

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 12th July 2016 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman), Kevin Ochel (KO), Mike Kirby (MK) and Joanne Brooks (JB)

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

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from Councillors Steve Trice (ST) and Amanda Hodgkins (AH), Joanne Brooks (JB) apologised for lateness

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 7th of June 2016 were approved with corrections.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

At this point items 16 and 15 were discussed (see below) in order that members of the public present for these items could leave if necessary.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.01 **Chinalls Close Paving Slabs** ST has obtained and forwarded a quote from John Donaldson, grass cutting contractor, for the three options which, taking into account sale of the slabs at £1 a piece to Dragon Reclamation, would give the following prices:

1. Remove all slabs, level the area and re-lay as currently arranged. - £575
2. Remove all slabs, level the area, re-lay a double width strip as a path and seed the remaining area with grass. - £315
3. Remove all slabs, level the area and seed with grass. - £600

This quote obviously makes all options achievable. Phillip Rushforth, resident of Chinalls Close, is asked about the recent impromptu barbecue which took place on the paved area. This had attracted many residents to take part and the general feeling seemed to be that the paved area is an asset. A lot of work on removing weeds has been carried out by residents and it would seem to be a shame to remove them if they can be such a resource.

SC is to approach the insurers, Zurich, and seek their advice about possible signage. She is to point out that the slabs were laid by the developers, have been subject to settlement but are still popular with residents and see if it would be possible to put some sort of advisory signage in place to allow residents to use the area at their own risk. c/f

- 5.02 **Village Notice Boards** The rail is still to be replaced. c/f
- 5.03 **List of assets (the pond)** c/f
- 5.04 **Public Protection and Development letter** c/f
- 5.05 **Carol Service/Christmas Lights** The lights are still to be mended or replaced. c/f
- 5.06 **Letter from Little Tingewick resident about Mere Lane** SC is to research this over the summer now that the audit has been completed. c/f
- 5.07 **Risk Assessment Forms** The remaining sheets still need to be returned. c/f
- 5.08 **Local Heritage Assets Register** SC has returned the form and put up a notice. A resident has come forward to volunteer and SC has delivered the forms to Ms Corinne Merrick.
- 5.09 **Queens 90th Birthday Celebrations** SC posted the card to the Queen's Personal Private Secretary as protocol dictates.
- 5.10 **Emergency Questionnaire** SC was unable to submit the form electronically but has posted it.
- 5.11 **Parish Path Warden** MKB has found the map and will bring it to the next meeting. c/f
- 5.12 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has heard from Kathryn Gash, OCC Highways, that she has visited the village again and inspected Valley Road. Only two drains were classed as in need of clearing, these were scheduled and a fix-my-street report has confirmed that they have been fixed. MK points out that the drain in the grass of the Cross Tree triangle has not been cleared. SC is to contact Kathryn Gash and make sure that this drain was actually inspected; it is possible that she is not aware of it. Kathryn Gash confirmed that the red marks around the village were hers. c/f
- 5.13 **Parish Liaison Meeting** MKB attended the meeting which was informative as always.
- 5.14 **War Memorial Letter** SC has forwarded the address of Bruce Smith, historian, for KG.

- 5.15 **Road Surface and Marking Problems** SC has heard from Kathryn Gash who is also having trouble with the boundary, having marked some potholes beside the Red Lion but then found out they are not in Oxfordshire. SC was told to contact Mike Todd of OCC Technician Highway Records and ask for the definitive boundary. Mike Todd has confirmed that the boundary is not straight forward and he has posted a map with the line marked on it which has not yet arrived. SC is to action this with either County Council once the map arrives. c/f
- 5.16 **Invoices** The invoices to Arrow Accounting and Zurich Insurance agreed at the last meeting have been paid.
- 5.17 **Internal and External Audit** SC has had problems obtaining forms for everyone to fill in for signatory status. SC is to forward details of how councillors can go online and fill in their own forms or failing that is to obtain forms from in branch. Apparently there are no rules as to which branch to use and SC will probably use the Banbury branch. The annual return has been sent in and all information posted on the notice boards. c/f
- 5.18 **Clerk's Salary Increase** SC has made the back payment and altered the ongoing amount.
- 5.19 **Oxfordshire Together** SC has heard from Maurice Sheehan, OCC Area Steward, as he is now administering the grass cutting. SC confirmed that the PC would not be taking on the rural cut but asked if the visibility splays would still be cut, these will be cut as necessary and the PC is to notify OCC Highway Enquiries of any problems. MKB has heard that there will probably be one cut of 1m depth this year of all the verges.
- 5.20 **Queen's Birthday Service** This went well and KG gave the reading.
- 5.21 **Dog mess Problems** SC has emailed the football team and asked them to get photos of the offending dogs so that they can be identified.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The quarterly financial report was produced. It was reported that there was £3,690.22 in the Treasurer Account and £5,301.22 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out in June:

