

## FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman), Kevin Ochel (KO), Mike Kirby (MK), Amanda Hodgkins (AH) and Steve Trice (ST)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO)

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from County Councillor Catherine Fulljames and Councillor Amanda Hodgkins (AH), for possible lateness

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the PC meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2014 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 December PC meeting.

### 5. MATTERS ARISING

5.01 **Obtaining a defibrillator** The box has arrived and SC will now pay for it as previously agreed. Dick Tracey has still not visited MKB to check the equipment despite SC's email so SC is to chase this up again. c/f

5.02 **Village Notice Boards** c/f

5.03 **VAS Signs** MKB passes the anonymous donation to SC who is still to check with the internal auditor as to how to record it. MKB has been in touch with Dick Chalcraft of CDC about the signs, we need a key to fit the signs to their bases and move them. c/f

5.04 **List of assets (the pond)** MKB is still to talk to Mr Tompkins. c/f

5.05 **Stiles** SC has received an email from Sarah Aldous, OCC footpaths officer, apologising for lack of progress on this matter, it is unlikely to be dealt with soon. This is to be an agenda item in 6 months.

5.06 **Christmas light tree** A working party will take place at the village spring clean.

- 5.07 **Printer** MKB has passed his printer with a supply of ink cartridges on to the PC. This will solve the problem.
- 5.08 **Blocked gullies** SC has received emails from Cliff Monger, OCC Highways, explaining that the PC do not pay for gully cleaning and further explaining that the drainage supervisor has informed Cliff that his department are not in Finmere in the near future. The call centre can be contacted by telephone or email supplying exact locations of any problem. ST has checked the gullies and has explained the location of the worst ones in an email to SC. SC is to pass this email on to the call centre and ask for work to be carried out. c/f
- 5.09 **Traffic speed in Mere Road** SC has received a reply from Peter Egawhary, OCC, he has forwarded this matter to Louise Wilson, OCC, who has replied that according to her records Finmere school has the appropriate signs in place. ST is to check this, given that both the school and councillors are unaware of them it is possible they have been moved or removed.
- Anthony Kirkwood, OCC Road Safety Engineering Team, has been contacted by Cliff Monger and has emailed a reply about the 20mph zone. The Finmere request has been added to a list of such requests which will be investigated in more detail when resources permit. However with restricted funds and over 200 locations on the list it is unlikely that any progress will be made in the foreseeable future. A very rough figure for the administrative and signing costs of a 300 metre long restriction would be £3,000. This restriction would still be subject to consultation in the area and therefore may be refused. Advisory signs are an alternative but they cost a similar amount if not more. SC is to pass this information to CF and see if the community fund could help. c/f
- 5.10 **Trespassers** This will be a subject in the next newsletter.
- 5.11 **Bins in Mere Rd** MKB is to install this now with the help of MK and ST. c/f
- 5.12 **Playing field problems** These will be featured in the next newsletter.
- 5.13 **Unauthorised Activity on the Field** This will be an item in the next newsletter. MKB is still to provide SC with details of the official shooting arrangements in order that she can formally advise the VHPFC. c/f
- 5.14 **Additional Parish Councillor** Joanne Brookes, former councillor, is still interested in returning and is to have a formal meeting with MKB. c/f
- 5.15 **Dog fouling** MKB has cut back the undergrowth around the dog bin at the gated road junction. This will be an item in the next newsletter.
- 5.16 **Tree surgery and other works on PC land** ST is still to talk to Steve Reason, resident, with a view to seeing if the residents will help with any of the work needed on the open space. KG has cut back the brambles around the notice board and they are to be checked during the spring clean. c/f
- 5.17 **Remembrance Day Wreath** The payment for the wreath has been sent.

- 5.18 **Underpass Gullies** ST checked these and reported in his email to SC that they had not been cleaned. SC has reported this matter to Tingewick PC and has passed on ST's contact details. Tingewick PC has passed this matter to their councillor responsible for footpaths who is to liaise with ST. c/f
- 5.19 **Drain Covers** ST has checked and found the third drain cover. He has also found several unsafe drain covers along Mere Road. SC is to forward his email to Cliff Monger. The water company will react more quickly to a report from him. SC is also to thank Cliff for all his efforts. c/f
- 5.20 **Community Speedwatch** This will be an item in the APM newsletter.
- 5.21 **Public Protection and Development letter** c/f
- 5.22 **Data Protection Registration** This has been renewed.
- 5.23 **Assets Register** This has been updated. The new account for Chinalls Close at the value of £1 will not show on reports until next month's statement as it was entered after January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 5.24 **Dogbin** SC has checked with CDC about the legalities of moving the bin. Environmental health are to send a list of any siting requirements. ST has looked at the area and feels it may be best to get the homeowner and his neighbour to agree on a new site once any regulations are known. c/f

