

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 3rd of February 2015 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Mike Kirby (MK) and Amanda Hodgkins (AH)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO) and seven members of the public

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from Councillors Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman) and Steve Trice (ST) for absence and Councillors Kevin Ochel (KO) and Amanda Hodgkins (AH), for probable lateness

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the PC meeting of 6th of January 2015 were approved with corrections.

3. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This was postponed as the County Councillor was unable to attend.

4. QUARRY LIAISON MEETING REPORT

No quarry liaison meeting has taken place since the January PC meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.01 **Obtaining a defibrillator** SC has paid for the box. Dick Tracey, SWAS, has been off work with an injury but is now back and has arranged to meet with MKB to check the box and give advice over the next couple of days, he is also happy to attend the APM and arrange some training. c/f
- 5.02 **Village Notice Boards** c/f
- 5.03 **VAS Signs** MKB is still waiting to hear back from Dick Calcraft, CDC. c/f
- 5.04 **List of assets (the pond)** MKB is still to talk to Mr Tompkins. c/f
- 5.05 **Blocked gullies** SC has reported all the various identified problem gullies to the OCC Highways website and these should be dealt with shortly. c/f
- 5.06 **Traffic speed in Mere Road** ST has checked for the signs and found that they are in place but are not prominent or noticeable, borne out by the fact that none of the councillors knew of their existence! Also there is some 'SLOW' signage painted on

the road which is badly worn and no longer effective. SC has notified Louise Wilson, OCC, of this and requested some refurbishment, Louise Wilson has replied that she has moved position and this responsibility now lies with Peter Egawhary. SC is to chase him up.

SC passed the information about signs to CF who had already acted after receiving the minutes of last month's meeting. CF has authorised the signage with Anthony Kirkwood, OCC. It is possible that the time limit for funding had passed but CF is hopeful that this can be implemented. c/f

5.07 **Bins in Mere Rd** The invoice for the bin has now been received, it had been sent to Syresham PC by mistake! SC is to pay this by BACS, proposed MKB, seconded MK, carried unanimously. The bin is still to be installed. c/f

5.08 **Unauthorised Activity on the Field** c/f

5.09 **Additional Parish Councillor** c/f

5.10 **Tree surgery and other works on PC land** c/f

5.11 **Underpass Gullies** c/f

5.12 **Drain Covers** ST has emailed SC with details of a further damaged and dangerous drain cover at the entrance to the un-adopted road to the Church. SC has emailed details of all these locations to Cliff Monger, OCC Highways, along with the PC's thanks for all his efforts, and has asked him to report them to Anglia Water, as their response is always faster if the report comes from him. c/f

5.13 **Public Protection and Development letter** c/f

5.14 **Dogbin** SC has heard from Environmental Health, CDC, and there are no regulations regarding siting the bin. c/f

5.15 **Compliance – Health and Safety Assessment of Assets** SC asks that councillors bring in any remaining sheets so that the folder can be completed. There are three outstanding actions:

Street light – OCC is responsible for street lighting and confirm that they maintain 5 lights in Valley Rd. No quote for a maintenance contract can be given without full details. The lights are cleaned, serviced, tested and a new lamp is fitted every 3 years, electrical testing is carried out every 6 years. The PC is to check if the PC light is one of 5 or if there are 5 other lights on Valley Road. c/f

Stable Close open space – on the agenda

Chinalls Close paving – c/f as ST is away.

c/f

5.16 **Grass Cutting Agreement** The signed agreement has been returned to OCC.

5.17 **Road Repairs** SC has reported the Valley Rd surface damage to the OCC Highways website.

- 5.18 **War Memorial Flowers** SC has reimbursed Beryl Smith for her expenditure on flowers.
- 5.19 **HGV's Driving Wrongly** Following a site visit by OCC the signage has been changed, with the no entry sign moved right to the corner of Fulwell Road by the pond.
- 5.20 **Water lying on the road** SC has reported this to the OCC Highways website.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £2,222.98 in the Treasurer Account and £5,295.69 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid in:

£192.00 anonymous contribution

The following had been paid out:

£17.16 to Beryl Smith (S144 (LG Act 1972) Encourage Visitors)

£648.00 to Wel Medical Ltd (S137) for defibrillator case

£8.69 to e.on (running costs)

£284.75 to SC (general administration)

7. S19/S137

No requests have been received.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was carried out this month.

9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

There is nothing to report this month.

10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS

MKB has forwarded the request for information from Jonathan Dawson (JD), solicitor, to the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee (VHPFC). He has also provided a copy of all governance documents to JD. Hugh Smith, Mixbury Trust, has confirmed that the Trust has no objection to the PC registering the spinney as a village asset. A Section 36 valuation has been initiated by the Trust, they are still to provide MKB with a map.

