

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 6th December 2016 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Steve Trice (ST) (Acting Chairman until MKB joined the meeting after item 6.15), Mike Kirby (MK), Kevin Ochel (KO) and Joanne Brooks (JB)

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

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from County Councillor Catherine Fulljames (CF), Councillor Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman), Councillor Amanda Hodgkins (AH) and also Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman) for lateness

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

ST declared an interest in Item 5 (as a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee), in Item 10 (as a member of the VHPFC) and also in Item 15 - Glebe Farm application (as a neighbour)

JB declared an interest in Item 15 - Glebe Farm application (as a neighbour)

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 1st of November 2016 were approved with corrections.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

5. OPERATION PLAYGROUND UPDATE

The Operation Committee members, Jacky Horwood and Emily Ackland, gave a presentation confirming that they have a definite sum agreed by GrantScape of £36,543.76. The CTP (Contributory Third Party payment) of £4168.00 has now been raised and they hope to proceed with the application shortly. Having obtained quotes from three organisations it has been decided to order from Wicksteed, their quote was very reasonable and also gave the best variety, quality and durability as well as the lowest maintenance costs. A good deal has been done and a reduced price means that a substantial amount of equipment can be purchased and

landscaped. Copies of the group's presentation are given to the PC for reference; one of these is to be brought to meetings in future for information in any discussions. The proposed timeline is that the order should be placed with Wicksteed in January. The grant monies are drawn down from GrantScape once the project is complete, after the invoice has been received from Wicksteed. The delivery, as the equipment must be built, takes ten weeks and installation another two to three weeks. The PC will then have thirty days to make the payment in full of the invoice. The first instalment of the 2017 precept will have arrived by then and the PC could make the payment and quickly reclaim VAT. It is possible that the PC could ask to pay in instalments or receive a loan from CDC in order to cover the VAT amount of some £7,500 or even claim back the VAT before paying the invoice; SC is to check with HMRC. It is anticipated that the playground should be open for use by July.

One issue that arises is the cutting of the grass in the play area; the group have approached Alan and Trevor Jones who see no problem with maintaining it. There needs to be a discussion on the future of the old play area, whether the new playground is to replace or increase provision. There will be cost implications for the annual inspection report. The beech tree at the location may need to be cut back but must not be felled as it is a memorial tree. The group has kept a sum aside for signage and will ask the suppliers to give definitive advice on what signage is needed. The suppliers have assured the group that there is no need for a fence; this will facilitate the passage of the right of way through the site. The PC points out that there may be issues with dog mess, as experienced by the football club, and the group will explain to their supporters that further fundraising may be required for a fence if a problem does develop. ST pointed out that there may be issues here regarding the public footpath running through the site, and that it wouldn't be possible to just put up a fence. If it proved necessary redirecting a public footpath is not quick, straightforward, or guaranteed, and it costs £1200 to apply for planning permission, plus advertising and any other costs which arise in the event of objections being raised by members of the public.

The group have one request of the PC. It would be best if swing gates were fitted to the gaps in the car park fence, in order to make it more difficult for any straying child to access traffic areas. There should also be a gate at the rear of the village hall, which would keep children away from the bottle bank area and the road. The group will fund these improvements. The work is to be carried out before the playground opens. The project go ahead was proposed by KO, seconded ST, carried unanimously. ST agreed to consult with OCC regarding the precise location of the right of way across the land before any equipment is sited, and it was agreed by the Operation Playground Committee Members he would be sent an electronic version of the scale drawing of the site plan, which was included in the booklet. This is to be an agenda item in January.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- 6.01 **List of assets (the pond)** SC has received a new copy of the text sheet for the common land registry CL 95 but this still shows crossing out in red pen and handwritten notes which are not easy to decipher. OCC have confirmed that they have no larger scale map. SC has asked OCC to advise whether they think the Land Registry would hold a larger version of a marked map or whether the Land Registry map would simply show the pond. No reply has been received yet. c/f

