

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD ON THE 20TH JULY 2015, IN THE NEWELL ROOM, FREELAND, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

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

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Three members of the public were present for this session – Amy Jackson, Adrian Parker and Catherine Parker.

Amy Jackson spoke first on behalf of a small group of residents (6 in total) that had come together to discuss some concerns, these were as follows:

- The lack of availability of adequate affordable 1-3 bedroom housing to buy within Freeland – especially for young people either already in the village or coming into the area;
- An ageing population in Freeland, with few younger singles, couples or families, and the longer term detrimental impact on village services and facilities such as the pub;
- General confusion about what affordable housing means or its impact.

The group was aware of strong feeling within the village against development, but also knew of many others who shared their concerns. Amy mentioned the show of 30 hands at the Annual Parish Meeting that indicated there are people in the village who would like to see affordable housing stocks increased. She also advised that the Community Led Plan indicated this too when more respondents said they thought Freeland needed additional housing than said it didn't (although the sample size was pretty small). She advised that whilst the group recognised that those living next to a potential development will have strong views about the immediate impact on them, this can make it awkward for others living further away about voicing support, even though their views may be entirely valid. The group therefore ultimately wanted to make sure their voices aren't lost in this debate.

Amy advised that the group had collectively agreed the following aims:

1. Increase **understanding** within the village about the benefits of having more diverse and obtainable housing;
2. Help give **a voice** to those in Freeland who are supportive of development and/or affordable housing;
3. Promote **appropriate, sympathetic and sustainable** development within Freeland with the aim of increasing the opportunity to buy 1-3 bedroom housing;
4. Find **constructive opportunities** to address the infrastructure challenges that such developments might pose.

She finished her talk by advising that the group hoped that these can be seen as positive and practical ambitions which have the potential to align with some of the Parish Council's aims and objectives. The group would be meeting regularly and the Chairman asked for any updates or useful conclusions that were reached to be passed to the Parish Council.

Adrian Parker spoke next and he was one of the residents that lived close to the field on the A4095 that was being proposed for development. Adrian was a local ecology expert with a background of over 20 years as an Ecologist. He reported a number of concerns about the ecological surveys that had been carried out so far on the site, which he stated were insufficient or incomplete and fell way short of the standards set by DeFRA and Natural England. Freeland had an unusual geology and as such provided habitats for an unusual set of species of flora and fauna. A minimum of 500 metres from the site should be surveyed, and this had not yet been done, plus pond sampling had not been carried out, even though there were a number of ponds close to the proposed site. A survey carried

out by TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) showed a population of Great Crested Newts that are a protected species present in the gardens of two properties on the edge of the proposed site, although Daniel Family Homes failed to record this in their report and suggest a survey is not required. There were also 4 species of butterfly within 500m of the site, two are threatened species and two were on the brink of extinction. Adrian also advised that no reptile, bat or amphibian surveys had been completed which he felt to be a huge oversight. He would be writing a full report which would be submitted to the WODC Planning Team.

Catherine Parker then spoke about concerns regarding the access to the proposed site and whether there was any indication that access would be made available via the Industrial Estate. She also advised that many residents in the area were concerned about safety and accessing the site. She also raised concerns about the escalation of interest in the village and local surrounding area by developers, with many residents being stopped in the streets and being questioned sometimes quite aggressively about their personal circumstances which many were uneasy about answering. The Parish Councillors noted these comments and recognised that it was Open Season for developers at present as there was no ratified Local Plan with WODC. A new Local Plan had now been developed and was in the final stages.

All residents thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to speak at the meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Mary Ann Canning & Toby Morris – both away.

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

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

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

All of them signed the book accordingly.

In view of the residents present at the meeting and their interest in the Daniel Family Homes planning application, it was agreed to bring forward item 7 (Planning) to be taken next.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions

The application below was shown on the projector and Councillors discussed the details of the proposed changes.

7.1 Applications Received:

15/02135/OUT

LAND BETWEEN WYCHWOOD HOUSE AND MALVERN VILLAS, WITNEY ROAD, FREELAND.

Outline planning application for residential development of up to 29 dwellings for Daniel Family Homes (means of access only).