- £163.70 to Zurich (general admin – insurance)
- £176.20 to Arrow Accounting (general admin – internal audit)
- £370.00 to John Donaldson (running costs – grass cutting)
- £293.00 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties, internet costs and back pay)

7. S19/S137

An invoice has been received from the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee for use of the hall during the Queen's birthday celebrations in the sum of £45. This is to be paid,

proposed MKB, seconded MK, carried unanimously. SC is to investigate whether any of the funding offered by various bodies can be applied for to offset this cost.

An invoice has been provided showing the cost of the new church mower. The sum remaining to be paid by the PC is £949.00. This is to be paid as previously agreed, proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was carried out this month.

9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

There has been no change; the insurance claim has still not been settled. There is no quarry liaison meeting scheduled at the moment.

10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB has circulated the draft lease. The two committees can now set up the new body and the playing field can be leased to this body. The PC needs its own solicitor, Jonathan Dawson, solicitor for both parties, is to be asked to recommend someone and MKB will approach OALC and ask them to recommend someone also.

MKB has walked the field this month and confirms that there are no problems with its condition although there are a lot of rabbits present.

11. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are new residents in James Court; MKB is to give them a welcoming letter.

12. PLAYING FIELD INSPECTION REPORT

MKB has gone through the report which has been circulated to the PC. There are no major issues. Phillip Rushforth, VH& PF committee, confirms that the latch will be fixed on the playing field play area; also there will be some work on the trees.

An invoice is attached to the report by John Hicks, inspector, in the sum of £112.32; this sum is unaltered from last year. This is to be paid by bacs, proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

13. ROAD REPAIRS

County Councillor Catherine Fulljames (CF) has arranged a visit to Finmere in her company by the Area Steward which has taken place. There will be an annual inspection next month. A report of the visit has been sent by Maurice Sheehan, OCC Area Steward. Ponding issues on both sides of the road opposite the two new houses on Sandpit Hill are to be looked at. Several defects on the edge of the road near the school will be raised by the annual visit. Several potholes on Water Stratford Road will also be picked up by the annual inspection. Flooding issues at the entrance to a field near Bacons House bridge will be drawn to the attention of the asset team but it may be that nothing can be done.

14. PARISH CLERK HOURS DIARY

The total for the quarter was 100.75 hours. This is some 3 hours higher than the same quarter last year but overall the figures are just about right.

15. POSSIBLE VALLEY ROAD TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

This was dealt with near the start of the meeting, see above.

Mr Howard Jones, owner, was asked to explain the problems with the listed wall beside Valley Road. The wall is extremely old and has no foundation other than soil. Because vehicles often park along the stretch of road bordering the wall it is too narrow to cope with the large agricultural and other vehicles which pass along it. These are driving over the grassy bank beside the wall and are in danger of undermining it completely and causing it to collapse even more extensively than previously. OCC Highways have looked at several possible solutions. There is not enough room for bollards on the verge and these could also be repeatedly damaged and would be expensive to replace. Mr Jones would ideally love a proper kerb along the verge but this is apparently too expensive. The PC suggests possibly a post and rail fence, motorway barrier fencing or sleepers laid at the base of the wall to protect it. All of these solutions would be somewhat unsightly and expensive. The ownership of the verge is not certain. OCC Highways did mention the possibility of 'village access only' signs to discourage as many large vehicles as possible. Several milk tankers pass by regularly, though there are no dairies in the village or its vicinity. Hopefully these signs would cut down on the traffic flow through. As MKB points out there will be a huge extra risk of through traffic during the construction phase of HS2. SC is to contact OCC and request signs.

16. CREATION OF A CHILDREN'S PLAY PARK COMMITTEE

A group of eight Mums have come together to form a sub-committee to fund raise for a new children's play area. They have asked to present their plans at the PC meeting in order to make the village aware of their plans and to make sure that the PC are in support of their ideas. MKB recommends that they visit Somerton and Steeple Aston who have both recently fitted new playgrounds. Richard Preston, who fundraised for and steered the playground in Steeple Aston, has explained to MKB that the project cost some £54k.