- 6.02 **Christmas Lights** The lights were mended by working party before the carol service and are working at the moment. They will need to be replaced at some stage as the wiring is beginning to perish and had broken in several places over the autumn. The cost of a 20m strip is some £150 and there are two 20m and one 10m strip in use. They could be tested in the summer before ordering replacements. This is to be an item on the June agenda.
- 6.03 **Letter from Little Tingewick resident about Mere Lane** SC has continued researching the minutes but found no reference to the road surface. Some folders may be in use by councillors and SC has no electronic copy of the older minutes. The PC suggests that SC should check any missing folders and then inform the Little Tingewick resident of any findings or lack thereof and close this issue.
- 6.04 **Parish Path Map** This has now been framed by MK and hung in the village hall. MK is to send the invoice for some £55 to SC. This is to be paid, proposed JB, seconded KO, carried unanimously.
- 6.05 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** The drain beside the post box has still not been attended to. SC is to check fix-my-street and refresh the request if possible. c/f
- 6.06 **Internal and External Audit – Signatory Forms** Two of the councillors still need to hand in their forms. SC is to remind them. c/f
- 6.07 **Church Mower** SC has just received an invoice and a letter of thanks from the Rector.
- 6.08 **Bottle Bank** Phillip Rushforth (PR), Village Hall and Playing Field Committee, has still not heard from CDC about reporting the bottle bank for emptying. He is present at the meeting and will pursue this for the VHPFC.
- 6.09 **Stable Close Bund** PR confirms that he looked at the tree concerned and it is a silver birch which will not damage the garage of AH. JB confirms that silver birch will not undermine foundations. If AH is still unhappy this issue can be raised again.
- 6.10 **Christmas Carol Service** This went well with Anita Bilbo turning on the lights. JB has written to thank her on behalf of the PC.
- 6.11 **A421 Verge to roundabout** This has still not been mown despite all the other verges being cut. SC is to chase this up with Bucks CC. c/f
- 6.12 **Mixbury to Fimere footpath** SC has not heard from the Fianders regarding the state of this path. SC is to chase this matter up as the gentleman may well be in touch again. The issue over the missing signs would need to be taken up with MKB concerning whether they had now been fixed in place. c/f
- 6.13 **Paving slabs in Chinalls Close** ST has spoken to John Donaldson (JD), grass cutting contractor, and it is hoped that the work will be done in the next week or so, certainly before Christmas. SC has requested details from volunteers, PR is happy to coordinate this and collect details from everyone. c/f
- 6.14 **Queen Victoria’s Jubilee Tree** The work has been carried out by MK, as JB discovered when she arrived with secateurs.

6.15 **Memorial Wreath** This has been paid for.

At this point MKB arrived and assumed Chairmanship of the meeting.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £2,354.15 in the Treasurer Account and £5,302.15 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out:

£100.00 to British Legion (S137 – village benefit – memorial wreath donation)

£287.50 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

An invoice has been received from Howard Computing in the sum of £63 for mending the PC laptop, decided under urgent business. This is to be paid by bacs, proposed ST, seconded MK, carried unanimously. Mr Howard advised that the problem had arisen as Windows Vista is no longer supported by Google Chrome or MSN. SC is now using Mozilla Firefox but this will cease supporting Vista within the next couple of years. It is felt that the PC should consider funding either Windows 7 for the existing machine or a new laptop and office 365. This is to be taken into account when discussing the budget in Item 14.

A renewal notice has been received from ICO regarding Data Protection Registration. This is to be held over to the January meeting as it requires a cheque to be signed and has a later deadline.

8. S19/S137

No requests had been received.

9. URGENT BUSINESS

The ordering of the repair of the laptop was decided under urgent business.

10. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

MKB confirms that Ben Wragg will try to arrange a quarry liaison meeting if the PC would like that. ST suggests that MKB should check with Barbara Cunningham, village representative, whether she is able to attend and when. The site is still for sale.

11. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB has checked with Mixbury Trust and they confirm that the right of way across the field was granted to themselves in order that they could have access for works and maintenance. Once the PC buy the spinney this will no longer be relevant. PR is to change the lock on the gate and inform Revd Alice Goodall as the Trust Chairman. Proposed ST, seconded MK, carried unanimously. MKB has also drafted a letter to Mixbury Trust explaining the PC's offer for the spinney. This is to be circulated before sending.

MK has walked the field this month and reports it to be in satisfactory condition.

12. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are no new residents this month.

13. OLD BANBURY ROAD PATH CONDITION

The path is currently passable. There will need to be a working party or possibly JD could be asked to carry out the work. JB is to take a look at the path as some of the machinery on her farm may be able to be used although there are access considerations. Liability will have to be considered for any work that the PC carries out.

14. PARISH PRECEPT INITIAL REVIEW

SC circulated revenue estimates for 2017-18. The figures need to be adjusted as the new expenses of a laptop (£500 approx), Christmas lights (£500 approx), possible extra grass cutting costs if prices change or the season requires an extra cut (£500 approx) and legal fees concerning the setting up of the new VHPFC (£500 approx) have all now been identified. This means that with the probable loss of the remaining grass cutting grant, though no more has been heard on this matter since the summer, the possible shortfall between income and outgoings to be covered by the precept would be in excess of £11,000. This figure includes a reduced amount to be spent on S137, only £1,500, and allows no money for any unexpected contingencies. The PC is already running a reserve less than one year's precept while best practice is to have at least one year. All this, coupled with the fact that the capping of PC's is likely in the near future, means that the PC must consider raising the precept by between 35% and 50% for the 2017-18 year. The actual monetary value is small, about £10 pa, but the percentages will look large. The PC asks PR how he feels as a villager and how he thinks others may view this. PR feels that villagers will understand if the costs involved and the precepts of comparable villages, being generally much higher, are explained. A newsletter will need to be produced. The final review will be on the January agenda. Councillors are to consider these matters over the Christmas and New Year period. The matter of the PC contribution to the cost of the exterior lights for the village hall is also raised, having been scheduled to be considered during the review. It is felt that it would be best for the PC, given the financial position, to make a donation of half the cost, some £350. PR is to send the exact figure to SC for circulation under urgent business. Proposed JB, seconded MK, carried unanimously.

15. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

OCC Finmere Bridleway No. 4 (Part) Public Path Temporary Diversion Order – this is now in place

16/01759/TPO – Town Farm, Fulwell Rd – 2 yew trees – reduce overhang by 2m away from property – subject to TPO 4/1998 – consent subject to conditions – it transpires that the PC cannot object on TPO applications as only an expert can decide – this has been carried out and the trees seem unaffected

16/02093/F – Five Gables, Fulwell Road – erection of single storey extension to replace conservatory – the PC has no objections

16/02115/F – Glebe Farm, Water Stratford Road – conversion of redundant agricultural structure to form dwelling – the PC has no objections

16/03638/APP – Tingewick – Land opposite Red Lion, Little Tingewick – change of use of the land for the siting of a caravan for residential purposes for 1 no. Gypsy pitch together with the erection of a stable block and hardstanding ancillary to that use – the applicant's husband Mr Aaron Smith is present at the meeting and the PC invites him to speak on relevant matters. There will need to be a change of use of land for this application but the rules for gypsy sites are different to those for permanent dwellings. The application has been altered slightly in that it is now for one static and one touring caravan, to accommodate the family of the applicant, and is now for only the first 20m of the land near the road, the rest remaining as grazing land.

MKB attended the Tingewick PC meeting last week where the Finmere PC email was read out. This email included suggestions for conditions in the event of the granting of the application such as limiting storage of machinery and plant. Tingewick PC took these suggestions on board and added a suggestion for a condition removing permitted development rights. They also made observations concerning highway safety due to the bus stop and entrance location and also the village envelope, but they did not object.

