

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 21ST NOVEMBER 2016, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Peter Newell
	Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
	Councillors:	Tim Webster, Mary Ann Canning, Matthew Ruddle, Bill Phillips, Peter Foster
	District Councillors:	Colin Dingwall (until 8.30pm)
	County Councillor:	Liam Walker (nominated Conservative Party Council Council candidate, from 8.00pm)
	Clerk:	Lisa Smith

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

4 members of the public were also present: Mr Wicks, Richard Burch, Doug Hickton and David Walker. All were welcomed to the meeting. The residents wished to raise concerns about the building work that was currently taking place at number 19 Oaklands Close, but that may possibly be affecting a soakaway that was put in approximately 13 years ago. The residents were concerned as it appeared that the soakaway had been covered up with soil and this would adversely affect the drainage in the area and could ultimately result in their properties becoming flooded. A pipe had been removed but the residents had been assured that a new one had been put in, but they would like some sort of assurance that this had been done. The Clerk gave a brief update to the residents about the action she had taken so far. The WODC Planning Team had been informed and they had passed it over to their Enforcement Team who were now monitoring the situation. Their Building Regs team would also be checking out the drainage issue and a contact name was passed to the residents so they could liaise with them if necessary. The other issue was that of the footpath at the end of Parklands by the entrance to the woods that had been dug up, and replaced with rubble. The Clerk agreed to report this to Highways to see if they could get the tarmac on the footpath reinstated. The residents thanked the Council for their assistance and then left the meeting at 7.45pm.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Jane Linnell – away, Carol Reynolds.

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

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

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

Matthew Ruddle (personal) as a member of Freeland School Society.

Bill Phillips (personal) as having an interest in item – Precept – Litter collection.

All of them signed the book accordingly.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 17th October 2016;

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 17th October 2016 were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

A brief update was given by Peter Foster. Peter was in regular contact with the representative from CTIL but there was a current freeze on new acquisitions so it was likely this would go on hold for a few months with no further progress. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda for the present time and Peter would provide updates as and when he had further information.

6.2 Dog signs for playing field – update on progress

The Clerk had produced some signs that would be emailed around to Councillors for comment.

Action: Clerk to email dog signs as above and put on playing field.

6.3 Cuts to number 11 bus service – to note any response received from Stagecoach

The Clerk had written to Stagecoach and had chased a response numerous times but no response had yet been received. Liam had advised that the Leader of the County Council was due to meet with the CEO of Stagecoach and this would be brought to their attention. The outcome of this meeting was therefore awaited.

6.4 Safety matting for play area – to note any response received from Russell Play

The Clerk had written to Russell Play about the unsuitable matting but had not yet received a reply. The Clerk would chase up a response.

Action: Clerk to chase response from Russell Play.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1.1 Applications Received:

16/03362/HHD 24 Oakland Close, Freeland

Replace existing conservatory with single storey extension. Form new side extension including raising garage roof to enable first floor habitable use for Mr & Mrs M Homewood. After a brief discussion Council **resolved** to not make any comments or objections to the proposed changes to the property.

7.2 Applications Approved: None

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.4.1 WODC – Consultation on Draft Local Plan – To discuss and decide on whether the Parish Council wishes to submit any comments on the proposed changes - consultation open from 11th November to 23rd December

A fairly detailed discussion was held regarding some concerns about the Draft Local Plan. The Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan had also been emailed round to Councillors for comment. Many concerns were raised regarding the proposed Eynsham Garden Village near the A40 that was due to provide at least 2,200 homes, a science park, park and ride service plus 2 new primary schools and a secondary school facility. Huge concerns were raised about the size of the area for development with the very real possibility that it would eventually spread right up Cuckoo Lane to Freeland, and also how the infrastructure would cope with a development of that size. A proposal to extend Cuckoo Wood Farm to 65 acres had also been included in the Draft Local Plan.

After further discussion Council **resolved** the following:

- To support the proposals put forward in the Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan;
- To object to the proposed changes to the Draft Local Plan on the grounds of:
- the proposed infrastructure would not support the amount of cars generated from the site and would make the A40 situation horrific, plus the Park and Ride site not being sufficient in size for the amount of parking that would be required;
- the lack of consultation done to date with the local Parish Councils;
- the rural landscaping would be totally eroded and ruined, which included the extension of the Cuckoo Wood Farm site which should not be allowed;

- localised flooding that could be made worse - the junction by the A40 is very prone to localised flooding where often half of the road is completely flooded and is very dangerous. The land in the area north of Eynsham is raised, but the Eynsham Garden Village area goes into non-draining soil which again could exacerbate the flooding problems;
- no doctor's surgery has been included in the Eynsham Garden Village Plans and both local surgeries are currently operating at full capacity;
- the Garden Village needed to be self-sufficient;
- the character of Eynsham Village would be changed for the worse;
- the area was rich in many species of wildlife and fauna (Rob would pass details to Clerk) which would be lost if this area was developed.

