

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 16TH DECEMBER 2019, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT: Chairman: Peter Newell
Vice-Chairman: Robert Crocker
Councillors: Vero McCoy, Matthew Ruddle, Mary Ann Canning, Tim Webster, Peter Foster
District Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 9.05pm)
County Councillor: Liam Walker (from 9.00pm till 9.05pm)
Clerk: Lisa Smith

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No-one was present for this session.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Bill Phillips – away, Marilyn Davies – family commitment.

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 having a local business.

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

Matthew Ruddle (personal) as a member of the Scout Committee.

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2019

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 18th November were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings. The Clerk had experienced a few printer problems and a couple of pages were missing from the minutes, so Council **resolved** to approve the minutes as a whole, and that the missing pages could be signed by the Chairman outside of the meeting.

Action: Clerk to get Chairman to sign extra pages of minutes outside of meeting.

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

There was nothing further to report. Peter F would keep the Council updated on any 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.

6.3 Little Free Library – to update on progress, to update on progress in repairing current library and on transforming phone box into a new library, and to consider purchase of signs to decorate the phone box

Matthew gave a brief update. The local contractor had installed the shelving in the phone box so the next step was to obtain some vinyl lettering to place on the phone box. Matthew had found a company and was in the process of obtaining a quote and some examples. He had also contacted the Teddy Girls to discuss the wording of the lettering as he would like to thank them within the lettering. Matthew hoped to be able to bring some examples to the January meeting.

Action: Matthew to obtain quote and examples of vinyl lettering to bring to January meeting.

6.4 Welcome pack for new residents – to update on progress in creating a new pack

Vero had produced a welcome letter that contained various information about Freeland and how to find out more via the website. The aim was to give this out to any new residents when they moved to Freeland. Council unanimously agreed to approve the letter and thanked Vero for carrying out this work.

6.5 Parish Councillor Profiles – to update on progress

There were only 3 Councillors left (Robert, Peter F & Tim) who were due to appear in the next editions of the Grapevine. These remaining Councillors were asked to email their profile to Matthew and he would pick one each month to be published.

Action: Robert, Tim & Peter F to write their profile and email it to Matthew.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received:

19/03094/HHD GLEBE FARM, THE GREEN, FREELAND.

First floor extension for Mr R Crocker.

Robert left the room for this item and did not take part in any voting or decision making. Council were happy with the proposed changes to the property and felt the crenulations were an attractive (and different) additional feature. No objections were raised and Council were satisfied that the changes were in keeping with the current style of the property.

7.2 Applications Approved:

19/02890/HHD 56 BROADMARSH LANE, FREELAND.

Alterations and erection of single storey front and rear extensions for Mr David Cascone.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

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

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

There was nothing further to report. Receipt of the Play Facilities and Public Art Contributions were still awaited. The Clerk would chase this up again.

Action: Clerk to chase up S106 Funds as above.

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 last month to request an update on the review of the Permitted Development Regulations. His office had confirmed that they had chased up the Minister and were awaiting a response.

7.8 Oxfordshire Garden Village Masterplan Framework Public Exhibition

It was reported that following attendance at the Garden Village public exhibition, many of the concerns previously raised by the Parish Council had not been taken into account. Councillors were encouraged to send in comments informally, and a local resident was preparing a full response which could be sent in on the Council's behalf. Council agreed for this to be sent in once it had been checked by Mary Ann and the Chairman.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

Merilyn had advised that unfortunately, WODC would not remove the graffiti on the wall as it was a privately owned wall, so it was now down to the resident to remove it.

Alaa updated the Council on the Environment Committee that he had been chairing, with various recommendations made about single use plastics. A statement of principles was being drafted. He also updated the Council about current usage levels for the Comet bus, which was predominately being used by Freeland residents, with an average of around 8-9 residents using the bus. Improvements to the branding of the bus were also being investigated. It was reported that Hanborough Parish Council had also agreed to allocate £1,000 to the Comet Bus if needed. A statement of investment principles for local council pension schemes was also being worked on.

Liam's update (which was held later in the meeting after his arrival) included details on the Cuckoo Lane road patchwork resurfacing work that had now been completed. He would now try and push for a full resurfacing to be carried out as this stretch of road still needed attention.

Liam and Alaa were thanked for attending and both left the meeting at 9.05pm.

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 29th November 2019 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 Matthew (in Bill's absence).