The plan is to be called 'Operation Playground' and it is hoped that the play area can be moved to the top of the field, nearer the village hall, as at the moment many users of the hall do not let their children play in the present area as it is out of sight. The PC has no objections to the moving of the area per se, though it will of course add to the expense. MKB is to put the new committee in touch with Richard Preston and also give them details of possible fundraising opportunities like TOE or Grantscape. The committee provide their contact details and confirm that they will have a presence at the Church Fete on Sept 3rd. The PC will help with their efforts by placing information in the next newsletter and on the website. Contact details are exchanged.

17. VILLAGE TRANSPORT SURVEY

AH dropped off annotated copies of the survey results before the meeting. It is clear that the X5 would definitely be used by many people who do not currently use the bus at all. MKB is to approach the X5 operators and liaise with District Councillor Barry Wood who has been working on this for some time. KG points out that the OALC June update gave information about a pilot scheme using council mini buses to provide a service to those unable to access buses. There will hopefully be more information soon.

18. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM ITEM 19 (COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY)

This item and item 19 were moved to the end of the meeting in order to allow members of the public to hear other items before leaving rather than waiting to be readmitted.

The motion was proposed by MKB, seconded by KO and carried unanimously.

19. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF THE REMAINDER OF THE PLAYING FIELD

This item was dealt with last and is exempt from inclusion in the minutes.

20. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16/01003/F – Rowan House, Banbury Rd – single storey rear extension – the PC raised no objections and made no comment.

21. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

16/00656/F – Lark Rise, Mere Road – demolition of existing bungalow and detached garage: erection of 1 four bedroom dwelling, off-street parking and gardens – permission subject to conditions – this arrived too late for inclusion on the agenda and will be on the September agenda.

Invoice from Mrs Beryl Smith for war memorial flowers in the sum of £30 – this is to be paid under Section 144 – proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

Invoice from volunteers for church mower – see Item 7 above.

Emails printed:

Request for money for the Queen’s birthday celebration from VH&PF committee – see Item 7 above.

CF, fix-my-street and OCC Highways regarding grass cutting, drainage and road repairs

Steve Trice regarding paving slabs and Item 19.

An email was received from Paul Nash, VH&PF committee, passing on a request from several ‘Mums’ in the village regarding the lack of a proper verge on the section of the Water Stratford Road leading to the village hall. The playing field entrance nearer to the village is overgrown and offers only a restricted line of sight for drivers. The request is that the PC could find some solution, possibly by commissioning some severe cutting back of the hedges in the vicinity. – The problem with this is that the PC do not own all the hedges in the vicinity so there is a limit to the cutting back that can be done. KG suggests that if people walk up the unmade road to the Church beside the Old Rectory that will bring them out diagonally opposite the closest playing field entrance and children can then walk up the side of the playing field to reach the village hall.

Emails forwarded –

Playing Field Inspection Report

June OALC update

Usual reports

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bottle bank – As observed by councillors arriving for the meeting the bottle bank is at present overflowing. Phillip Rushforth, VH&PF committee, explains that the Brownies and Guides used to check this every week, report to CDC before it became full and sweep up any mess. As far as he understood the Beavers and Cubs took over this task when the Brownies folded. It is the Beavers last night tomorrow. Phillip Rushforth will attempt to find another regular hall user willing to take on the task.

Overgrown footpath – the footpath leading to the gated road on the Banbury Road is very overgrown and will not be cut back for the Finmere Festival fun run this year. SC is to report this to Sarah Aldous, footpaths officer OCC but there may well be no budget for it. This should be mentioned in the next newsletter and could possibly be tackled during the village spring clean, though the PC would need someone to open the gate to allow access for a trailer to clear the waste.

Stable Close Bund – AH has emailed concerning the trees neighbouring her property on the bund. These are now threatening to damage the path and garage foundations on her property and she and her husband would like the PC to consider felling some of them. Phillip Rushforth, VH&PF committee is a qualified surveyor and if he can be informed of the species of tree concerned and the current height he will be able to give information on the minimum safe distance which they need to be away from the property.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 6th of September.

Meeting closed at 10.45 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Clerks and Councils Direct July 2016

DRAFT