

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 19TH JANUARY 2015, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 8.00PM.

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

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Two members of the public were present for this session – Melanie Holton and Shirley Ball. They wished to express their concerns and dissatisfaction regarding the Freeland Cemetery not being available to be used for burials. They were not at all happy about having to be buried in Church Hanborough rather than Freeland, as they had lived in Freeland all their lives and this was also where their other family members were buried. The residents had been sent the Cemetery Working Group report last month showing the options that the Council had considered and the recommendation that the best option was to use Church Hanborough Cemetery for burials. The residents stated that they felt burials at Church Hanborough were really a temporary solution and asked whether the Parish Council could investigate further other options to find a longer term solution for burials in Freeland. They were very much in favour of the burial mound option (as mentioned but rejected in the report) , plus they felt the other possible locations such as near Bowles Farm or West of 40 Wroslyn Road should also be investigated further. The residents did not feel that Church Hanborough cemetery was a satisfactory solution, as there was no pavement to walk there, it was not a close enough location to Freeland, and it was not really within walking distance, especially for residents with mobility problems. They also advised that they would have no objection to having their family member's graves reused in the current churchyard.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None received.

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

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

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

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

Peter Newell (personal) for item 7 – Planning.

All of them signed the book accordingly.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 15TH DECEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th December 2014 were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Defibrillator for phone box on corner of Parklands and outside Freeland Hall – update on progress in installing the equipment (and to discuss revised quote from electrician). Plus discussion of a rota system for monthly checking of the defibrillators.

One defibrillator had been installed on the outside wall of the village hall and this was now fully operational. Training would be required and it was agreed to arrange the training to coincide with the Annual Parish Meeting - the Clerk would arrange this. The electrician had reviewed his quote for the second defibrillator installation but the revised quote had only been marginally reduced. It was also

noted that the amount quoted was significantly higher than that had been paid in other local parishes. After some discussion, Council **resolved** to seek an alternative quote for the second defibrillator installation and the Clerk would arrange this.

It was also suggested that the defibrillator should be added to the play park rota so that the equipment could be checked each week to ensure that the three functional indicators were showing positive and that the device had not been tampered with. Council **resolved** to add the defibrillator to the rota to be checked by the Councillors.

It was reported that the Football Club had managed to obtain a defibrillator through a scheme via the Football Association in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation and this one would be installed inside the changing rooms. Robert agreed to meet with Ben Symonds to arrange the installation.

Action: Clerk to seek alternative quote as above and to add the defibrillator to the rota, Robert to meet with Ben Symonds to site the FA/BHF defibrillator.

5.2 Memorial trees – update on progress

It was reported that most of the trees had been planted and the remainder would be done the following day. The species being planted was *Crataegus prunifolia*, a type of flowering hawthorn. A suggestion was made of inviting residents to sponsor a tree in memory of those who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2 as some of the family members were still living in the village. It was agreed that the Clerk would place a note in the Grapevine inviting sponsorship of the trees. It was felt that we needed names inscribed on some weather-resistant metal plaques attached to the trees (rather than a cheaper plastic version) and the cost of this was unknown - but estimated at about £30 each which, it was suggested, people might feel appropriate for sponsorship. Robert Crocker agreed to look into the actual cost of an inscribed metal plaque and report back. It was also suggested taking some photographs of the tree planting and to place an article in the next edition of the Clerks and Council's Direct magazine and in the local newspaper to raise the Council's profile. The Clerk would arrange this. Councillors offered their thanks to Robert for carrying out the tree planting.

Action: Clerk to do note for Grapevine and article for local newspaper and magazine as above and Robert to find out the cost of metal plaques.

5.3 Mobile phone coverage in Freeland – update on getting a new mast installed

Hanborough Parish Council had responded to advise that they were in support of a joint letter being written to David Cameron to ask for his help in improving the mobile phone coverage. The Clerk would write the joint letter and await a response.

Action: Clerk to write letter as above.

5.4 Broken fence between churchyard and pub – update on getting it removed

The broken bits of the fence had been removed and the nuns had obtained a quote to replace the fence. It was agreed that Tim would follow up with the nuns about whether they were going ahead with replacing the fence.