The Clerk would draft a letter referring to the Local Plan where objections could be raised.

Action: Clerk to draft letter as above.

7.4.2 Damage to footpath at end of Parklands – to note concerns raised by resident regarding damage to footpath through the woods at end of Parklands from building work being carried out at Oaklands Close

This had already been dealt with at item 1.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

A brief update was given. Colin had met with the CEO of the LEP (Local Enterprise Project). Carterton was going to be put forward for development as a special science park area, although infrastructure would also be required.

The Draft Local Plan had gone for approval and the outcome was awaited.

Colin also reported that he had now been appointed as the Cabinet Member for Housing.

Councillors also passed on their thanks to Liam Walker for helping with the street sign cleaning on what was a very wet and windy day. His help was much appreciated.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Consideration of Budget and Precept Requirement for 2017/18

Details of expenditure in 2015/16 and to date for 2016/17, together with precept figures for the previous year had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting, and were available to councillors at the meeting. Figures for the budget for 2017/18 were provisionally agreed, totalling £61,516 a slight increase of 2.56% from last year (£59,980). Particular reference was made to the following items:

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS:

Clerk's Salary – No national pay award had been agreed so the Clerk did not leave the room for this item. Council **resolved** to increase the budget figure to £7,725 to allow for a potential increase of up to 2%, although it was recognised this may not be the actual salary figure. This would be agreed once the outcome of the national pay negotiations was known.

Insurance – The insurance budget figure was showing a negative balance of £451.82, due to additional premiums for extra items being added onto the insurance policy. It was therefore agreed to increase the budgeted figure from £1,200 to £2,500 to cover the overspend and to have a little in reserve in case a similar situation arose next year when additional items may need to be added onto the policy.

Audit fee – In light of the current levels of income and expenditure and the likelihood that this could increase again by the end of the year due to the Play Park Project and Garden of Remembrance expenditure, it was agreed to increase the audit fee figure by £50 as there was already £400 remaining in the current year's budget.

Office Equipment – No new equipment was currently required, and as there was already £427.51 remaining in the current year's budget, it was agreed not to allocate any further funds for the coming year.

Training - Clerks and Councillors – As there was an unspent balance of £365 in the current year's budget, it was agreed not to allocate any further funds for training for the coming year.

Hall Hire - £35 was remaining in this year's budget to cover the remaining hall hire charges. Although most of the meetings were being held in the Newell Room, rather than the Village Hall, it was agreed to increase the payment slightly to £200 to cover any additional Hall usage.

Elections – As elections had been held in 2016, £877.63 of election expenses needed to be included for the coming year.

Website/software - £100 was allocated to cover the running costs of the website hosting by EverWeb, and as there was already £36 remaining in the mapping software budget, no further funds were allocated.

Accounts software - £200 was allocated to cover the annual fee for the Scribe accounts software.

Stationery/printer items/postage/notices – all of these budgets showed unspent balances, and whilst the Clerk did have some expenses claims to submit, it was agreed that no further funds would be allocated to these budgets for the coming year apart from the notices budget where it was agreed to allocate just £20.

ALLOTMENTS:

Allotments – All allotment funds had been transferred to the Allotment Association, so no further action was required with these budgets.

CEMETERY ITEMS:

Cemetery Development – £26,047 was currently held in unspent funds in the Cemetery Development budget but this was likely to be used up on the first phase of the landscaping work in the Garden of Remembrance. It was therefore agreed to include a further £9,000 in the budget for next year, as this would go some way to cover the soft landscaping work.

Cemetery Maintenance – £1,665 was currently held in unspent funds in the Cemetery Maintenance budget, and it was agreed to allocate a further £1,000 to cover any additional hedge cutting and mowing required once the landscaping work had been completed.

PLAYING FIELD ITEMS:

Play Area Development/Maintenance – The play park development fund currently had £3,271.05 being held and it was hoped to purchase some additional items of equipment. In view of this Council **resolved** to include an additional £3,000 to this budget for next year.

