

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, ON THE 15TH MARCH 2021, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:

Chairman:	Peter Newell
Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
Councillors:	Mary Ann Canning, Peter Foster, Matthew Ruddle, Véro McCoy, Bill Phillips.
District Councillors:	Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 9.05pm)
County Councillor:	Not present
Clerk:	Lisa Smith

At the time of this meeting taking place, the UK and rest of the world were still experiencing a Coronavirus (Covid -19) pandemic, and legislation and rules around social distancing were being updated regularly. The current Government advice was to not allow public meetings to take place, but legislation had been changed to allow virtual meetings instead.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Three members of the public were present for this session – Kenny Wylie and Graham Ford, who both wished to listen to the meeting, and Christian Silk who wished to speak about tree planting.

Tree planting in Freeland – Christian Silk to attend to discuss tree planting in the village and possible options that can be explored further and to note what has been explored already.

Christian explained that in the current climate crisis he was very keen to explore tree planting in the village and was keen to know what had been investigated already and what options were perhaps worth exploring further. It was explained that whilst the Parish Council was supportive of the idea of planting more trees in the village, the stumbling block was always about land ownership and having available land to plant them and making sure they were planted in appropriate locations.

It was explained that the Parish Council had possibly been in line to obtain some trees as part of a mitigation for a planning application that was refused and went to appeal for land at Eynsham. As part of the mitigation an area of woodland was proposed to be provided in Freeland, however the appeal was rejected so this couldn't happen. The grass verges through the village were unfortunately a maze of pipes and cables that proved challenging to find suitable locations for the memorial trees. It was tricky to find suitable sites in Freeland that would be suitable for tree planting as most of the surrounding fields were owned by large institutions who would probably wish to develop the land at some point in the future.

Robert advised that he would be providing a list of landowners to the Parish Council and Christian would be happy to make approaches to them to enquire about possible tree planting on their land. Robert would pass the list to the Clerk who could pass it to Christian. It was also noted that Freeland was quite fortunate in that it was already quite a leafy village with many houses having large gardens, and where there was lots of woodland on the south side of the village, fields on the Eastern side and the North Leigh Common at the northern end of the village.

Robert was also giving a talk on the 24th March at the Eynsham Recovery Network which Christian was welcome to go along to. In this talk he would discuss the importance of linking existing habitats and hedgerows and not to over manage/trim them to allow wildlife to flourish.

Alaa also advised that he had written an article for the Grapevine about Climate Change Strategy at WODC which would have links to the website and related documents.

Christian thanked the Parish Council for their time and left the meeting at 7.55pm.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Tim Webster, Merilyn Davies.

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.

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 15th February 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th February 2021 were approved and would be signed by the Chairman (outside of the meeting) 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

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

6.2 PC Noticeboard – to update on progress to remove PC notice board on the corner of Parklands.

The board had not yet been removed but would be done shortly. It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

6.3 Community Led Plan review – to receive an update on the CLP review.

The Clerk confirmed that she had just received a USB stick posted through her door with the updated CLP on it. She had not had chance to view it yet and it was noted that the size of the document may be too large to be emailed around. The Clerk would investigate and see if the file could possibly be compressed to send round to the Councillors.

Action: Clerk to look at updated CLP document and email around if possible.

6.4 List of land ownership around Freeland – to note contents of list of landowners around the village

Robert confirmed the list had not been written yet but would be done shortly.

Action: Robert to produce list of landowners around Freeland and pass to Clerk.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received:

21/00323/HHD

5 HURST LANE, FREELAND.

Erection of a detached bike shed for Ms Veronique McCoy.

21/00351/HHD

2A BLENHEIM LANE, FREELAND.

Erection of single storey side extension for Mr & Mrs Foster.

After reviewing the above two applications, Councillors agreed not to make any comments or objections to the proposed changes to the properties. For discussion of 5 Hurst Lane, Ms Veronique McCoy temporarily left the meeting as did Peter Foster for discussion of 2A Blenheim Lane.

Action: Clerk to advise WODC Planning Dept of the above.