Action: Tim to speak to nuns as above.

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

Bill had the book and there were no problems to report apart from the gate near Pigeon House Lane had been left open and unlocked. Robert agreed to look at this with a view to making it secure. The book was then passed to Robert.

Action: Robert to check and secure gate as above.

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

The WREN grant application had been submitted and WREN had advised that a response would be received in July. The information regarding the play park development and equipment being applied for would be taken to the village primary school for the children to view and support letters would hopefully then follow.

6.2.3 Shed on the field – to update on progress in making the shed safe and any action taken following receipt of the Health & Safety Officer's report

Unfortunately a meeting had not yet taken place between the Parish Council and the Football Club members. However the Club had been in contact with the Chairman and some netting and warning signs had been erected around the shed to prevent people entering the building. The Chairman had asked a member of the Club to make a start on removing the chemicals as soon as possible. The Football Club were arranging to apply for a grant from the Football Association - Small Works Fund, and the Chairman reported that he would be happy to help them with their application. The Football Club had also obtained a quote for a new shed of £4,399 (inc VAT). A bespoke lean-to shed was also suggested which may be a more affordable option, and this could be attached to the newer shed on the field at the back of the hedge by Blenheim Lane. After further discussion, Council **resolved** for the Chairman to write to the Football Club to advise that the shed needed to be removed as soon as possible and to ask them to arrange urgent removal of the hazardous chemicals, plus to advise which equipment they still wished to retain. It was also suggested writing a note to Sally Hole to keep her up to date with these developments as this area of the field was of particular importance to her. The Clerk would write to Sally to update her.

Action: Chairman to write to Football Club as above, and Clerk to write to Sally Hole.

6.3 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.3.1 Flooding on Wroslyn Road by corner of Oaklands Close – to discuss any further update from Highways/WODC

There was nothing further to report at the present time. It was clear that this was not a top priority item for Highways and as it was proving difficult to get any action to be taken, it was agreed to remove this item from the agenda for the present time.

Action: Clerk to remove item from agenda.

6.3.2 New Bus Shelter outside village hall – to approve quote for bus shelter base and update on progress with order

Unfortunately there had been a delay in getting the quote for the bus shelter base. It was agreed that the Clerk would chase this up and in the meantime Council **resolved** to place the order for the shelter.

Action: Clerk to chase up quote for base and to place order for shelter.

6.3.3 Pothole repairs - to update on response from Cllr Hudspeth re a proposal that the Parish Council takes charge of its own minor road repairs (just potholes) using an approved contractor

The Clerk had emailed Cllr Hudspeth regarding the suggestion last month for the Parish Council to take charge of its own minor road repairs, and a response had been received to advise that he has asked the Highways team to investigate our suggestion. No further contact had been received so Council agreed for the Clerk to chase up a response.

Action: Clerk to chase up response.

6.3.4 Intermittent sewage smell on Wroslyn Road – to update on contact with Thames Water following resident's complaint

The Clerk had chased up Thames Water again regarding this as no update had been received from them. After a rather frustrating telephone conversation, Thames Water advised that there was no information stored under the reference number given by the Clerk and the call had to be logged from scratch again. This has been done and a Lanes engineer came out on Tuesday 13th January 2015 who was going to feed back to Thames Water that the chemical dosing required topping up at the pumping station near the Green. The Clerk has requested a follow up call to ensure this is done. A response is awaited.

6.3.5 Cars parking on pavements – following complaint from resident, update on response from WODC re flyers

The Clerk had contacted WODC to ask about the flyers but had not yet had a response. This would be chased up.

Action: Clerk to chase up response.

6.3.6 Speed activated signs – update on progress in application for VAS sign near school and proposal to put £1,000 in the budget next year for such a sign

The speed activated signs would cost approx. £5k each. An application for the sign had been submitted to Louise Chapman for her approval before it was sent off to Highways. Council also **resolved** to put £1,000 in the next year's budget into earmarked funds to help cover these costs.

