

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, FREELAND ON THE 19TH JULY 2021, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Roger Faulkner
	Vice-Chairman:	Mary Ann Canning
	Councillors:	Peter Foster, Amy Jackson, Bill Phillips, Andrew Bird, Tony Tomkys
	District Councillors:	Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 9.15pm) Merilyn Davies (till 8.40pm)
	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 virtual meetings from 6th May, so a risk assessment was carried out and it was agreed to hold the meeting in the village hall (rather than the Newell Room) to allow for social distancing and better ventilation.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

One member of the public was present for this session – Kenny Wylie who wished to listen to the meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Andy Bain – personal reasons, and Liam Walker.

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.
Roger Faulkner (personal) as Vice Chair of Freeland Community Benefit Society.
Amy Jackson (personal) as having a local business.
Andrew Bird (personal) in item 7 – Planning.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 21st June 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 21st June 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman 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 report was given. A multi skills site visit and survey had been carried out and the initial drawings had been produced and were awaiting approval. Once approval had been given a planning application would be drawn up for approval. However, it was reported that there may be a slight delay to this as some concerns had been raised from members of the public about the safety element of 5G sites, so all 5G sites were currently on hold.

Peter would keep the Council updated on any further developments.

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

It was reported that Robert was unable to provide the list due to a conflict of interest (as he farmed some of the land) and the land ownership was often changing so the list could become out of date very quickly. It was agreed that the Parish Council would keep its own list of the known landowners around the village and Mary Ann would produce a map with a list of known landowners annotated onto it and email it around to the Councillors.

Action: Mary Ann to do map as above.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received:

21/02306/HHD

1 CHURCH VIEW, FREELAND.

Proposed annex, erection of rear and side extensions and porch for Ms Maria Admans.

After reviewing the above application, Council agreed there were no objections or comments they wished to make regarding the proposed changes to the property.

21/02359/HHD

8 PARKLANDS, FREELAND.

Single and two storey rear extensions, extension over garage for Mr E Tweedie And Mrs A Tweedie-Wood.

After reviewing the above application, Councillors had some concerns about potential loss of privacy and overlooking from the proposed changes. It was agreed to submit these concerns to WODC Planning Officers.

21/02355/HHD

11 BLENHEIM LANE, FREELAND.

Erection of a two storey rear extension for Miss Maddy Bull.

Councillors also had some concerns regarding the above application, mainly around potential loss of light for the kitchen and the overbearing nature of the proposals on the site. It was also reported that the boundary line of the application appeared to not be showing correctly and needed clarifying with WODC as it looked like it was including the grass verge on Walkers Close which was not within the property boundary.

21/00961/FUL

LAND SOUTH OF SHASTON, THE GREEN, FREELAND.

New Build Chalet Bungalow with detached double Garage for Mr & Mrs Neil and Catherine Tregear.

The Clerk had been notified by WODC that this application was being reconsulted with the Parish Council as there had been some additional ecological information submitted for this application. A meeting had been held between a couple of councillors and a local resident who was an ex-WODC Planning Officer and, after reviewing the additional information, Councillors felt that although additional ecological information had been provided, it still would not give a true reflection of the ecological state of the land as the survey was carried out in winter when it should have been carried out in the spring/summer months.

Concerns were also raised about WODC's pre-application advice stating that the site *"is viewed by officers as undeveloped land within the built up area"* of the village. However, the Councillors had a contrary view. A look at the village on Google Maps showed that The Green was really an outlier of the main built-up part of the village, separated by swathes of open land on both sides of Wroslyn Road. The houses around The Green had a very loose-knit layout, and Councillors did not consider that this area formed part of the built-up area of the village. If this application were to be approved, it would no doubt also mean that the large gardens of the neighbouring houses would also have to be considered acceptable in principle for infill development. The cumulative effect of that would be to change/urbanise the existing attractive low density, loose-knit character of this outlying area, and would also set a dangerous precedent for future development.

There were also still concerns about the inappropriate access to the site, intrusion to neighbouring properties and the loss of a valuable wildlife site, and the ecology survey being carried out in winter.

Plus concerns were also raised regarding the impact on one of only two Grade II listed building in the village, Windy Knowe being one of them that would be directly affected by this proposal.

Council therefore **resolved** to object to the planning application for the above reasons and the Clerk would submit these objections to the WODC Planning Officer.