R3.0057/19

LAND WEST OF CUCKOO LANE AND ADJACENT TO THE A40, EYNSHAM, WEST OXFORDSHIRE, OX29 4PU

Construction of a park & ride car park providing 850 car parking spaces, cycle spaces, motorcycle spaces, electric vehicle charging points, bus

shelters, landscaping, external lighting, public open space, toilets, seating, fencing, habitat creation, drainage features, new access from Cuckoo Lane, new roundabout with access onto A40, an eastbound bus lane approximately 6.5km in length from the park & ride site to the A40 bridge over the Dukes Cut canal, two sections of westbound bus lane (each approximately 500m in length), new shared use footway/cycleway, widening of Cassington New Bridge, junction improvements, new crossings, new footbridge alongside Cassington Halt Bridge, and associated works for Oxfordshire County Council.

It was reported that Russ Canning was willing to write a detailed response to the above consultation for approval as he had done previously on behalf of the Parish Council. Councillors unanimously agreed to this and passed on their thanks to Russ for carrying out this work.

Action: Russ Canning to write detailed response to consultation for PC approval.

The following **new licensing application** had also been received:

W/21/00117/PRMA WHISKY EXPRESS, 3 WROSLYN ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FREELAND.

Application for New Premises License.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed not to make any objections to the above application.

7.2 Applications Approved:

20/03584/HHD 53 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Insertion of new dormer window in rear elevation of detached garage for Mr G Findley.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

20/01734/OUT LAND NORTH OF A40, A40 SECTION FROM BARNARD GATE TO EYNHAM ROUNDABOUT, EYNHAM (NEIGHBOURING PARISH)

Outline application with means of access for a mixed-use Garden Village, comprising residential, retail, food and drink, health and community facilities, hotel, class B1, B2 and B8 employment uses, education provision, burial ground, public open space with sports pitches together with ancillary facilities, landscaping and associated infrastructure and works for Grosvenor Developments Ltd.

21/00068/HHD 59 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of a two-storey side extension, single story rear extension conversion of loft space with rear dormer for Mrs Evens.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

Alaa had written an article for the April edition of the Grapevine regarding WODC's Climate Change Strategy and a new Sustainability Standards Planning Checklist that would be used to help planning officers promote climate/biodiversity awareness when looking at planning applications. A website link was also provided in the article to the WODC website for the Climate Change Strategy and other related documents.

There had been a number of comments from residents on social media regarding the Inspired Villages proposals and Alaa had engaged with the residents to provide information. A company called First and Last Mile had also engaged with residents on social media with regards to trying to connect communities by improving community transport services. Alaa had already had conversations with this company and had secured two parking spaces at the Hanborough Station for community buses, but now the company was seeking fenced and gated spaces in the local area.

Alaa was thanked for his update and he 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 28th February 2021 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 would be signed by Matthew or Bill outside of the meeting.

9.2 To approve renewal of OALC & OPFA annual subscriptions.

It was agreed to approve these subscriptions as part of the invoices to be approved for payment at item 9.3.

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. These invoices would all be paid by BACS online via the bank account with Unity Trust. Council therefore **resolved** to approve all of the following invoices for payment:

The following invoices are requested to be approved for payment:			
BACS Ref Number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
BACS 023	Summit Trees	Tree trimming on field & amenity area	420.00
BACS 024	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - March	949.82
BACS 025	OPFA	Annual subscription	42.00
BACS 026	OALC	Annual subscription	315.31
BACS 027	Lisa Smith	Refund expenses (Zoom x 3, toner & imaging unit)	129.97
BACS 028	Stephen Sparrowhawk	Tree clearance on field	605.00
BACS 029	Smith & Sons Ltd (Bletchington) Ltd	Shingle for shed	317.63
BACS 030	Oxfordshire County Council	Access Protection Markings - Oakland Close	256.00
BACS 031	Community First Oxfordshire	Annual subscription	70.00
BACS 032	Oxfordshire County Council	Access Protection Markings - 165/167 Wroslyn Rd	128.00
		Total:	1,727.13
Plus:	New NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for March salary payment.		