Action: Clerk to chase up application and to note budget funds for next year's precept requirement.

6.3.8 Double yellow lines by school – update on progress in application for traffic order change to allow installation of double yellow lines on corner of Parklands

An application for a traffic order change had been submitted to Highways and a response was awaited.

6.3.9 Damaged bus stop pole outside no 9 Wroslyn Road – to update on progress following report to Highways

A resident had contacted the Chairman to report a damaged bus stop pole that was leaning at an angle outside no 9 Wroslyn Road. It was reported to Highways who reviewed the situation and have confirmed they cannot spend money to straighten it at the current time due to financial constraints.

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

No reports were received. The Footpath rota had been completed for this year and the book was being retained by the Clerk until the Spring.

6.4.1 Hazel tree overhanging footpath and garden at no 48 Broadmarsh Lane – to consider a request from resident to have the tree lopped and pruned (but not removed)

A resident had contacted the Clerk this month to raise concerns about a hazel tree that was overhanging their garden and the public footpath. Council **resolved** to obtain a quote from Elliot Hall to prune the tree. The Clerk would arrange this.

Action: Clerk to arrange quote for tree pruning as above.

6.5 Cemetery – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.5.1 To consider two complaints received about the cemetery being changed to Garden of Remembrance and that residents cannot be buried there, and to ask the Parish Council to investigate other options further

See item 1 - Public Participation session. Council noted the concerns raised by the residents and discussed at length the possible solutions in order to respond to the residents. The options of ground near Bowles Farm or West of 40 Wroslyn Road being used as a cemetery site were deemed unsuitable due to the potential for waterlogging as the water table in these areas was likely to still be considered too high to allow burials to take place. A recent hole dug in the road outside 44 Wroslyn Road (for main sewer pipe connection) which filled with three feet of water overnight confirmed this. A burial mound was a possibility within the new cemetery but this was likely to involve considerable costs for numerous tonnes of soil and to find drainage solutions, plus the land currently being used for allotments would have to be enclosed within the mound.

A suggestion was made regarding having coffins buried above ground in a kind of raised tomb, a practice that was apparently carried out in other European countries. It was agreed to research this possibility in more detail to find out if this practice was allowed and the likely costs of such a raised tomb. After further discussion, Council **resolved** to enquire with the Environment Agency and the Cemetery Advisor at Witney Town Council (Claire Swan) about having raised tombs, and to obtain costings for a burial mound (Mary Ann and Robert would do the costings for the mound).

Action: The Chairman to make enquiries with Environment Agency and Claire Swan re raised tombs and Mary Ann and Robert to do costings for burial mound.

6.5.2 To consider if the PCC were to agree to re-using old graves, whether the Parish Council would assist with costs involved in moving headstones

After some discussion, Council resolved to assist with the costs of moving headstones within reasonable limits. The Clerk would advise the PCC of this decision.

Action: Clerk to advise PCC re above.

6.6 Allotments – to receive any reports

As Martin had resigned there was nothing to report. It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to Martin to thank him for all his work as a Councillor and to thank him for agreeing to be the liaison officer between the Allotment Association and the Parish Council. The letter would also request that any reports or updates about the allotments be emailed to the Clerk or Chairman in time for the meeting agenda.

Action: Clerk to write letter to Martin as above.

6.7 Community Led Plan – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.7.1 To discuss the implementation of the third priority item from the CLP: Improvements to A4095 junction

Council agreed to postpone this item until a decision had been made on the Pye Homes planning application in Long Hanborough.

6.8 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

A very brief report was given. The Christmas tree lighting event was well attended and made £60, plus the Teddy Girls raised £200 for the play park from their chocolate tombola. A letter of thanks had been sent to them. The hall had been redecorated and the annual accounts had been signed off.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions

The two applications received were shown on the projector and Councillors reviewed and discussed each one in turn. The plans for an application for a large development of 1,500 homes on land to the East of Woodstock were also shown and discussed.

7.1 Applications Received

14/01948/HHD ALVERE, WITNEY ROAD, FREELAND.
Single storey extensions, alterations and new garage for Mr John Major.