The applicant explained that his family had owned the site for some 12 years and he had spoken to many villagers over recent weeks and months seeking to put minds at rest. He assured the PC that there would be no machinery stored or commercial activity carried out at the site. Concern was expressed about the size of the turning circle provided by the hardstanding. The applicant explained that there was a 3.5 ton vehicle restriction on the site put in place by AVDC. The size of the gate into the remaining grazing area of the land was questioned; at 6m it seems excessive for simple horse access, the applicant was happy to change the size of the gate if asked. Drainage was another issue raised and the applicant confirmed that if the main drains were deemed to be overstretched by the site then a septic tank would be installed. He also confirmed that Highways were, so far unofficially, satisfied with the safety of the site entrance.

Other such sites in the area have caused numerous problems, not least by morphing from single caravan to multiple occupancy sites over a relatively short period of time. ST points out that a resident who lived near the site had posted a comment on the AVDC planning website in the last day or so, objecting to the proposal on a number of planning/legal points. The comment points out that a planning review raised concerns about gypsy site provision in AVDC complying with the local plan and then questions whether they have done enough to

provide sites at more suitable locations. Another point raised elsewhere was that the recommendation was that traveller sites should ideally be local authority owned. Mr Smith refuted this, explaining that although local authorities do own some sites they have sold off many more and by far the majority are now privately owned. Reflecting the views of villagers expressed on planning grounds the PC is minded to object to the application. The village envelope, highway safety and possibly the fact that this is a very peripheral location to satisfy the local plan will be stated, though MKB points out that the latter point is tenuous. MKB is to write and circulate the objection before submitting it. Proposed ST, seconded MKB, carried unanimously.

Mr Smith commented that the decision of the council to object to the planning proposal would do him a favour, as if AVDC rejected the application he would be able to gain permission by appeal, which would not demand the conditions offered by him at this stage. Mr Smith said that this would make the site more valuable to him. He left the meeting at this point after requesting the return of the letter from Mrs Squires (the applicant) that he had given to councillors at the beginning of the meeting giving assurances that she would not add further caravans on the site in the future. He left the meeting at this point but returned a short while after, to clarify that he was just trying to explain to the meeting the likely outcome of the matter. Mr Smith then left the meeting.

16/01209/OUT – Heatherstone Lodge, Banbury Rd – residential development and associated infrastructure – permission refused

16. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

Invoice from Howard Computing for mending laptop – see Item 7

Data protection registration renewal reminder – see Item 7

Notification of planning policy consultations – partial review of the Cherwell Local Plan – this has also been circulated electronically

Detailed invoice from the PCC for the mower contribution

Letter of thanks for the mower contribution from Revd Alice Goodall on behalf of the PCC

Letter and invoice from Beryl Smith – invoice in the sum of £14.85 for flowers for the war memorial – Beryl Smith explains in her letter that advancing years mean she will no longer be able to carry out her planting work at the memorial. SC is to write with sincere thanks on behalf of the PC for all the work that Mrs Smith has carried out over the years. The invoice is to be paid proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously. SC is to explain to Mrs Smith that the PC is unable to provide a cheque until the new signatory forms are in place but the PC is happy to pay electronically if she so wishes. A replacement plantsperson will need to be found and councillors are asked to give this matter some thought before the next meeting.

Emails printed –

OALC about Oxfordshire Together – this covers the use of S137, which ordinary PC's can only use to subsidise community buses rather than commercial services

NALC about Carer's Allowances – SC is to circulate the link

CDC public access building list – there are no buildings other than the school which meet the criteria

Sue Ryder letter of request for support – this is not applicable as not specific to the village

Draft notes of a meeting to consider the Parliamentary Boundary Consultation – no action required

Various about road markings – these confirm that the road marking work was carried out by OCC

Steve Trice about Operation Playground – points covered in Item 5

Emails forwarded –

Tingewick PC planning application information – see Item 15

Leicestershire council about planning app on land opposite Red Lion – points covered in Item 15

County Council update – information on new directors etc – no action required

Notification of planning policy consultations – notes on partial review of Cherwell Local Plan – no action required

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Update – no action required

OALC November Update – no action required

Usual reports

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 10th of January 2017.

KO apologises for the January meeting.

Meeting closed at 11.15 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED - None