

MEETING OF  
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Steve Trice (ST), Kevin Ochel (KO), Amanda Hodgkins (AH) and Joanne Brooks (JB)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO) and one member of the public

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from Councillors Katherine Grimston (KG) and Mike Kirby (MK) and Councillor Amanda Hodgkins (AH) apologised for possible lateness

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

ST declares an interest in an S137 request concerning the graveyard mower. (See Section 7 below)

ST declares an interest in the governance of the playing field. (See Section 10 below)

## 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 were approved with corrections.

## 4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

## 5. MATTERS ARISING

5.01 **Bus Subsidies** A timetable has been received for the replacement service which will only run on Fridays and will go between Finmere and Bicester. AH has set up a survey with 'Survey Monkey' which is free if you keep your questions to only ten. AH will send the link for the survey to SC in order for it to be forwarded to Paul Nash, website administrator, for posting on the web. AH has produced paper copies of the survey for the whole village and these are divided up for distribution as with newsletters. MKB will then approach the operators of the X5 service. c/f

5.02 **Chinalls Close Paving Slabs** MKB asked for quotes from a local landscaper for three options:

1. Remove all slabs, level the area and re-lay as currently arranged.

2. Remove all slabs, level the area, re-lay a double width strip as a path and seed the remaining area with grass.

3. Remove all slabs, level the area and seed with grass.

The landscaper was unwilling to quote for the first two options but costed the third option at £2,500. This seems a very large sum but MKB points out that there are some 200 slabs involved and due to health and safety regulations they would all have to be removed on the same day. The resulting uneven ground would have to be levelled with a considerable amount of topsoil. ST suggests that it may be possible to do the job more simply if villagers are given the chance to remove the slabs themselves over a period of time, with the area fenced off for health and safety. It is also possible that the slabs could be sold to a reclamation yard to offset the cost of the work.

The PC needs to obtain another quote; ST is to speak to John Donaldson, grass cutting contractor, and also to Dragon Reclamation. KO wonders whether gravel may be a cheaper option as the problems of levelling are removed. JB points out that this option too can be expensive as you need a weed resistant membrane under the gravel which can also cost quite a lot and there are significant weed control issues over time. c/f

- 5.03 **Village Notice Boards** The rail is still to be replaced. c/f
- 5.04 **List of assets (the pond)** c/f
- 5.05 **Public Protection and Development letter** c/f
- 5.06 **Carol Service/Christmas Lights** The lights are still to be mended or replaced. c/f
- 5.07 **Audit** This has now been carried out.
- 5.08 **Letter from Little Tingewick resident about Mere Lane** SC is to research this once the audit has been completed. c/f
- 5.09 **Playing Field Spinney** After much negotiation JB has obtained a quote of £250 for a steering report which will be sufficient for purpose and provide the PC with an opening offer price. Information on overage and proportions is needed; these are on the TP 1 and are 50% for 80 years. This report should be commissioned, proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously. JB is to order the report. c/f
- 5.10 **Risk Assessment Forms** The remaining sheets need to be returned soon. c/f
- 5.11 **Transparency** MKB provides his signature and the details on acreage/usage etc are on the TP 1. c/f
- 5.12 **Local Heritage Assets Register** SC is still to return the form, she has obtained the address. SC talked to Anita Bilbo, villager, at the APM and she is unable to continue with the process. SC is to put up a notice asking if anyone in the village would be interested in carrying on the work at their own pace. c/f

- 5.13 **Governance** SC has now completed the amendments to Financial Regs and Standing Orders and finalised Data Protection and Equality and Diversity policies and sent all to the web.
- 5.14 **Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations** SC has obtained a card for the Queen which is duly completed. SC is to post this off. c/f
- 5.15 **Emergency Questionnaire** SC is to submit the form electronically. c/f
- 5.16 **Parish Path Warden** The Fianders have confirmed that they have received information from the Oxfordshire Ramblers and have already walked approximately half of local paths. MKB has a map and will bring it to the next meeting. c/f
- 5.17 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has heard from Kathryn Gash, OCC Highways, that she has visited the village and put the drains on the list for jetting. ST confirms that nothing has been done yet. SC has also reported Valley Rd and The Pines area in particular for future treatment. SC is to contact Kathryn Gash and ascertain the timetable that is likely for the work to be carried out. SC is also to ask the meaning of the red markings that have appeared around the village and see if any have been placed by her. c/f
- 5.18 **Receipts and Payments Accounts and Bank Reconciliation for 2015/16** The internal auditor had said last year that it was not normal practice for the internal auditor to sign these and has not signed them this year so new versions without the auditor's signature space need to be signed. There is also one alteration to the receipts and payments account. The internal auditor insisted that the precept be recorded as £7,500 with a £350 grant from CDC to make it up to the £7,850 requested rather than simply recording a precept of £7,850, this was following the omission of the FPC revision at the CDC precept setting meeting. These documents are to be signed, proposed KO, seconded ST, carried unanimously.
- 5.19 **Insurance Renewal** SC obtained the formula for the fidelity guarantee amount required. It is balances plus half your precept so £25,000 is ample cover. SC contacted Aon and they did provide a revised quote but this was still more than the quote from Zurich so SC took out a policy with Zurich as decided at the last meeting.
- 5.20 **Parish Liaison Meeting** MKB confirms that enforcement of planning regulation is to be one of the topics covered.
- 5.21 **War Memorial Letter** SC has obtained the address of Bruce Smith, historian, for KG and will forward it to her. c/f
- 5.22 **Road Surface and Marking Problems** SC has emailed Kathryn Gash about this but has received no reply yet. The old markings are now showing through which is a cause of confusion as priority at the junction used to be different. SC is to chase this up.