15/00094/HHD 19 OAKLAND CLOSE, FREELAND.
Erection of two storey rear extension for Mr & Mrs P & S Gilford.

After reviewing the plans for the above applications, Council **resolved** that there were no objections that they wished to make on proposed changes to either of the properties. It was also suggested that the projector could be hired out to residents if they wished to use it, and Council **resolved** that a hire charge of £5.00 would be made to cover the cost of a replacement bulb.

7.2 Applications Granted:

MW.0122/14 CITY FARM, EYNHAM (NEIGHBOURING PARISH)
Non-compliance with conditions 1 & 8 of Permission no.: MW.0181/12 (deposit of inert waste material to restore original land Levels and improve agricultural productivity and retention of haul road for agricultural access) to provide for revised drainage scheme for McKenna Environmental Ltd.

14/01836/FUL 23 BROADMARSH LANE, FREELAND.
Erection of two storey dwelling for Mrs Barbara Kingman.

7.3 Applications Refused – None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn – None.

7.5 To agree a new Council member to join the Planning Team – following Martin's resignation, a new member on the Planning Team is required. Jane Linnell has been suggested.

Council **resolved** to add new member, Jane Linnell, to the Parish Council Planning Team to replace Martin Shann.

7.6 To note any update regarding resident's complaint re noise and smell from extractor fan at unit 2 on Wroslyn Road Industrial Estate

There was nothing to report, the resident who complained is chasing up a response. Council agreed for the Clerk to also chase up a response.

Action: Clerk to chase WODC Planners for an update on the situation.

7.7 To note any update following planning refusal in July 2014 for an extractor system at unit 17 on Wroslyn Road Industrial Estate – extractor fan still present and in use despite no permission to do so and in breach of conditions of site

The Chairman declared an interest in this item and the Chairmanship of the meeting was passed to the Vice Chairman whilst this item was discussed.

No update had been received from WODC, yet the extractor fan was still present and in use despite there being no permission in place and despite this being in breach of the planning conditions. In the WODC decision letter dated 15th July 2014, planning permission for the extractor fan was refused, and the applicants were given 4 months to re-apply for the fan. As no application has yet been reviewed by the Parish Council, it was agreed to ask WODC for an update on the situation and to alert them that the extractor fan was still present and in operation, despite the refusal of planning permission. The Chairmanship was then passed back to the Chairman.

Action: Clerk to write letter to WODC Planning Enforcement as above.

7.8 To note a planning application has been made for up to 1,500 homes on land east of Woodstock

The application documents for this development proposal were shown to Council on the projector. The development was very large and consisted of a primary school, residential homes and business units. After some discussion Council **resolved** that they did not wish to make any comments at the present time.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS

8.1 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 31st December 2014 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 signed by Bill.

8.2 Approval of invoices for payment

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

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

| Cheque Number | To whom paid | Details | Amount (£) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 102165 | Lisa Smith | Clerk's salary January 2015* | £600.42 |
| 102166 | Freeland Village Hall Bookings | Hall hire 19.01.15 | £12.50 |
| 102167 | WODC | Grass cutting for playing field | £237.60 |
| 102168 | Bill Phillips | Litter picking Oct/Nov/Dec 2014 | £250.00 |
| 102169 | B L Consultancy | Health & Safety report for shed | £180.00 |
| 102170 | Barlow & Sons Ltd | Posts and strapping for memorial trees | £107.09 |
| 102171 | Spur Electrical Ltd | Defibrillator installation at V.Hall | £420.23 |
| | | Total: | £1,807.84 |
| * salary includes nationally agreed pay increase of 2.2% (approved last month) | | | |

8.3 Update on review of the effectiveness of internal audit process (to include review of financial system)

The Chairman and Janet were due to meet with the Clerk on Friday 23rd January to carry out this review. They would report back at the next meeting.

Action: Chairman and Janet to meet Clerk to carry out review.

8.4 Any other financial business – None.

9. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – TO CONFIRM DATE AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR THE APM

The provisional date for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) was agreed for Friday 24th April 2015 at 7.30pm. The Clerk would book the hall. Possible topics for discussion were suggested as:

- Defibrillator Installation and Training
- Methodist Chapel – raise awareness of current situation to see if any offers of assistance are put forward
- Discussion of outcome of Community Led Plan

10. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY – TO UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN FILLING THE VACANCY

An advert has been placed in the Grapevine that was due out very shortly. It was suggested making contact with the two previous residents who had previously expressed an interest in the position to alert them to the vacancy. The Clerk would contact them both.

Action: Clerk to contact both residents as above.

11. FREELAND METHODIST CHAPEL – TO NOTE THE CHAPEL IS IN REAL DANGER OF CLOSURE AND TO CONSIDER WAYS IN WHICH THE PARISH COUNCIL MAY BE ABLE TO OFFER ASSISTANCE

Three reports were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting regarding Freeland Methodist Chapel. The Chapel is suffering from high running costs (£3,000 on repairs and £5-6,000 running costs last year), which appear to be due to its aging fabric, low levels of insulation and an expensive heating system. Additionally the chapel has lost bookings since the re-opening of the hall.

Unless new people join the Church, its ageing congregation means that it will become increasingly difficult to keep going and will have to be closed.

It was suggested that the congregation will try and keep the chapel going for another year; however there is a 5 yearly inspection of the building's fabric this month, which may bring matters to a head.

The Council discussed possible options such as nominating it as an Asset of Community Value, but the Parish Council would need to find the funds to purchase it.

It was felt to be a better option to get involved now and work with the Methodists to find a solution that would work for the village as a whole.

Possible options included the Chapel becoming a shop based on the same model as Hanborough post office, which is serviced by the main Co-op shop. Agreement from the Methodist Church would need to be sought.

The Parish Council could offer help in planning restoration work and seeking grant funding; or the Chapel could be included with the village hall venues, offering a medium sized space for hire and be included on the website. The village hall is fully booked on weekday evenings and there are potentially other clubs that need a venue.

After further discussion Council **resolved** to approach the Methodist Church and offer support to try and find a way forward – Tim, Mary Ann and Robert agreed to make the approach.

Action: Tim, Mary Ann and Robert to approach the Methodist Church members.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

The following were received, noted and/or considered:

(a) Freeland Gardening Club – to discuss a request to erect a new public bench by the bus stop on Wroslyn Road near the entrance to Busby Close.

A request has been made for the Council to consider erecting another public bench on the wide verge on Wroslyn Road near the entrance to Busby Close by the bus stop. The Club suggests the bench might be subsidised by donations from local people and grants. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to place a note in the Grapevine to see if any residents wish to sponsor a bench in memory of a loved one.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine as above.

(b) A & J Catering – to note response received following the Parish Council's letter raising concerns about speeding vans through village.

The company have responded very promptly to advise that they have passed this straight on to management and they have spoken to all of their drivers regarding the problem. They all have said they understand, and that it won't happen again. This response was duly noted.

(c) OALC members update December 2014 – details had been emailed round for information.

Plus additional items received since agenda papers circulated:

(d) WODC – Parish Budget setting, Referendums – update from WODC as to whether a spending threshold will be applied to Parish Councils. Details emailed round to Councillors for information.

(e) OPFA – Playground Inspection Training Course – to be held on Sat 7th March at Tackley Village Hall – no-one wished to attend.

(f) Quote for lawn treatment by village hall for consideration – quote received from Lawn Science who recommend 4 treatments per year at a cost of £35.50 per treatment. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to have 2 treatments per year initially and would review the situation. The Clerk would arrange this.

Action: Clerk to arrange 2 lawn treatments on village hall front lawns.

13. CIRCULATION

January circulation – out at meeting.

December circulation – none.

November circulation – returned.

14. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

As Colin and Toby were not present there was nothing to report.

15. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Clerk gave a very brief update about the school. The headteacher Mrs McGilvray was now back at work following her period of compassionate leave. The year 5 and 6 children were away in Wales attending a week's residential trip.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

There were no additional items for discussion.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 16th February 2015, 8.00pm in the Newell Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.44pm.