Action: Clerk to submit comments/objections to the WODC Planning Officer as above.

7.2 Applications Approved:

R3.0057/19

LAND WEST OF CUCKOO LANE AND ADJACENT TO THE A40, EYNHAM, 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.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

21/01735/HHD

137 BROADMARSH LANE, FREELAND.

Side extension for Mrs Emma Stoppani.

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.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

In Alaa's report he provided a brief update on the Salt Cross Area Action Plan Inspector's hearing that was live streamed on Facebook. A list of the main modifications required by the Inspector to be made to the Plan was expected soon. Alaa encouraged people to view the hearing on Facebook to understand the main areas of concern.

Alaa also advised that a meeting of the Community Bus Committee was due to take place that week when it was hoped to agree that the service would be able to resume.

A brief update about the proposed allotment site was given although no formal lease agreement had yet been received or agreed.

An update was also requested on the white gates on the A4095 whereby the Clerk had asked Highways to repaint the gates, but the report had been closed off by Highways as they advised it was a duplicate report (it wasn't). It was suggested asking Mears New Homes to do something about the white gates as their Oakland Grange development was very close to the white gates and it would be in their interest to make sure the entrance was as attractive as possible. Marilyn would provide a contact name for Mears to the Clerk. It was also suggested checking the S106 agreement for this development to see if anything was included that could apply to the white gates – the Clerk would have a look.

In Marilyn's report she provided some information regarding the Good Neighbour Scheme, which was organised in conjunction with Age UK and which she was hoping to set up across Hanborough and Freeland to build on the community spirit that was present during the first wave of the pandemic.

There would be no cost to Parish Councils to set this up as the cost was borne by Age UK. The Clerk had already had a discussion with David Bates from WODC about this initiative and was going to explore this further. Marilyn also encouraged the Parish Council to explore producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Amy was willing to sound out some of her contacts about getting involved with the Neighbourhood Plan and it was agreed that Amy could approach them.

Alaa and Marilyn were both thanked for their reports, and Marilyn left the meeting at 8.40pm and Alaa left the meeting at 9.15pm.

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 30th June 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 was signed by Bill.

9.2 Motor Insurance Renewal – to approve the insurance renewal premium for the tractor

Details of the insurance renewal premium had been emailed to Councillors prior to the meeting. Came & Company had confirmed the insurance renewal premium for the motor insurance policy for the tractor to be **£177.17** (£181.93 last year), inclusive of insurance premium tax, that is payable on 1st August 2021.

This policy was aimed at the agricultural community providing cover to comply with the laws relating the compulsory motor insurance legislation within the EU.

The policy included comprehensive cover for personal accident up to £10,000 and £1,250 cover for loss of keys/replacement locks.

After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to approve the renewal of the motor insurance premium of £177.17.

Action: Clerk to arrange payment of motor insurance renewal.

9.3 Annual audit – To receive an update on progress

The Clerk gave a brief update on the audit which was progressing well. All information had been submitted to the external audit provider and the outcome was awaited.

9.4 Approval of invoices during August - to discuss the approval of invoices that need to be paid during August and decisions on any planning applications received.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that any urgent payments up to a maximum value of £1,500 that needed paying before the September meeting (or any expenditure that had previously been agreed) could be signed off by the Chairman and Vice Chairman (or another signatory in their absence). The Clerk would confirm with the Chairman or Vice Chairman the urgency of the payment to be made.

It was also agreed that the Planning Team would review any applications that were received over the summer and would make recommendations to the full Council, and anything considered controversial would be circulated to the full Council with Councillors giving feedback via email.

The Planning Team could also try and delay any large schemes that could be controversial by asking WODC for an extension to the time limit.

9.5 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 059	Prysebros Ltd	Weed spraying of playing field	396.00
BACS 060	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - July*	950.42
BACS 061	Freeland Nurseries	Q4 Rootmore?	31.96
BACS 062	OALC	Training course x 1 MAC	60.00
BACS 063	Graham Lay	Annual treatment of 12 benches & 2 seats	515.00
BACS 064	HMRC	National insurance contributions Q1	176.40
BACS 065	Bill Phillips	Litter picking - April/May/June	250.00
BACS 066	Glos. Playing Fields Association	Playground Inspection Training - A Bird to attend	45.00
BACS 067	Came & Company - AJ Gallagher IBL	Motor insurance renewal for tractor	177.17
BACS 068	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - August*	950.42
		Total:	3,552.37
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for July & August salary payments.		
	*Pay award pending for Clerk's salary - negotiations still taking place so previous salary continued.		
	NI rate has slightly decreased so £23.50 has been deducted this month (rather than £24.10).		

