

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 4th April 2017 in Finmere Village Hall

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

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

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from District Councillor Ian Corkin and Parish Councillor Amanda Hodgkins

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 7th of March 2017 were approved with corrections.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This was postponed as the County Councillor was unable to attend. The PC asks that SC should write a letter of thanks to County Councillor Catherine Fulljames who will no longer be representing the Parish after the May election, having done so for more than twenty years, supporting the PC with many issues, large and small, over that time.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.01 **Operation Playground** The hedge trimmings have now been mostly burnt and the work will be ongoing over the next few weeks.
- 5.02 **List of assets (the pond)** MKB has carried out the risk assessment, no actions required.
- 5.03 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has contacted Kathryn Gash, OCC Highways again and the matter has been referred to Gordon Kelman. It would appear that despite the matter being reported as cleared by fix-my-street on Jan 20th nobody has actually visited the site or carried out any work on it. c/f

- 5.04 **Stable Close Bund** JB has spoken with Rhodri Jones, CDC Arboricultural Officer, and he has found no records ordering the preservation of the bund. JB is to obtain a quote for the work from John Donaldson, grass cutting contractor. MKB has received an email from a householder, whose garden borders the bund, expressing an interest in buying their section, following the mention of this matter in last month's minutes, and also asking that no trees be felled on their section. ST points out that if the scheme of selling the bund could be revived this would provide potential funding towards the purchase of the spinney and also remove an ongoing cost of maintenance. He said that in view of this possibility any work on the trees should be postponed until after a decision was reached. Should the decision be in favour of offering this land to the residents and they agreed to purchase the land, they would then be free to decide themselves whether to trim or fell the trees, as the trees would be on their own land. The PC should send a letter to all householders to check the feasibility of this before carrying out the work. It is felt best to check the details of the deeds before proceeding as there may be restrictions or overage costs. MKB is to bring the deeds to the May meeting and this is to be an agenda item. c/f
- 5.05 **Mixbury to Finmere footpath** SC has again spoken with Anita Bilbo, Poors Plot, who has in turn spoken with Pete Lepper, renter of the Poors Plot field. The gate has been opened to admit sheep several times recently and there should be no problem with it. SC wonders if this is the right gate. KO points out that the gate to the road which would be used for sheep is on the roadside of the field whereas the gate used by the footpath is in the top SW corner beside a small wood. The continuing path leaves the field by the next corner into MKB's field. Once through the gate the previous path skirts the wood, crosses a ditch and carries on beside the Whiteley's field. MKB points out that the gate the Leppers use regularly is on the other side of the field, midway down, and leads near to the pond. SC is to let Anita know which gate is being referred to as Anita is hopeful that she may be able to walk the route herself over Easter. c/f
- 5.06 **Application for land opposite Red Lion, Little Tingewick** This application has now been successful.
- 5.07 **Road repairs** SC has written to OCC Highways concerning this matter but has received no reply yet. SC reads out the letter and ST suggests that in future correspondence it should be stressed that not just agricultural vehicles will find a problem but also large commercial vehicles and delivery vehicles. It is felt that perhaps SC should write to the residents affected and explain the PC's concern over possible damage to parked vehicles, access for emergency vehicles and obstruction problems. SC is to circulate the letter for comments and amendments first. SC is to pass on any reply from OCC Highways to all councillors. MKB will speak to residents on the matter if he meets them. c/f
- 5.08 **Newsletter** This was produced and distributed, though not all copies were delivered before the spring clean.
- 5.09 **Spinney Acquisition** MKB has had no further news from Mixbury Trust. c/f
- 5.10 **Sports Association Loan** SC has received a personal cheque from the Sports Association Chairman and this was banked on March 30th but only at the Post Office,

it did not appear on the PC's HSBC account until April 3rd. SC has entered it on the PC accounts as being banked in April to avoid confusion but Councillors feel that even though it will not be on the bank statement it should be recorded and explained on the bank reconciliation. SC is to check with the internal auditor as to the best way to proceed. c/f