9.2 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 (£)
102592	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 16.12.19	12.50
102593	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary Dec 2019	902.57
102594	Peter Newell	Website hosting charge	79.81
102595	Graham Lay	Materials for shelving in phone box	110.00
102596	Nigel Green	Mowing July - Dec 2019	1,445.00
		Total:	2,549.88
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £67.64 (employee & employer contributions). £38.65 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for December salary payment.		

9.3 Review of Budget and Precept Requirement for 2020/21 – to also note revised quotation for outstanding bench maintenance work

A slightly revised quotation had been received regarding the bench maintenance work that now required removing some of the benches so that they could be soaked overnight in wood preserve treatment. The overall cost was still within budget and so Council agreed not to make any changes to the proposed Precept Requirement for 2020/21.

It was also reported that WODC had made a mistake when calculating the tax base last year. They had expected more of the Mears homes to be occupied so overestimated the amount of band D equivalent properties last year. This resulted in the average precept figure reducing meaning WODC made a loss. This year, the number of houses equivalent to a band D was lower than last year, which meant the tax base would be increased which would show up as a false 10% increase in the Freeland Council Charge. This would prove difficult to explain to residents, but it was agreed to discuss it at the Annual Parish Meeting, and to place an article about it in the March Grapevine.

Action: Clerk to diarise to do article in March Grapevine.

9.4 To receive an update on the review the effectiveness of internal audit process (to include review of financial system)

Peter F and Vero were due to carry out the review and a date would be arranged at the end of the meeting

Action: Peter F and Vero to arrange to meet Clerk to carry out review.

9.5 Any other financial business – None.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

10.1 Play areas/Playing Field – to receive any reports: Vero had the pink book and would carry out an inspection shortly. Matthew had reported a problem with a split log on the hanging tyres Multiplay equipment. The Chairman had screwed the log together as a temporary solution but this would need to be monitored.

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

A plan showing the proposed new larger shed with an approximate size of 8m x 8m was shown to the Council, which also included some screening around it with native trees and hedges. As previously stated last month, a height of at least 3m 50cm at the apex was needed to enable tractor to be accommodated with the roll bars up, but it was noted this was a very large shed and required some careful consideration, especially around the visual impact. A suggestion was made of having it constructed from steel sheets, ideally grey in colour to lessen the visual impact. Some preliminary costings were provided last month with the smaller new shed approx. 5m x 4m costing around £13.5K, or a new larger shed approx. 8m x 8m would cost in the region of £18-£25K.

Contact now needed to be made with the Sports Clubs about the size of shed required. Mary Ann agreed to email round the plan and to contact the Sports Clubs to find out their requirements.

Action: Mary Ann to email round the plan to the Councillors and to contact Sports Clubs as above.

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

Two quotes had been obtained, but a third was required so it was agreed to defer this item until January when hopefully all 3 quotes would be available.

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

10.1.4 Annual inspection report – to update on progress in getting items actioned that were agreed last month

The wooden posts on the wooden climber had been checked and all seemed very robust and firm in the ground, so it was agreed to monitor these for the current time. The loose fixings had been secured with a large Allen key. Robert had agreed to dismantle and check the metal zip wire bolt - this would be done shortly, and he would report back at the next meeting.

Action: Wooden posts to be monitored, Robert to dismantle and check zip wire bolt.

10.1.5 Tractor – to consider whether to have a winter service carried out

The Clerk had received a letter from the tractor supplier as to whether the Council would like a winter service carried out. It was agreed to check the conditions of the warranty and to probably have this carried out in the Spring. The Clerk would dig out the warranty and check the details and obtain a quote from the supplier.

Action: Clerk to dig out tractor warranty as above and obtain quote for service.

10.1.6 Replacement of the Fenland Leisure Products Climbing Frame – to consider replacing this equipment with an alternative piece of play equipment

It had been reported that the logs on the Fenland Climbing Frame were quite badly split and it was suggested considering replacing this equipment. It was agreed that the Picnic Bench Working Group members would have a look and come up with some suggestions. It was also agreed that Matthew would join this group.

Action: Picnic Bench Working Group to investigate suggestions for replacing climbing frame equipment.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports

10.2.1 Highways reports – to receive any reports: Overhanging shrubs on Hurst Lane

Some concerns had been raised last month by residents about some overhanging shrubs on Hurst Lane that were making the road quite narrow by the bend. It was agreed to find out who owned the shrubs and then to ask the resident or a local contractor to cut them back.

Action: Clerk to find out ownership and then get shrubs cut back as above.

10.2.2 To update on getting overhanging trees and shrubs cut back on Eynsham Road

This had now finally been done.