After listening to the three residents who spoke at the meeting, and taking into account the views that had been heard previously at the May meeting, plus comments and concerns that had been sent in to the Council (by phone, letter or email), the Parish Councillors held a further discussion about the application. After careful consideration, it was the decision of the Council that they would oppose the application for the means of access and up to 29 houses due principally to the problems of access onto the A4095. Councillors also felt that the development ultimately meant the loss of a valuable green open space that in return offered no overriding benefit to the village as a whole. They noted that the outline planning application which showed open green spaces and affordable houses was "illustrative" and the actual scheme would be determined at a later date after outline planning had been granted. It was agreed also to point out to WODC in the objection letter about the ecological surveys needing re-doing as pointed out by the local ecologist in his talk to the Council.

7.2 Applications Approved:

15/01708/HHD **2 CHURCH VIEW, FREELAND.**
Erection of single storey rear extension for Mr Welford.

15/00986/HHD **24 CHURCH VIEW, FREELAND.**
Single storey rear extension for Mr & Mrs B Hunt.

7.3 Applications Refused:

15/00908/FUL **35 PIGEON HOUSE LANE, FREELAND.**
Erection of a dwelling for Miss Jennifer Cherry.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 To discuss the potential development of 1,500-2,500 houses north of Eynsham, that may be situated behind Tesco on the A40.

It was pointed out by one of the Councillors that a landowner who owned some of the land behind the Tesco garage on the north side of the A40 had been approached by a developer and was keen to have development on their land. It was possible that a development of 1,500 – 2,000 houses may be built and classed as within Eynsham parish; however it was pointed out that in the latest SHLAA the land north of the A40 was deemed as unsuitable for building for Eynsham as they did not want the village split by the A40. No further details were known about this development at the current time but the council thanked the Councillor for making them aware of the situation.

7.6 To consider whether the Parish Council wishes to submit a funding bid for S106 funding for community facilities in relation to the Daniel Family Homes planning application 15/02135/OUT

After some discussion, Council **resolved** to submit a S106 funding bid for suggested items such as:

- Expanding the primary school
- Freeland play park improvements (to possibly include some outdoor physical training equipment and tennis courts)
- Garden of Remembrance development project.

The Clerk would contact WODC to arrange the bid.

Action: Clerk to contact WODC as above.

7.7 To note residents' concerns regarding the Daniel Family Homes planning application and information received re Great Crested Newts

Details of the resident's concerns regarding the planning application, and the information regarding Great Crested Newts were both duly noted.

7.8 To note and discuss a public exhibition being held by Commercial Estates Group (CEG) to gain residents' views regarding a proposed development on land adjacent to Hanborough Station which includes new housing as well as land for an additional station car park and potentially other infrastructure.

It was noted that his proposed development included 140 houses and a new GP surgery, with the main aim being to provide a bigger station car park. There would also be a bus terminus on site. After some discussion, it was agreed to write to CEG to advise that although the Parish Council were in favour of a better rail station including a better car park, if it comes with an additional 150 houses then this would make it problematical in terms of increased traffic on the A4095 (that was already suffering greatly at peak times) as most people would have to drive to the car park, plus the trains would be even more overcrowded than currently.

Action: Clerk to write to CEG with Council's comments as above.

The three residents then left the meeting at 8.45pm.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 15TH JUNE 2015

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th June 2015 were approved and signed as a true record of those proceedings.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Memorial trees – to consider and approve quote for 15 stakes for memorial plaques, plus to note donation received from Freeland Tuesday Club and Open Gardens towards the cost of the trees

Two donations had been received this month – one for £727.81 from the Tuesday Club from outstanding Club funds following the closure of the Club. The other was for £2,649.20 from the Open Gardens Committee from funds raised during the Open Gardens weekend. Parish Councillors were very appreciative of both donations and asked that letters of thanks were sent to both parties. The Clerk had obtained a quote for 15 metal stakes from Brunel Engraving who could provide them at a cost of £17 per stake (15% discount). However, it was suggested ordering wooden stakes that could be concreted into the ground following a report of one of the memorial trees being knocked when the grass verges were recently cut. Council **resolved** to approve a proposal that the Council purchased some wooden stakes at a cost of no more than £250 (+VAT). Council also **resolved** to approve a proposal to purchase 2 additional tree guards (6 posts per tree), with 12 posts in total being required at an approximate cost of £3.50 per post.

Action: Robert to order wooden stakes and tree guards, Clerk to write letters of thanks for donations.

5.2 Mobile phone coverage in Freeland – update on response received from Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal

There was nothing further to report as the Clerk had written to Vodafone and was awaiting a response.

Action: Clerk to chase up response from Vodafone.

5.3 Memorial Bench by Busby Close – to discuss if any further sponsorship requests have been received and to discuss any action required to request for bench

No further sponsorship requests had been received. A suggestion was made by Mary Ann to name a bench in memory of a particular resident and Mary Ann had offered to organise this – Council approved this suggestion.

Action: Clerk to advise Mary Ann of above.

5.4 Little Free Library – to receive an update on progress

The Little Free Library box was currently being made and it was hoped to have it installed by mid-August. A Facebook and Twitter account had been set up so residents could follow its progress and find out more. Posters would be created shortly and an opening ceremony was planned to be held on the first Saturday in September at Matthew's house. The new plaque for the library box had also recently been sent to Matthew.

5.5 Pond – to consider any further quotes for bulrush removal at pond –

The Clerk had contacted the pond contractor again but still had received no response to date. It was agreed to research other contractors by looking in the local magazines (Grapevine, Hanborough Herald etc) and to contact a local garden contractor whose name was passed to the Clerk. Tim also knew of a contractor and would pass the details to the Clerk.

Action: Clerk to contact garden contractors and research other possible contacts 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

Janet had the book and it was reported that there were a large amount of grass clippings in the play park bin recently. It had also been reported that the black brush on top of the climbing frame (the one with the tyres) had been partially pulled off and needed fastening properly. This had now been done. It was also reported that the junior slide needed de-rusting and repainting. It was agreed to contact a local painter in the village to obtain a quote. As it was the right time of year for carrying out this work, Council **resolved** that the quote could be approved by the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Action: Clerk to contact local painter to obtain a quote for de-rusting and painting slide.

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

As Mary Ann was not present there was nothing further to report.

6.2.2 Quotation for field spraying – to consider if field spraying is required this year

Councillors felt that the field did not need spraying at the current time, and agreed to remove this item from the agenda and review it again next year.

Action: Clerk to remove this item from agenda.

6.2.3 Edge of playing field - update on tidying area (and removing items such as rubble, dead tree, fencing etc) on playing field at rear of resident's house

Robert had completed the work on the area and had cleared 2 big trailers full of tree stumps and rubble and other items. The resident seemed to be happy with the work and Councillors passed on their thanks to Robert for carrying out the work.

6.2.4 Design of the new shed on the playing field – to receive an update on the initial designs for the new shed

Robert gave his apologies that this had not yet been done but would be done in time for the next meeting.

Action: Robert to bring plans along to September meeting.

6.2.5 Cricket pitch rolling – to consider approving quote to hire a roller for the cricket pitch

A request had been made from the Cricket Club to hire a roller for the pitch. This had been done once at a cost of approximately £20.00 – this was approved by the Council. A further request had been received from the Club to have the pitch rolled again. Councillors wished to support the Cricket Club that had started back up again, and agreed to the proposal that a roller was hired on occasions as needed to see out the season at an approximate cost of £20 per hire. It was also agreed to take the old roller down to the local hire company to see if it could be repaired and obtain a quote for the work.

Action: Robert to liaise with Cricket Club re hiring the roller.

6.3 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports

Two reports had been received this month:

New road nameplate on Broadmarsh Lane – A resident had requested a new road nameplate on Broadmarsh Lane (cul-de-sac numbered 89-127), although a new one had been installed on the opposite side of this road a couple of years ago. They had asked if the brambles on the corner of the eastern end of Broadmarsh Lane could be cut back. Council agreed to ask WODC for a new nameplate, and to see if WODC could cut back the bushes.

Action: Clerk to contact WODC as above.

Overhanging tree near 1 Church View – A resident has raised concerns regarding an overhanging tree leaning heavily over Wroslyn Road with no apparent counter weight to balance it out. From reviewing the tree it appeared as if it was located within the rear garden of 1 Church View. Council agreed to write to the residents at 1 Church View to see if they could have the tree assessed and report back to the Parish Council.

Action: Clerk to write to resident as above.

6.3.1 New Bus Shelter outside village hall – update on progress with order

The base for the shelter was being installed on Tuesday and the new bus shelter was being delivered on Thursday.

Action: Robert to prepare concrete base for shelter and remove notice boards.