9.6 Risk Assessment Annual Review – to review the Risk Assessment document

The Risk Assessment Statement had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Council **resolved** not to make any changes to the document and approved the statement, which was then signed by the Chairman at the meeting.

9.7 Mowing in Freeland – to note price increase from contractor for mowing verges in Freeland

The mowing contractor, Jason Footitt had advised the Clerk that he would be increasing his prices for mowing the various areas in the village from 1st August this year. Prices would be increasing from £75 to £90 per cut. This was duly noted and agreed.

9.8 Bench maintenance report – to note bench maintenance report with recommendation of repeating work in 2022

Graham Lay had carried out some bench maintenance work on 12 benches and seats around the village. The total price is £515 for all 12, compared with his original (previously approved) proposal of maintenance on 10 benches for £655.

He had advised that treating the 10 benches with 2 coats was not required but that the additional 4 benches/seats would benefit from a single coat, hence his ability to reduce the price and treat all benches.

From a budgeting point of view, he recommended that the Parish Council budgets again for an annual treatment of £550 for the 14 items. By carrying out annual maintenance he advised it should be possible to avoid the more expensive option of bi-annual maintenance requiring removal and pressure washing of the benches. The above was noted, and it was agreed to review this at the November budget setting meeting.

Whilst talking about benches it was agreed to bring forward the following item:

10.6 Bench on the Green – to note bench is in poor state of repair and to discuss if any action is to be taken

It had been reported to the Clerk that the bench on The Green was in a very poor state of repair (it was literally crumbling) and needed attention. A new bench would cost in the region of £600 - £1,000. It was going to be suggested to the Teddy Girls that this could be their next fundraising project, but as they hadn't been able to carry out any fund raising in the past year due to the pandemic, they may have other ideas that they wish to prioritise.

It was agreed that Mary Ann would look at some options and obtain quotes for possible replacement benches and bring this to the September meeting.

Action: Mary Ann to explore options and quotes for benches for the September meeting.

9.9 Any other financial business – to receive an update on change of bank signatories

Peter and Mary Ann were now set up as signatories, and the process was nearly complete for the Chairman. The Clerk would arrange the necessary forms for completion to also add Tony as an additional signatory to the bank account.

Action: Clerk to ensure above changes are confirmed with bank and to arrange completion of forms to add Tony to as authorised signatory to the PC bank account.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

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

10.1.1 Play area reports – damaged zip wire chain sleeve, damaged trampoline tile, barbed wire in hedge behind play area.

Pink book– Peter had the pink book and would pass it to Tony. There were no problems to report.

Zip wire/trampoline tile – The quote had been approved and the work for both items was due to be carried out shortly.

Barbed Wire -. It was queried where the barbed wire was located as the Clerk and Mary Ann had had a look and couldn't see it. It was reported that it was located to the left of the old stile by Blenheim Lane entrance – Andrew agreed to take a look.

Action: Andrew to check barbed wire.

10.1.2 Water for cricket square – to update on progress with adding a water supply to the new storage shed.

An initial inspection had been carried out by Thames Water and some tweaking of the work was required. A second inspection had been arranged for later this week when it was hoped the work would be approved and the water could then be connected.

Robert Crocker was sorting this out and he would advise the Clerk when it had been done.

Action: Robert to arrange connection to pipework.

10.1.3 Play equipment replacement for wooden climber and toddler area development – to receive an update from working group and to discuss first design proposals and layout.

Mary Ann was currently obtaining further quotes, so it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to add to next month's agenda.

10.1.4 Pitch Maintenance agreement – to approve signing a Pitch Maintenance Agreement from Football Club for the FA

A request had been received from the Football Club to advise that following a pitch inspection by the Football Association around 18 months ago, the Club were hoping to obtain some additional funding for pitch maintenance. However, when the Club recently chased this up, the procedures had changed and one of the requirements was now to have a pitch maintenance agreement in place with the landowner. This was to ensure that should the Club be successful in obtaining some grant funding that there was permission in place to allow the Club to use the pitch for a considerable period of time, After a brief discussion and a talk through of the form, Council approved the pitch maintenance agreement.