9.4 Any other financial business – None.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

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

10.1.1 Play area reports – to update on trampoline tile gluing; report of gas leak at field by zip wire.

Peter F had the pink book and would pass it to Matthew. There were no problems to report. The trampoline tile would be done in the Spring when the weather would be much drier, and the tile could be glued successfully. A report had also been received about a possible gas leak that had been investigated by the gas company and a small leak had been identified and fixed. It was also noted that since the meeting papers had been sent out a letter had been received from a neighbouring resident about cutting back an elm tree that was situated on the playing field that was leaning on their fence. This was agreed.

10.1.2 New storage building on field – to update on progress of new shed, and path reinstatement.

Robert gave an update. The internal cladding would be installed shortly. The drainage around the shed had now been completed with a French drain being installed. The area around the perimeter of the shed had been dug and perforated pipes laid that connected onto the drain in Blenheim Lane, plus a soakaway had been installed by the footpath. An old land drain on the field had also been located and unblocked and connected to the drain on Blenheim Lane via the French drain. Now that the pipework was connected to the drain in Blenheim Lane, it was hoped this would help the water to drain off the field through the pipes rather than it pouring off the surface of the field.

The tree and shrub planting had been completed around the shed with Mary Ann and some volunteers helping with this work. All that was left now was to fit the gate and to finish off the path, as well as the internal cladding.

Councillors passed on their thanks to Robert for all the work he had done with the new shed.

Action: Robert to install cladding, hang gate and complete work on path.

10.1.4 Water for cricket square – to update on progress with adding a water supply to the new storage shed and to discuss where stop tap will be located.

The Council needed to arrange to have the pipework installed before they could make the connection. Robert agreed to speak to a local plumber to see if they were able to sign off the pipework before the connection to Thames Water was arranged. It was noted the pipe work could not be installed until the ground had been dug over to remove all the small roots, which would be done in the next 3-4 weeks. Once this was done the pipe could then be laid.

Action: Robert to speak to local plumber re pipework.

10.1.5 Play equipment replacement for wooden climber – to receive an update from working group.

Mary Ann and the Clerk had met with a small working group of parents to gain some ideas and feedback as to preferred pieces of equipment to replace the wooden climber. The Clerk had also been in contact with Eynsham and Combe Parish Councils about how they maintain their sand pits and whether there were any hygiene implications. Both Councils responded that they had no problems in keeping it clean. The rear section of the enclosed toddler area needed clearing and some additional log rolls installing to attach to the existing fence.

Mary Ann would produce a report with a proposed plan for the next meeting.

Action: Mary Ann to produce report and plan for next meeting.

10.1.7 Northern boundary of playing field (including area behind zip wire) – to receive an update on tidying work due to be carried out and to discuss how to develop this area going forward.

The clearance work had been carried out and lots of plum suckers had been removed. The whole area had now been opened up with lots more space. A mixture of fruiting shrubs had been planted to the rear of the basketball courts along to Heath Farm (up to the beginning of the zip wire), and it was suggested grassing the remaining area or planting up with flowering plants and grasses. The plum suckers may well regrow and would need monitoring, but Councillors were pleased with the results of the tidying work and positive feedback had also been received from a number of residents.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports: none.

10.2.1 Traffic calming measures – to receive an update from Traffic Calming Working Group, including the traffic survey, public consultation, 20mph zones and deterring HGVs using Pigeon House Lane, plus to note request to have traffic survey by Shaston property.

Another meeting of the group was due to be arranged, and Mary Ann was in the process of producing a large-scale village plan. With regards to the behavioural science reports, it was noted that specialist consultants would probably be required, and this would need investigating. As Liam was not present the Clerk would email him to get an update about the traffic survey black boxes and whether an OCC consultant would be able to offer some help with the project. It was noted that some concerns had been raised by a resident this month about the re-routing of traffic through the village when the A40 was shut and also about the S1 and S2 buses being diverted through the village. It was agreed to email Liam about these issues. Concerns had also been raised about building contractors possibly storing their vehicles at Cuckoo Wood Farm which had not been granted planning permission for such use, so it was agreed to email Merilyn with this information for her to take forward with the Planning Officers at WODC.

Action: Clerk to email Liam and Merilyn as above and Mary Ann to draw up large scale village plan and arrange further meeting of Traffic Calming Group.