The maintenance figure of £1,000 would continue based on the previous year's expenditure – this covered inspections, grass cutting and hedge cutting.

Playing Field Maintenance– Servicing for the gangmower and tractor had not been required as the cutting of the playing field was now being carried out by a contractor. The contractor's costs were likely to be in the region of £1,836 (based on 27 cuts per year at a negotiated cost of £68 per cut), plus there were also plans for a new lean-to shed to be built on the field to replace the old garage. As £12,978.58 was currently held in unspent funds in the budget, it was agreed not to allocate any further funds for the coming year.

SECTION 137 ITEMS:

Community Responders – As there was £2,100 currently held in reserve, Council **resolved** not to allocate any further funds for the coming year.

Donations: This was showing a negative balance of £150 due to a couple of additional donations made this year. It was therefore agreed to increase the budgeted figure to £1,000 based on this year's expenditure of £880, and to cover the small overspend.

Subscriptions: This was increased to £400 to allow for any increases in subscription charges next year.

Other S137 - £591.76 was currently being held in reserve funds to cover any items that could not be authorised under any other expenditure powers. It was agreed to allocate a further £2,000 to this fund in case of any unanticipated expenditure for the coming year.

VILLAGE HALL/CRF ITEMS:

Servicing Village Hall and CRF Loans – This remained at £5,559 to cover the two fixed payments of £2,779.14 per year made on the loan for the CRF, and the Village Hall figure remained at £23,656 to cover the two fixed payments of £11,827.81 per year made on the loan. These together totalled £29,215 which was allocated for next year.

Village Hall/CRF Maintenance - £500 was allocated to this fund to cover any maintenance required around the Hall and CRF – this included grass cutting and hedge trimming in this area.

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE ITEMS:

Grass cutting – £1,500 was allocated to cover the grass cutting around the village that was carried out by a local contractor.

Litter Collection – Bill Phillips advised the Council that he did not wish to have an increase in his payment so did not leave the room for this item. Councillors thanked Bill for this gesture and therefore agreed to keep the payment at £1,000 for the litter collection work done.

Tree work – It was likely that some tree work would be required in the next year so it was agreed to allocate £500 to cover these costs, in addition to the £2,020 currently held in reserve.

Pond Maintenance – Money had been saved this year by the Councillors carrying out the bulrush removal. As there was already £1,100 held in reserve funds it was agreed not to allocate any further funds for the coming year.

Amenity Area – Further work on this area would be required to establish ownership status but this was not felt to be urgent. As there was currently £1,900 currently held in reserve it was agreed not to include any further funds for next year.

Seat Repairs – It was felt unlikely that repairs to the benches in the village would be required during the next year so it was agreed to discontinue the budgeted allocation of £200 for 2017/18. There was £344 currently being held in reserve which could be used if required.

Highways/Footpath maintenance – in view of the likely cuts to services from OCC, and more services like pothole repairs, drain clearance and verge work likely to be devolved out to parish councils, it was agreed not to increase the budget figure as there was already £8,852.99 held in reserve currently, although the costs were at this stage unknown. As part of this sum, a new VAS (vehicle activated sign) had been budgeted for at a cost of £5,700 under the Highways heading last year.

Dog bin emptying – As two new dog bins had been purchased this year, it was agreed to allocate £200 to cover the emptying costs for the coming year.

9.2 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 31st October 2016 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.

9.3 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 all of the following invoices for payment:

Cheque Num	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
102329	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary November	£606.32
102330	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 21.11.16	£12.50
102331	Boward Tree Management Ltd	Tree/hedge root grinding on field	£216.00
102332	RBL Poppy Appeal	Wreath for rededication of war memorial	£17.00
102333	Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd	Gravel and shingle for path across field	£672.89
102334	Elliot Hall	Tree removal on playing field	£400.00
102335	R A Crocker Ltd	Ballast and geotextile membrane for footpath	£2,288.40
102336	EHS Ltd	Roller/dumper hire	£176.33
102337	Nigel Green	Mowing/hedge cutting July - Nov 2016	£1,665.00
		Total:	£6,054.44

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

Tim and Peter Foster were due to carry out the review this year, which needed to be done by the end of January 2017. They would arrange a date to meet with the Clerk.

Action: Tim and Peter 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:

No reports had been received.

10.1.1 Play equipment book – to receive any reports

Mary Ann had the book and passed it on to Matthew. There were no problems to report. The Clerk would email round a new play park rota.

Action: Clerk to email new rota as above.