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £2,989.58 in the Treasurer Account and £5,295.69 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out:

£100.00 to Royal British Legion for memorial wreath (S137 (LG Act 1972 Village benefit)  
 £35.00 ICO registration for data protection (general administration)  
 £1,020.00 to John Donaldson for grass cutting and tree works (running costs)  
 £294.32 to Sharron Chalcraft for Clerk and RFO duties, internet costs and back pay (general administration)

MKB hands SC the £192 anonymous contribution.

## 7. S19/S137

No requests have been received. The memorial wreath comes under S137 expenditure.

## 8. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was carried out this month.

## 9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

There has been no contact with Opes this month. No incidents have been reported or complaints received. By the look of things a good job is currently being done.

## 10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS

Jonathan Dawson, solicitor, has sent a checklist of information needed with questions about the directors and assets of the charities among other things. The fewer items on the list that apply the cheaper the work will be. Many things such as loans, trust funds etc do not apply. MKB is to forward the list to Illa Moss, Chairman, and Phillip Rushforth, member, of the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee.

MKB has now had confirmation from Hugh Smith, Mixbury Trust, that the sale of part of the spinney land to the neighbouring homeowners has now been finalised and he is to send a definitive map to MKB for the PC's reference. The Trust is open to negotiations with the PC over the purchase of the remainder of the spinney. With his 'other hat' on as Chairman of the Poors Plot charity Hugh Smith is sure that the Poors Plot would help the PC with a donation toward the necessary 10% deposit needed to attract a grant for the remainder. He would of course have to abstain from any discussions due to conflict of interest. He does not feel that the Mixbury Trust would have a problem with the PC listing the spinney as an asset to the village which will mean that the PC have first dibs for six months. He is to talk to the Trustees.

## 11. PLAYING FIELD CONDITION

MK has walked the field this month. SC has investigated the cost of signage for the field after the email from the insurance company last month; they range from £35 for a small plastic sign to £110 for a large aluminium one. SC is to contact the insurance company and explain that the PC feels that other parks and open spaces do not have warning signs and insist that if they want a sign they should provide the wording.

## 12. COMPLIANCE – CHECKING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS

SC did not circulate KO's sheets. They are checked and agreed. Others have completed their sheets but not brought them in, however they have identified no further actions as being necessary beyond the annual check for presence and condition during spring clean and the standard regular maintenance/inspection that already takes place. The situation with all assets is now as follows:

War Memorial – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

Village Pond (part) – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

VAS signs – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

VAS sign base – full sheet submitted – no actions needed.

Street light – full sheet submitted – annual check and safety inspection (see agenda item 17 below).

Stable Close open space – full sheet submitted – no action beyond clearing, carried out, sanding wooden equipment and possible signage. It is felt that before investing in signs and equipment maintenance it should be decided whether the play equipment is to be removed. This is to be an agenda item in February.

Playing Field – Two of three sheets submitted – no actions provisionally.

Notice Boards – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

Litter bins – full sheet submitted – no actions identified. The possibility of signage is raised but felt to be unnecessary at this time.

Grit bins – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

Dog fouling signs – full sheet submitted – no actions identified.

Dog bins – full sheet submitted – no actions identified.

Computer – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally

Cold calling signs – full sheet submitted – no actions identified.

Christmas lights – full sheet submitted – no actions identified.

Bench – detailed sheet outstanding – no actions identified provisionally.

Chinalls Close open space – full sheet submitted – no action beyond repairs to paving, see agenda item 5. 16 above.

Pending receipt of the remaining sheets the PC is happy to accept that no other actions are required. Proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously.

### 13. PROTECTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

The PC will work toward buying the spinney for the village to add to the amenity of the playing field in the future. To that end it is decided to formally register the spinney as a community asset but first to ask the Mixbury Trust to obtain a Section 36 valuation for the purposes of planning fund raising. This matter is to be carried forward until such a report is received. Proposed ST, seconded MK, carried unanimously.