10.2.2 Overgrown hedge in Broadmarsh Lane – to discuss quotes received for work to either trim back or remove laurel hedge on unregistered land in Broadmarsh Lane.

A further quote had been received to remove this hedge (cut down to ground level) as well as to reduce it by 50%. It was noted that if it was cut down to ground level the hedge would grow back as a

much softer, less woody hedge. After some discussion it was agreed to write to the residents that were adjacent to the hedge and opposite to tell them that the Council felt that the hedge needed cutting and to ask their preference on the options for cutting it back. The Clerk would write to ask for their feedback.

Action: Clerk to write to residents as above.

10.3 Footpath & Bridleway matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports: None.

Robert had the book and would pass it to Bill.

Action: Robert to pass footpath book to Bill.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports:

No reports had been received.

10.4.1 To receive an update on progress of maintenance work at the GOR and on the GOR gates, and to update on production of brochure.

Details of the draft brochure had been emailed to the GOR Working Group members, and positive feedback had been received. It was agreed to circulate it to the rest of the Council for comments/feedback. As Tim was not present no update was available about the gates or maintenance work.

Action: Clerk to email draft brochure to full Council.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports:

There was nothing much to report as the Hall was still closed due to the third Covid-19 lockdown regulations. However, with restrictions due to start easing shortly, bookings were starting to be made although some groups were yet to confirm their start dates. The Hall finances were looking healthy and a £12.5K grant had just been received. After 10 years since the Hall was first opened, the curtains were due to be changed. The Clerk also advised that as it was still unclear as to whether virtual meetings would continue post 7th May, the Hall had been provisionally booked for the May, June and July meetings, and the Newell Room from September onwards. However, it was noted that even if virtual meetings were not permitted past May, many members may not feel comfortable meeting in person and this would be taken into account going forward.

10.6 Amenity Area – to approve plan for planting and maintenance work to tidy up this area

Various fruit trees and shrubs had been planted in the amenity area, including three birch trees in place of the oak trees, apple trees, hawthorn, hazel, flowering pear and a hornbeam hedge by the new fence. It was noted that the soil there was of a poor quality and a compost mulch was needed. A pile of rubbish needed removing which would be done shortly. It was also suggested asking the Naturehood group if they were interested in any further planting to improve the area. The Clerk would contact Russell Fisher.

Action: Clerk to contact Russell as above, Robert to remove rubbish.

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

- (a) OALC February update – details had been emailed around.
- (b) OALC – protocol for death of a senior figure – details had been emailed around.
- (c) Nature Recovery Network – Working Together for Wildlife 2 webinar for Parish Councils and communities – details had been emailed around.

Plus additional items received since meeting papers were sent out:

- (d) WODC Electric Vehicle Event – details had been emailed around.
- (e) OALC – Council meetings post 7th May – details had been emailed around. It was still not clear whether remote meetings could continue after 7th May, but it was hoped further clarification on this would be available soon.
- (f) WODC – Invite to Climate Action Day – details had been emailed around. This event would be held on Friday 23rd April 9.30 – 4.00pm and only 1 representative per PC was allowed. If anyone wished to attend, they were asked to contact the Clerk.

12. CIRCULATION

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, no papers were currently being circulated.

13. TO REVIEW PARISH COUNCIL PROCESS RE TIMELY REPORTING OF PC MEETINGS

Concerns had been raised about the fact that the minutes that appear on the village website are a month in arrears and are therefore often out of date by the time they are available for residents to read. It was noted it was not permitted for Parish Councils to approve minutes via email and this had to be done at a formal PC meeting. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to publish the draft minutes on the village website which would then be approved at the next PC meeting.

Action: Clerk to email draft minutes to Chairman to place on website.

14. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children had returned to school and there was little to report. A new Year 2 teacher had been appointed, Mr Sam Jones.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

PC Elections – the Clerk reported that she now had nomination packs for the forthcoming Parish Council elections so if anyone wished to stand, they could collect a pack from her.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Until the regulations changed about public meetings, the next meeting of the Council would be held remotely via Zoom on **Monday 19th April 2021 at 7.30pm.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.46pm.