10.1.2 Multiplay – to update on progress on de-rusting/painting the red handles on Junior Multiplay equipment

The de-rusting and painting of the red handles had not yet been done due to the recent bout of wet weather but it would be done before Christmas.

10.1.3 New path across field - to receive an update on the installing the new path across field from Village Hall to play park

The path had now been completed by Robert and daffodils had been planted, and grass and wild-flower seed had been sown. Council passed on their thanks to Robert for carrying out this work on behalf of the Council.

10.1.4 Repairs and maintenance at Play Park – to update on when the work would be carried out

Mary Ann had contacted the company to arrange the work and a start date was awaited. It was likely that all the maintenance work would be done at the same time.

10.1.5 Worn signs on Church View – to consider any action to replace signs

A report had been made that the road nameplates on both sides of the entrance to Church View were very worn and rusty and needed replacing. It was agreed to make a request to WODC to have them replaced.

Action: Clerk to request new nameplates as above.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports:

Update on Laurel Hedge on Broadmarsh Lane – the hedge had been cut back by Highways but the height of the hedge had not been reduced. The resident had chased this up with Highways but no further action had been taken.

Update on broken signpost by Barnard Gate – The Give Way sign had been moved back a little further away from the junction, and the new sign had not yet been installed. The Clerk would monitor the situation and chase if necessary, although Highways had advised that it could take up to 6 weeks from date of order to installation.

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

Tim had the book and there were no problems to report. The footpath rota was now complete so the book was passed back to the Clerk.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports – none.

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

A brief update about the plans was given. The contractor had been appointed and the grass had been sprayed so it could die back ready for the work to commence when the weather improved. It was likely the work would start in January.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

There was nothing to report.

11. COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH SCHEME – TO DISCUSS WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHEME – DETAILS PLACED IN CIRCULATION

PCSO Phil Workman had delivered some information about the Community Speedwatch scheme to the Clerk for the Council's consideration. Details had been placed in the circulation and the Clerk would place this item on the next agenda once Councillors had had chance to read the information provided.

12. EYNHAM CONSOLIDATED CHARITY – TO NOTE THAT ANN KERSHAW WILL BE RETIRING FROM HER ROLE AS A TRUSTEE ON ABOVE CHARITY, AND TO DISCUSS HOW TO FILL THE VACANT POST

Notification had been received that the Parish Council's representative Ann Kershaw had resigned from her position as Trustee on the Eynham Consolidated Charity due to ongoing health problems.

A replacement was therefore required. It was agreed to place a note in the Grapevine to see if there was anyone in the village willing to undertake this role. The Councillors noted the length of service Ann had given and offered their thanks to her and wished her well.

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

- (a) OALC – members update October – details had been emailed around.
- (b) Donation requests received – Marie Curie Cancer Care, Volunteer Link-Up and West Oxon Citizen's Advice Bureau – details had been placed in the circulation and it was agreed to place this item on the next agenda once Councillors had read the request letters.
- (c) Restoration of Freeland War Memorial – letter of thanks received from John Hewitt – details had been placed in circulation.
- (d) High Sheriff's Awards 2017 – details had been emailed around – there were no nominations that Council wished to make.
- (e) WODC – Invitation to Town & Parish Council meeting – to be held on Thursday 8th December, 7.00-8.30pm, WODC offices, Witney – details had been emailed around – the Chairman agreed to attend.

Plus additional items received since agenda sent out:

- (f) Cassington Food Waste tour – to be held on 29th November at midday – no-one wished to attend.
- (g) OALC – Powers in relation to bus subsidies – details had been emailed around.
- (h) WODC – Draft Local Plan Public Exhibitions – details had been emailed around.
- (i) OALC – NALC Lobby for Parish Councillors to claim Dependants Carers Allowance – details had been emailed around. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to support the lobby to allow Parish Councillors to claim Dependants Carers Allowance. The Clerk would complete the related survey.

14. CIRCULATION

November circulation – out at meeting.

No October circulation.

September circulation – returned.

No May, June or July circulation.

15. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

A brief update about the school was given by the Clerk. The report received from the SIAMS inspection at the end of last term showed the overall level achieved was good, and it was hoped that this would increase to outstanding in 5 years' time.

Freeland School had been awarded the 'Bronze School Games Award' for 2015-2016. This was in recognition of the sporting achievements in the last academic year. The school hoped to build on this and was aiming to achieve the silver award in subsequent years.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

None.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Monday 19th December, 7.30pm in the Newell Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.40pm.