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £4,693.12 in the Treasurer Account and £5,300.29 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out:

£370.00 to John Donaldson (running costs – grass cutting)

£284.75 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties, internet costs)

An invoice has been received from Phil Hood of Arrow Accounting for the internal audit in the sum of £176.20, this is to be paid by bacs, proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously.

An invoice has been received from Zurich for insurance in the sum of £163.70, this is to be paid by bacs, proposed KO, seconded JB, carried unanimously.

The schedule of regular payments needs to be renewed. The recipients are unchanged though the amounts have been adjusted slightly to allow for price increases. Proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

## 7. S19/S137

A request for S137 funds for the village hall to be available on the Queen's birthday in case of bad weather has been received. MKB points out that the plan at the APM as he understood it was to have the hall open on the day for people to use the toilets. SC is to email PR and check that arrangements for opening, checking and closing are in place and to let MKB know if any help is needed.

A request for S137 funds toward the replacement of the village church graveyard mower has been received. A sum of up to £1,000 would be required. The PC will eventually become responsible for the church graveyard and will be glad of the volunteers and all the hard work they do for the village. The PC will fund the mower purchase up to the value of £1,000, proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously.

## 8. URGENT BUSINESS

The transport survey was circulated for approval of the questions under urgent business.

## 9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

The fire is now officially out. The building is still unsafe and will need to be made safe before a full analysis of the condition of the remaining machinery can be carried out, the main structure is alright but the roof is loose. KO points out that the machines may well have integral plastic parts which will have been melted by the heat. The insurance had apparently only very recently been moved to a new company. There has been no decision on the future of the site. KO points out that few recycling plants are making money at the moment. There

have been redundancies and the site is currently operating on a skeleton staff. The capping of the rear of the mound will need to have an extension to its planning application.

## 10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

The governance of the playing field and village hall is a separate agenda item, see Section 13 below.

MKB has walked the field this month and confirms that there are no problems with its condition.

## 11. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are no new residents this month.

## 12. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND COMPLETION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR 2015/16

The internal audit was passed on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The auditor, in addition to the alteration to the receipts and payments account, see Section 5.18 above, made three observations. SC is to check with BDO whether the sports club loan should be included on the asset register. The item Declarations of Interest, see Section 2 above, is to be added to the monthly agenda. SC is not to be a counter-signatory on cheques but rather two councillors should sign each one. The only problem with this is that the same councillors are not necessarily present at each meeting. SC has checked with HSBC and there is no limit to the amount of signatories, below 100. SC is to download forms for councillors to fill in and these are to be submitted at the branch. SC is to find out which is the branch to use now that the Buckingham branch has closed.

The external audit is now completed. Section 1 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance Statement is completed and signed. Proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously. Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Accounting Statements is completed and signed. Proposed ST, seconded JB, carried unanimously. The Annual Return is checked for correct completion and the RFO explanatory notes are checked for clarity and accuracy. SC is to post the relevant information on the notice boards and the web and send in the Annual Return.

## 13. VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELD GOVERNANCE

MKB and PR have met with Jonathan Dawson, solicitor, who provided excellent advice and information. One body is to be established. The PC will then either give the land to that body or provide a simple long lease of 99 or 125 years. The lease will be sufficient for the body to obtain grants. It is felt that as public money was used to purchase the field that gifting it could open the PC to accusations of misuse of public funds. It is decided to pursue the lease route with a lease of 125 years, proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

The lease will give the newly established body the right to issue leases of its own to others, notably the Sports Association for the pavilion, but the number and type of leases which can be granted will be controlled. There perhaps should be a consultation process with the existing Village Hall and Playing Field Committee about the establishment of the new body although this is not mandatory.