### 14. GRASS CUTTING AGREEMENT

OCC have finally replied to SC's email, on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, and stated that unless the PC sign the altered agreement the contract will be ended. The deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup> was given but MKB has spoken to OCC and obtained an extension for discussion. The PC could give up the responsibility for the grass cutting of the main road sections to OCC but the resulting

loss of £750 would not be reflected in the reduced costs of the contract, also villagers are very happy with the current appearance of the village and the reduced cutting which OCC would carry out would impact on the village adversely. It is decided to sign the amended agreement. Proposed AH, seconded ST, carried unanimously. SC is to return the signed copy of the agreement.

#### 15. PARISH CLERK HOURS DIARY

The hours worked by the Clerk for October were 18.5, for November 22.5 and for December 29.5 giving a quarterly total of 70.5. The total for the first 9 months is 236.75 so the total of 25 hours per month is looking about right. It is agreed that the Clerk should continue to be paid for 25 hours till the end of the year. Proposed ST, seconded MK, carried unanimously.

#### 16. ROAD REPAIRS

Valley Road has areas of the surface which have sunk, to such an extent that the metalwork is showing through the road surface. SC is to report this to Cliff Monger.

#### 17. STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE

Having checked the area both ST and other councillors are clear that the light is very necessary. There is no other light nearby and the area is very narrow. Visual examination and consultation with an electrician have made certain that the bulb at present in the light fitting is not a mercury bulb and therefore will not require changing in the spring when regulations change. One electrician has refused to quote for the maintenance contract as the position and height of the fitting mean that you would need a cherry picker or some such machine to reach the light safely and the road would possibly need to be closed. It is strongly felt that CDC/OCC (SC is to check who is responsible) have been maintaining the light as the fitting is certainly very clean and looks exactly as the other fittings in the street. SC is to check with CDC/OCC and obtain a written description of the checks carried out in order to comply with health and safety.

#### 18. PARISH PRECEPT REVIEW

The PC must decide on the amount of the precept to be levied in 2015/16. SC has produced and circulated a revenue estimate and an explanation of factors affecting the PC finances. MKB has emailed a brief description of the options. The increase in hours for the Clerk have resulted in a rise in general administration costs, the obtaining of the Chinalls Close open space has contributed to a rise in running costs, though this will be less in subsequent years, and these had already risen through the ownership of the village hall. The grass cutting grant will be halved next year resulting in a loss of £750 of funds. All in all the PC is looking at a shortfall of £8,100 if the full provision for S137 payments, for village benefits, is maintained. If S137 is omitted altogether then the shortfall will be reduced to £5,850 which is more than covered by the current precept of £6,050. After much discussion it is decided to raise the

precept to £7,500. This gives the PC the flexibility to spend some money on village benefits and as there is the possibility that rises in the precept will be limited in the future it protects the PC's ability to carry out its responsibilities in future years even if there are further cuts in grant provision. Proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously. SC is to submit the necessary paperwork.

## 19. CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Sir Tony Baldry MP about broadband provision – read out

Electoral review of CDC: Draft Recommendations – placed in folder – to be an agenda item in February

Letter from Beryl Smith asking for £17.16 reimbursement for war memorial flowers - this is to be paid - proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously

Emails printed:

Email from ST about village issues – see matters arising and other agenda items

Email from Cliff Monger about gully cleaning - see matters arising

Emails from Peter Egawhary and Louise Wilson about school signs - see matters arising

Email from OCC about emergency planning – taken by KG

Email about 20mph zone – see matters arising

Email from MKB about precept – see agenda item 18 above

Emails forwarded:

Invitation to Sir Tony Baldry dinner

Grass cutting contract, OCC deadline news

Electoral review of CDC draft recommendations info

Usual reports

## 20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**HGV's driving wrongly** There have been several incidents recently of HGV's following faulty satnav information and causing damage to property and road verges when they become stuck. Paul Tompkins, villager, had to carry out considerable repairs to the verge near the pond last week. The PC would like to register their thanks for all his efforts. MKB has been in touch with OCC and the reports have been such that they are to have a site meeting to discuss possible signage.

**Water lying on the road** There is a considerable amount of water lying in the road near the old Kings Head. The gullies do need cleaning but it is also possible that the recent works to lay fibre-optic cables have damaged the ditch in that area. SC is to email Cliff Monger.

#### 21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2015.

KO apologises for probable lateness.

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

#### CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Winter in Oxfordshire communications campaign letter

Electoral Review of CDC: Draft Recommendations