11. PLAYING FIELD CONDITION

MK has walked the field this month and confirms all is well. SC has contacted the insurance company explaining that the PC feels that their current checks are adequate and certainly as rigorous as those carried out by other PC's in the area. SC also pointed out that other similar areas of land in the locality have no signage, presumably because it is felt that people can exercise their own common sense when utilising these amenities, and that the PC would require the insurance company to stipulate the wording of any signs for legal reasons. It is not expected that the PC will hear anything further on the matter.

12. PARISH PRECEPT REVIEW

A letter has been received from CDC explaining that the £443 payment under the rules for compensating PC's who lose council tax base during the year has been withdrawn. There are many PC's affected and with a small precept this makes a huge difference. It is felt that although the PC can absorb some of the loss there will need to be a change to the planned increase. MKB has contacted CDC and is assured that the change will be accepted given the exceptional circumstances, other PC's will no doubt have to make alterations also. It is decided to change the amount of precept request for next year to £7,850.00, proposed MKB, seconded MK, carried unanimously. SC is to submit the alteration.

13. CHERWELL ELECTORAL REVIEW

The changes to the system will mean Barry Wood, CDC councillor for Finmere, having 16 parishes in his area, from Kirtlington to Chesterton. There will be a dramatic change to rural representation. MKB currently has 9 parishes in his ward, a two member ward. When this becomes a three member ward the additional parishes will mean 115 PC meetings per year plus annual meetings will need to be attended.

14. STABLE CLOSE OPEN SPACE USAGE

The play area on the Stable Close open space is definitely not used at the moment and it is felt that it may be a good idea to remove the equipment, thus saving maintenance and inspection costs. MKB is to check the deeds for Stable Close to see if there is any provision included that the play area must be kept. SC is to check with CDC whether there are any restrictions or regulations on provision of play space on the development. This is to be an agenda item in March.

15. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF LAND OFF THE OLD BANBURY ROAD

This item was dealt with at the start of the agenda to accommodate the attending parties.

The PC has been contacted by Strutt & Parker (S&P) who have been invited to the meeting to give information about the proposed planning application for land off the old Banbury Road. There will be a presentation at the Village Hall from 2.30pm – 7.30pm on Monday February 9th. A special email address has been set up for comments. The land is owned by Zagora Holdings. The Cherwell Local Plan provisions have now expired and the National Policy 2012 is in effect, any new local policy will have to be consistent with the National Policy under new rules. In the 1996 Local Plan Finmere was categorized as a Category 1 village – this included both towns like Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and villages such as Adderbury, Deddington and Bloxham. Under the new policy Finmere is a Category A village which is the same grouping. Some 750 new dwellings are to be built across all category A's. Many of these have already been built in Bloxham. There is a list of ten criteria for any new site. The land off the old Banbury Road meets all these criteria in the opinion of S&P. The development will be 35% affordable housing.

It is intended to re-site the gate on the gated road and provide a single vehicular access to the land. The development will be a mix of 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed houses. There will be public open space and a children's play area. The site will be landscaped to minimise impact, particularly on the west boundary. Developers are actively encouraged to engage locally by CDC, though this is not statutory. The development will be in the wider public interest, CDC need to deliver new housing and the village needs to grow sustainably. Affordable housing can be an advantage for local people. The developers would like feedback from the village as to any benefits or improvements under Section 106 they would like to see, bus shelters, village hall improvements etc.

MKB points out that the plans show a proposal for 50 dwellings, which could mean 200 more people in the village with no new facilities, what benefit is that to the village? S&P point out that they can work with local authorities to fund bus services or can fund added play space or better drainage if needed. The area needs to be a sustainable location according to OCC Highways regulations.

It is felt that 50 houses will be very overcrowded on the site. The promotional literature shows a scale plan of a possible version of the development but the scale seems to be out of sync with that of the surrounding plan, S&P will address this issue before the presentation next week. The off-road parking provided will be in line with CDC policy of 2 off-road spaces per house. The allowed concentration of development is 30 houses per hectare even in villages.

MKB points out that the village contains approximately 180 houses at present, some 18 of those being away from the village centre, giving about 165 in the very centre of the village so this development will represent an increase of one third, 33%, to the core village. Have the developers looked at sewage and foul water capacity? S&P confirm that for sewage there is no capacity left in the village but that they can discharge to a soakaway or a watercourse, with EA permission, and there is a stream nearby. Alternatively they could connect to the present sewer system and pay for an upgrade. Foul water has sufficient capacity. MKB points out that capacity was reached in 1999 and there has been no improvement since, despite development in the village. In 1999 there were 130 houses in the village, there have been 42 houses built since, as infill, and this is a 31% increase to a system already at capacity. Village services, bus, Post Office, shop and filling station have all

gone since then. S&P point out that more children will benefit the village school, a major amenity that still survives. It is pointed out that very few children have been added to the roll as a result of past developments. Concern is raised about the possibility of a soakaway, this would be on high ground and could run-off into nearby housing. Will the soakaways be deep enough? S&P point out that the current drainage of the site will be assessed and any proposals must maintain this if not improve it. They will have reservoirs and rain water harvesting per house. MKB points out that all development since October 2013 counts toward the required figure to be split between category A's and these included Kidlington which has seen considerable building in that time.