10.2.3 White line painting by Primary School and across residents' driveways on Wroslyn Road – to receive an update

Both of these items had also finally been done.

10.2.4 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 was chasing up a response to get an update.

Action: Clerk to chase up a response.

10.2.5 West Oxfordshire Safe Cycle Routes – to consider appointing a representative to join the West Oxfordshire Safe Cycle Route Group

A number of email correspondence regarding the above had been received and circulated to Councillors for their information. The Chairman gave an update on an exhibition he had attended in Eynsham in relation to the Garden Village and possible cycle routes between Eynsham and Freeland. Unfortunately, the Eynsham Road was not deemed feasible to use as a safe cycle route. A local resident had a keen interest in the establishment of a safe cycle route and asked if the Parish Council could take part in a group that was being formed to look at possible options. Mary Ann agreed to be a representative to join the group and would get in touch with the local resident.

Action: Mary Ann to join West Oxfordshire Safe Cycle Route Group.

10.2.6 Planter maintenance – to consider an offer to maintain the planter by A4095

A local resident had approached the Clerk to advise that some residents had offered to maintain the planter on Wroslyn Road near the A4095. Council were happy to accept this offer, and Tim offered to supply the plants to the residents, if they maintained the planter. Council thanked Tim for this kind offer and the Clerk would accept the offer from the residents.

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 Graffiti on wall by Wroslyn Road/Woodlands footpath – to update on any progress in removing the graffiti

As already advised at item 8, Marilyn had advised that unfortunately, WODC would not remove the graffiti on the wall as it was privately owned so it was now down to the resident to remove it.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports

No reports had been received.

10.4.1 To receive an update on the location for the timber storage cupboard and outstanding archway work

The local contractor had agreed to carry out the base work after Christmas. Council resolved to approve the contractor carrying out this work at their normal hourly rate up to a maximum amount of £500. Mary Ann would also chase up the sawmill again re the outstanding archway work.

Action: Mary Ann to chase up sawmill re arch and purchase timber shed and arrange local contractor to install base. Clerk to order dog bin and litter bin.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

There was nothing to report.

10.5.1 To update on the tarmacking of the gravelled area of the village hall car park

The Clerk had agreed the quote in writing and had asked the contractor to contact Robert to advise on when the work would be carried out. It was likely this would now be done in the New Year.

10.5.2 To update on installation bike racks by the Village Hall

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

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

11. THE BIG LUNCH 2020 – to discuss whether the Parish Council wish to organise The Big Lunch again next year and if so, to decide on a suitable date (official date is 6th & 7th June)

Council agreed to organise this event again next year. Matthew had confirmed that he was happy to arrange it and had confirmed that the official dates were 6th or 7th June.

Council agreed to hold it on Sunday 7th June – the Clerk would arrange booking the Village Hall.

Action: Clerk to book Hall as above.

12. TREES IN FREELAND – to consider planting more trees in Freeland and to consider tree type and suitable locations

A resident had contacted the Council to enquire if the Parish Council could consider planting more trees in Freeland. Council liked this idea and agreed to consider planting more trees on the playing field around the new shed (once it was built) and possibly some more dotted around the field. It was agreed to also encourage residents to plant more trees, as long as they were of an appropriate type, size and in an appropriate location. This was something that could be mentioned at the APM.

Action: Residents to be encouraged at APM to plant more trees in suitable locations.

13. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2020 – to consider date and topics for discussion

Possible dates for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) was suggested as Friday 3rd or 17th April. The Clerk would check the availability of the Hall and book one of these dates. Councillors were asked to consider topics for discussion, some suggestions were:

- The environment – inviting a speaker to come and talk about climate change, possibly from the Eynsham Green Tea Group who were looking at encouraging people to live a more sustainable lifestyle.
- Planting additional trees in Freeland

Action: All Councillors to consider other topics for discussion at APM, Clerk to book Village Hall.

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

(a) OALC – November update – details had been emailed around.

15. CIRCULATION

No December circulation.

November circulation – still out.

No October circulation.

September circulation – still out.

July circulation – still out.

16. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Clerk gave a brief update. Another successful and well attended Christmas Fayre had been held, and all classes were being offered the chance to take part in Forest School. The school were also investigating plans to set up a school library.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

Street Fair – a suggestion was made of closing the roads in Freeland once a year to hold a street fair. Council were open to discussing this idea further if needed.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next ordinary meeting would be held on **Monday 20th January 2020, 7.30pm in the Newell Room.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.44pm.