Action: Clerk to forward signed copy to Football Club.

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, to update on the traffic survey, and to approve quote for survey.

Mary Ann was arranging a meeting of the Group so that the various items could be discussed further. A quote for the traffic survey had been received from Highways, and this totalled £490 + VAT for 4 x surveys that would run for 7 days and record speed, class and flow and would be carried out from September onwards. Council approved the cost of the surveys, and the Clerk would confirm this with Highways.

It was also reported that the village Speedwatch group were hoping to resume their checks from early September. A training session for the new members would be carried out in August.

Action: Mary Ann to arrange meeting of group and Clerk to confirm approval of traffic survey.

10.2.2 Dead oak tree by 149B Wroslyn Road – to note response from Highways re possible dead oak tree on grass verge.

The dead oak tree in the grass verge by 149B was reported to Highways last month as it was located within the verge outside of the resident's boundary and so felt to be the responsibility of Highways. A response had since been received from Highways that stated that they had visited the site and inspected the trees and vegetation. They advised that the vegetation present appeared to be growing beyond the area that OCC maintains and was therefore deemed to be an adjacent boundary feature. OCC, as the local highway authority, maintain the HMPE (Highway Maintainable at Public Expense) from boundary feature to boundary feature. As such the vegetation present was felt to be maintainable by the adjacent property/landowner, and not the county council, to maintain as they wished. More details on this matter could be obtained by contacting the highway records team at landandrecords@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

The quote received for the work was £250 + VAT, and after a brief discussion it was agreed to write to the residents to find out their thoughts on whether any action was deemed necessary.

Action: Roger to write to residents as above.

10.3.3 Parking at Freeland School – to discuss any suggestions about a way forward with regards to letter sent to school re parking problems in Oakland Close

An email had been received advising of a letter that had been sent to the School Governors about parking in Oakland Close and the problems it was causing at school drop off and pick up times. The contents of the letter were duly noted. No further action was deemed necessary at this point as a response from the School Governors was awaited, although it was agreed to place a note in the next Grapevine to encourage parents to park responsibly and considerately.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine as above.

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

Peter had the book and there were no problems to report.

A new map and description of each path had been attached inside the footpath book, and the Clerk had done a new footpath rota which had been emailed around and also attached to the book. Peter was arranging to walk the footpath with Tony to show him what needed checking.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports:

No reports had been received.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports:

Bill gave a very brief report as the Government Covid regulations were due to change that day so the regulations for hiring the hall would be updated.

10.6 Bench on The Green – to note bench is in poor state of repair and to discuss if any action is to be taken

This had already been covered in item 9.8.

10.7 Willow trees by the pond – to approve quote for pollarding 2 x crack willows next to village pond

Following on from Robert Crocker's email last month about various Green projects, the Clerk had obtained a quote for pollarding the two crack willows located adjacent to the pond.

The quote totalled £200 + VAT for pollarding the two willows to previous pruning points, and after a brief discussion, Council approved the quote for this work. The Clerk would contact the contractor to arrange the work.

Action: Clerk to arrange tree pollarding as above.

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

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

(b) WODC – Litter and dog bin replacement and renewal programme – details had been emailed around. The Clerk would arrange the review of the litter and dog bins and respond to WODC.

Plus additional items since agenda sent out:

(c) OALC – Council meetings after 19th July – details had been emailed around and were duly noted.

12. CIRCULATION

It was agreed that now the Council was back to meeting in person that the papers could now be circulated.

13. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Clerk gave a brief update to advise that a number of staff were sadly leaving the School. Mrs Tacon, a teacher, Mrs Gorman, a Teaching Assistant, Mrs Coates, also a Teaching Assistant and Mrs Gilbert, the School Administrator were all due to leave this summer. A new teacher, Miss Fletcher had been appointed, and the School were also currently recruiting for a full time Year 1 teacher.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY – None.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Council would be held on **Monday 20th September 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.**

As the Chairman was unable to attend this meeting due to another appointment, and the Vice Chair and Peter were both also away, it was agreed to see if the date could be moved to the week before, on **Monday 13th September**. The Clerk would contact the Village Hall Management Committee to see if they would be willing to swap the date.

Action: Clerk to contact VHMC to try and swap date.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.06pm.