S&P point out that this is an outline permission only; most matters are reserved with details to follow when the substantive planning application is submitted. The outline application is to go in during the first week of March with the full planning application approximately a year later. The land will then need to be sold to a house builder.

AH raises the question of what is an affordable house? A member of the public present echoes this query. It is explained that some 40% of the affordable housing will be socially rented housing in the hands of the housing association, approx 40% more will be affordable rented property administered by the housing association and the remaining 20% will be intermediate property which is part owned by the occupant and part owned by the housing association. None of this property should be sold into the private sector but should remain affordable. S&P further assure that the buildings on the site will all be two storey, no higher, and the attenuation basin will be adequate to not overflow.

MKB points out that Finmere is a blighted area with HS2 and the landfill; will it be easy to find a builder willing to buy the land? What is in it for the village? How will such a large influx be absorbed into the village? S&P point out that hopefully there will be integration through children's attendance at the school. MKB agrees that no growth is not good for the village but feels that the scale of any development is important and that half the number of houses should be applied for, 50 is too many for the site and the village.

At this point S&P representatives leave the meeting. MKB points out that Finmere was a Category B village. Submissions have been made to return Finmere to that status but examination and re-assessment of the criteria have meant that the categories have been re-jigged with some B's becoming A's and some C's becoming B's and Finmere remains Category A. Even so only some 6,200 additional houses need to be provided by CDC, not all being central. This leaves 750 between all the A's and 250 of those have been built in Kidlington. The remaining 500 are shared between 17 villages. Appeals bring this number down and there will not be that many left to divvy up, certainly nowhere near 50 for Finmere. District Councillor Barry Wood, present at the meeting as a member of the public, points out that there is no minimum concentration for dwellings, only the developers want to push for the maximum allowable concentration. He points out that it is always best to get the opinions of villagers direct to back up any representations made to CDC.

It is felt that there needs to be a village meeting where the villagers can be asked a straight Yes/No question and also asked what mitigation they would prefer if the site does go ahead. MKB is to

produce a flyer and this is to be distributed round the village before the presentation to maximise attendance.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

14/02138/F – Orchard Cottage, Mere Rd – garage conversion – the PC has no objections

17. CORRESPONDENCE

Glasdon invoice for litter bin – see 5. Matters Arising above

Grant for council tax reduction scheme letter – see 12. Parish Precept review above

OPFA membership renewal reminder – the PC is to remain a member at a cost of £40.00. Proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously

North West Bicester draft supplementary planning document consultation extension letter – the PC is not making an official comment

Planning application – 14/01809/LB – Coach House, Mere Road – replacement front door – this arrived too late for inclusion on the agenda and is to be an agenda item next month. SC has applied for an extension. The PC does not feel there will be any objections to the application.

Emails printed:

Steve Trice about manhole covers – see 5. Matters Arising above

PC Caroline Brown has emailed about being invited to any village events - Phillip Rushforth, VHPFC, present at the meeting is to invite PC Brown to the Finmere Festival on September 5th

Tingewick PC has forwarded an email about the condition of Mere Lane – following an email exchange Tingewick PC assure SC that their Local Area Technician for Transport for Bucks has confirmed that Mere Lane is entirely in Oxfordshire. SC is to check with OCC Highways.

HS2 has sent details of the phase one property compensation – placed in folder

OCC explanation of possible benefits of unitary structure – this has been proposed before

MKB forwarded an email from a villager voicing concerns - the stile on Fulwell Road is in need of repair, SC is to notify Sarah Aldous, OCC Footpaths Officer – people are parking in front of the bottle bank and blocking access, Phillip Rushforth, VHPFC, explains that the forthcoming car park refurbishment will address this issue with a wider tarmac area.

CDC draft supplementary planning consultation extension – as described above

Strutt and Parker information about planning proposals for land off old Banbury Road – see item 15. of the same name above

CF replied with information about sign funding – see 5. Matters Arising above

Emails forwarded:

The usual reports

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

HS2 Finmere PC have been invited to appear before the Select Committee on the Hybrid Bill on Monday February 23rd. Newton Purcell and Mixbury PC's and CDC are also to appear along with two private individuals. MKB will circulate his proposed presentation for approval. Light pollution will be one focus on the local detrimental effect.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 3rd of March 2015.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Clerks and Councils Direct January 2015

Banbury Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Review

J Parkers Wholesale Bulb Catalogue Spring 2015

HS2 phase one property compensation details