The PC will need to obtain its own solicitor for the final drafting of the lease as Jonathan Dawson will represent both bodies during the consultation. The VHPF should pick up part of the cost for Mr Dawson. It is felt that the PC needs to have some idea of the costs. JB has had similar work done recently which cost approximately £700.

#### 14. CLERK'S SALARY INCREASE

Confirmation has been received of the pay agreement for 2016/17 and 2017/18. SC is paid at SCP 24 which currently stands at £11.190 per hour. This is to rise to £11.302 from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, to be backdated, and again to £11.415 on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. This is accepted proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously. SC is to make the appropriate changes to the monthly payment and make the necessary back payment as well.

#### 15. E.ON TARIFF CHANGES

A notification has been received from e.on of tariff changes which will take place on July 1<sup>st</sup>. There is no detail as to what they are but an advice line number was given as it may be that switching to a fixed term contract would save the PC money. SC has rung the number and checked and the PC is definitely better off staying with the unmetered supply status.

#### 16. TRANSPARENCY FUNDING

MKB circulated more news of available funding for transparency implementation. It is not felt that any of this is applicable at the moment.

#### 17. OXFORDSHIRE TOGETHER – GRASS CUTTING AND OTHER SERVICES

SC has contacted County Councillor Catherine Fulljames regarding this matter asking to be put in touch with those who hold the information needed to make a decision but have heard nothing so far. There has been an email from Tim Shickle apologising for the lack of arrival of the maps, having to digitise maps for the whole of the north of the county has meant significant delays. The only detail available for the rural cut is that it runs on both sides of the road from the 30mph limit to the parish boundary, where applicable, and involves a cut back to the front side of the nearest ditch, wall or hedge. This would seem to be a huge area. Again there is no definite information as to whether this work, or at least the essential visibility splay cut, will be carried out by OCC if the PC does not sign up. ST suggests that no matter what information is forthcoming it is clearly not within the scope of the PC nor in the interests of the village for the PC to take on all these duties. It is decided that the PC will

not sign up to take on any services covered by Oxfordshire Together other than the urban grass cutting which is already undertaken. Proposed ST, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

## 18. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16/00463/F – Well End, Mere Road – erection of detached double garage with a room in the roof space and an external staircase – permission subject to conditions

Agricultural ‘Prior Approval’ Determination – Tile House Farm, Fulwell Road – building for storage of hay and straw – permission granted

## 19. CORRESPONDENCE

### **Correspondence for meeting –**

Invitations from the Shelswell Group of Parishes to the special service celebrating HM the Queen’s birthday - these have also been hand delivered. KG is to carry out the reading on behalf of the PC.

Centenary Fields programme leaflet – this is given to ST for the VHPFC.

MKB has received and forwarded an email from the residents of Finmere House concerning their Valley Rd wall. This wall is grade II listed and has been frequently damaged, even the house having been hit, and is having its foundations undermined. The council is unable to provide any real help with double yellow lines or bollards and is considering placing blue advisory “not suitable for hgv’s” signs on the Old Banbury Road and on Valley Road at this point. This would mean the routing of all heavy vehicles along Mere Road. They ask that the parish should discuss this. This is really an intractable problem, the Kings Head demolition created huge problems for traffic in the village when that piece of road was closed. This is to be an agenda item for the July meeting.

### **Emails printed –**

See sections above as detailed

OCVA team Pulse subscription offer – this is not felt to be suitable

Football team email about dog mess problems – unfortunately the problems with dog mess are continuing despite the new signage. The dog club has been exonerated but dogs are straying onto the field from the neighbouring stable area. One game had to be stopped four times due to three black Labrador type dogs straying onto and messing on the pitch. The gap in the fence there is mentioned but SC has already explained to the football club that this is a right of way and cannot be blocked. SC is to email the football club and urge them to get photographs of the dogs so that they can be identified.

Mobile library cessation notice – as part of ongoing cuts the mobile library service will end in September.

**Emails forwarded –**

See sections above as detailed

Invitation to County Council unitary workshop – JB will try to attend

Invitation to CDC parish liaison meeting – MKB will be attending

OALC update for May – no urgent issues need to be addressed

OALC AGM invite – nobody is able to attend

Usual reports

**20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Village marquee** – the village does own a marquee which may be used for the Queen's birthday event. This could possibly be hired out as a source of funds.

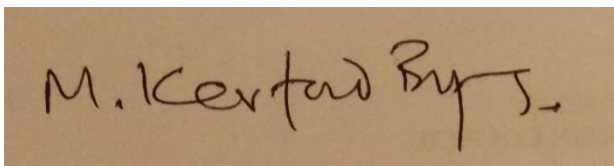
**21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> of July.

Meeting closed at 10.40 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED**

Glasdon leaflet

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light brown background. The signature reads "M. Kerford By J." in a cursive style.