bolvean, Broadmarsh Lane

2nd: Mr & Mrs McNamara, 166 Wroslyn Road

3rd: Mr & Mrs Evans, 99 Wroslyn Road.

It was agreed to place a note in the Grapevine and on the website. The results had been passed to Jill & Ray Evans so that they could be announced at the next Gardening Club meeting. The Clerk would also write a letter of thanks to Witney Horticultural Society and a cheque was prepared for signing for a donation to them for the judging.

Action: Clerk to place a note in the Grapevine and on the website as above and send letter of thanks to Witney Horticultural Society.

13. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

As no District Councillors were present there was nothing to report.

14. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

A brief update about the school was given including a new homework pack and the recent residential trip to Kilvrough in Wales.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

Defibrillators – a suggestion was made of organising some formal training so that residents knew how to use the equipment. A brief session was held at the Annual Parish Meeting, but more formal training was required. The Clerk would try and arrange some training in the Hall. A query was also raised as to whether the primary school would be having a defibrillator, but as there was one situated right outside of the school it was thought this was unlikely.

Action: Clerk to organise training.

Parish Council elections – it was suggested that as the next Parish Council elections were due to be held in May next year, some publicity about the elections and encouragement of applications was needed. This was duly noted and some thought would be given to how to do this.

December Parish Council meeting – the December meeting was due to be held on 21st December, which was getting very close to Christmas. A suggestion was made of moving the meeting back a week, but with other commitments this was not possible.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 19th October 2015, 7.30pm in the Newell Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.02pm.