6.3.2 Minor pothole repairs - to update on whether a different contractor is able to assist

Last month Colin had suggested a name of another contractor who may be able to assist and he had agreed to pass their contact details to the Clerk. The Clerk had not received the details so would contact Colin to chase this up.

Action: Clerk to contact Colin as above.

6.3.3 Speed activated signs – update on progress in application for VAS sign near school, plus to discuss any potential ideas to help Long Hanborough families having to cross the A4095 to come to school

The new VAS sign should be installed over the summer. It was also noted that some parents of children in Long Hanborough who attend Freeland School had asked if there was anything that could be done to assist crossing the A4095 by Wroslyn Road. Unfortunately Councillors felt that there was

little that could be done at the present time as it would not qualify for a lollipop person and pelican crossings were very expensive.

6.3.4 Signage request on Pigeon House Lane – update on order of new signs

The two new signs had been received and Robert and the Chairman agreed to install them.

Action: Chairman and Robert to install signs.

6.3.5 Dog waste bin – to consider installing an additional dog waste bin by entrance to Broadmarsh Woods

A request had been received to have an additional dog waste bin near the entrance to the woods in Broadmarsh Lane. The cost of the bin was £290.06 + VAT and it would cost £2.82 + VAT per empty. Council resolved to approve the request for an additional bin, and this would be paid for by funds held in the Highways Maintenance budget. It was agreed that Jane and the Clerk would agree the final location of the bin.

Action: Clerk to order new bin and Jane and Clerk to agree final location.

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

Robert had the book and there was nothing to report. The book was passed on to Matthew.

6.4.1 To discuss some concerns raised on behalf of horse riders where dogs have been off leads and out of control within Eynsham Park Estate

Some concerns had been raised on behalf of horse riders by Eynsham Park Estate where there had been incident reported of dogs being out of control and barking/nipping aggressively at horses even though they are away from the public rights of way. Council duly noted these concerns and agreed to place a note in the Grapevine to highlight it to residents.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine as above.

6.4.2 To note a report of a fallen tree on a footpath within Broadmarsh Woods

This had been reported to Eynsham Park Estate who had agreed to remove the tree.

6.5 Cemetery – to receive any reports

It was suggested and agreed to change the name of the Cemetery on the agenda to Garden of Remembrance. The Clerk would ensure this was changed on future agendas.

Action: Clerk to make changes as above.

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

As Mary Ann was not present no update was received.

6.6 Allotments – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.6.1 To approve the Freeland Allotment Association Agreement

Council **resolved** to approve the Freeland Allotment Association Agreement with a £1 peppercorn rent. It was also agreed to re-insert the dates for Michaelmas and Lady Day.

The Clerk would make the changes and advise the Allotment Association.

Action: Clerk to make changes as above.

6.7 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

No reports were received.

6.7.1 To consider approving the cost of replacing the wooden bollards with a more robust post and replacing the wooden fencing between the changing rooms and village hall with a metal fence that is in keeping with existing fencing (details and approximate costings to be reported at meeting)

A proposal was made to replace a number of the wooden bollards with metal ones which were felt to be more robust and would add better protection to the village hall. It was proposed replacing 4 of the bollards which were near the store room of the Hall and the one near the CRF. These would cost approximately £400 (£100 each). It was also proposed replacing the wooden fencing between the CRF and the village hall with a metal fence that again was more robust and in keeping with the existing fencing around the Hall garden. It was pointed out that there were no funds being held in the

village hall maintenance budget; however the Clerk and Chairman had reviewed the last 3 years' budgets and found that there were some funds that had been accumulated but not spent. Council therefore **resolved** to approve a proposal to bring forward amounts that had been accumulated but not spent in appropriate circumstances for the last 3 years (the Clerk and Chairman to agree which items to bring forward).

Council **resolved** to approve both of the proposals for the replacement fence and replacement bollards, up to a maximum spend of £1,500.

Action: Robert to organise replacement fence and bollards, Clerk and Chairman to agree budgets to bring forward.

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 30th June 2015 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.

It was agreed to take item 8.5 next before any invoices were approved.

8.5 Purchase of new computer – to consider approving Clerk's request to purchase a new laptop computer

The Clerk had circulated a report to the Council prior to the meeting with a request to purchase a new laptop. The June 2015 edition of OALC Members Update stated that:

"No matter how small your council, it should not rely on the clerk to use their home computer for council work..... The clerk should be provided with a council computer, pc or laptop, with a separate email address for the council. This is a very simple requirement and one ALL councils should do, especially the small ones."

The current Parish Council computer was purchased back in 2006, and had become out of date and unworkably slow to the point that the Clerk now used her own private computer for carrying out Parish Council work. Over the past 3 financial years (2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15) the Parish Council had set aside £500 in the Precept requirement each year that was currently unspent, which meant there was £1,500 available to spend on a new computer.

Council **resolved** to approve the Clerk's request to purchase the requested Dell Precision M3800 — 15" Mobile Workstation laptop costing **£1,299** (exc VAT and shipping), and to dispose of the 2006 Parish Council computer.

Council also approved the two requested customisations to the laptop, the solid state drive option costing an extra £10.60 and the upgrade to the display costing an additional £51.10. This meant the total price of the laptop would be **£1,460.70** (exc VAT and shipping). The Clerk thanked the Council for their approval and would arrange ordering the laptop.

Action: Clerk to order laptop as above and dispose of the old Parish Council computer.

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 all of the following invoices for payment, apart from the Brunel Engraving cheque number 102214 as the metal stakes were no longer required (see item 5.1).

Cheque Number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
102208	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary July 2015	£600.42
102209	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 20.07.15	£12.50
102210	Bill Phillips	Litter picking April/May/June 2015	£250.00
102211	WODC	Grass cutting on field 21.04.15	£81.66
102212	Nigel Green	Mowing March/April/May 2015	£855.00
102213	Matthew Ruddle	Refund expenses - travel & LFL registration	£73.40
102214	Brunel Engraving	Metal stakes for memorial tree plaques	£319.20
102215	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary August 2015	£600.42
102216	Get Mapping plc	Parish Online membership renewal	£33.60
102217	Lisa Smith	New laptop computer	£1,788.84
		Total:	£4,615.04

8.3 To note the new pension regulations and the action required to be taken before staging date

The Chairman gave a brief update regarding the requirements under the new pension regulations for the Parish Council to provide a pension scheme. The Parish Council's staging date was 1st March 2016, so at the September or October meeting the Council would need to choose a suitable scheme to offer to its one employee.

8.4 Annual audit – update on progress

The Clerk gave a brief update about the annual audit. The work on the audit was nearly complete and she hoped to be able to post everything off to the auditors by the end of the week.

8.6 Any other financial business

Change of signatories to bank account – update on progress – the Clerk had received confirmation from the bank that the requested changes to the signatories on the account had been made.

VAT Reclaim Quarter 1 – the VAT reclaim that had been produced from Scribe was reviewed and accepted by the Council.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT STATEMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW

The current version of the risk assessment document had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to make two changes to the document:

- To change the words 'burial ground' to 'Garden of Remembrance' and
- To change the word 'graves and burials' to 'plots'.

The Clerk would make the necessary changes and print off an amended version to be signed off at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to make changes as above to the Risk Assessment document.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

The following were received, noted and/or considered:

(a) OCC – changes to subsidised bus services and dial a ride services – a public consultation – to consider if Council wish to make any response to consultation. After a brief discussion, Council agreed to write to OCC expressing concerns about the potential cuts to the services and the detrimental impact it would have on residents, especially the elderly.

Action: Clerk to write to OCC as above.

(b) OALC – members update June – details had been emailed round for information.

(c) OCC Highways – Winter Preparedness 2015 – details had been emailed round. Council agreed they did not wish to have any more salt delivered.

Plus additional items received since agenda papers circulated:

(d) WODC – Review of Gambling Act 2005 Draft Licensing Policy Statement – consultation – details had been emailed round. Council did not wish to make any comments.

(e) Information about Great Crested Newts – details of TVERC report received from resident, details circulated – this was duly noted.

11. CIRCULATION

July circulation – to be sent out by Clerk.

May circulation – still out.

12. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

As no District Councillors were present there was nothing to report.

13. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

A brief update about the school was given including the recent SATS results and some changes being proposed for the autumn term by the new headteacher.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

Public Sector Show – Matthew reported that he had attended the Public Sector Show in London and that it had been well worth a visit. He recommended other councillors attending the event next year.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 21st September 2015, 7.30pm in the Newell Room.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.25pm.