- 5.11 **Old Banbury Road Path** The working party met and worked for some three hours, successfully clearing a large amount of material, there have been favourable comments about the transformation. Phillip Rushforth, resident, present at the meeting gives his thanks. Now that the area has been cleared other issues have been raised. There is a large vehicle 'parked' at the end of the footpath which is in a very dilapidated state. SC is to write to the owner pointing out the hazard posed and requesting action. Large amounts of soil have been dumped along the north verge of the gated area; these make maintenance of the verge by mower impossible. SC is to write to residents concerning fly-tipping. JB points out that the gate at the eastern end of the gated stretch actually hit her vehicle when she was bringing in her trailer to remove waste. Normally such gates have a sensor and this should not happen. It is possible the gate is an old design or that any sensor is damaged. PR is to check and email SC if OCC needs to be contacted. c/f
- 5.12 **Carers letter** SC has still not heard from Carers Oxfordshire, she is to contact the High Sheriff who is promoting their work and try to invite them to the APM. c/f
- 5.13 **Spring Clean** This went well with ten attendees, less than in previous years. Perhaps next year there needs to be a poster.
- 5.14 **New Water Stratford Road Pothole** This has now been repaired.
- 5.15 **Subscriptions** OALC, SLCC and OPFA subscriptions have all been renewed.
- 5.16 **Funds transfer** SC transferred funds, see Section 6 below.
- 5.17 **Plant volunteer email** This was passed to the School.
- 5.18 **Police priority email** SC informed the police that the PC was happy with current priorities.
- 5.19 **Footpath stiles** SC has contacted Sarah Aldous, (SA), OCC Footpaths Officer, but has received no reply yet. ST suggests that the PC helps to contact the landowner, which has been the problem factor in solving this issue for SA in the past. MKB has an email address for the owner, which is very old. SC is to contact the agent who acted for the owner in the planning application last year and ask him to pass on the request for stile repairs. PR confirms that there are 5 stiles to the field, all in poor or very poor condition. c/f
- 5.20 **Road signs** A former volunteer who had moved away has now returned to the village and is happy to help MKB paint the signs over the summer. c/f
- 5.21 **Play Area Entrance Sign** This has been straightened.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £183.44 in the Treasurer Account and £4,803.31 in the Business Money Manager Account.

This amount will change if the sports club loan repayment cheque is added to the March statement.

The quarterly report of account transactions was presented, January and February reports are contained in the appropriate minutes, March report is as follows:

The following had been transferred:

£500 from the Business Money Manager Account to the Treasurer Account

The following had been paid out:

£40 to OPFA (general admin – subscriptions)

£133.07 to OALC (general admin – subscriptions)

£78 to SLCC (running costs – subscriptions) (this is a running cost as the membership is for the Clerk rather than for the PC itself)

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

Renewal subscription demand received from Community First in the sum of £55 – this is to be renewed, MKB has been referred to this organisation by OALC for help regarding the establishment of the new Village Hall and Playing Field Committee – proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously.

7. S19/S137

No requests were received.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

Posters and petition sheets were received from CDC regarding the unitary authority proposals. SC asked Councillors under urgent business to decide on PC action. It was agreed that the posters should be displayed but that the petition should not be circulated by Councillors.

9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

There is nothing further to report.

10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB has been referred to Community First and Ardley PC for examples of model leases.

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

11. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are no new residents this month.

12. AUTOMATIC PENSION ENROLMENT

SC has written a letter to herself explaining her rights concerning the new workplace pension. SC does not qualify for automatic enrolment and does not want to take up voluntary enrolment. SC will provide proof to the Pensions Regulator and then the PC will be compliant. This is to be the official minute reference for compliance: proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

13. REPLACEMENT DEFIBRILLATOR PADS

The original spare pads, which were transferred to the defibrillator after its use last year, expire in May 2017. Replacement pads need to be ordered at a cost of £44.88 including VAT and delivery. SC is to order these: proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

14. PARISH CLERK'S HOURS AND SALARY

The total for the quarter was 76.5 hours. This was lower than the same quarter last year which was distorted by a large amount of new legislation needing to be dealt with. The total for the year was 295 hours. This was just under the 300 hours while last year's total was just above it. The figures are staying in line with expectations.

The second increment of the salary increase agreed last year is to come into force this month. A rise of 1% will mean that SC's hourly rate moves from £11.302 to £11.415. This is agreed: proposed KO, seconded MKB, carried unanimously.

15. AGENDA FOR THE MAY APM

The APM will take place on May 9th. It is felt that it would be good to have Operation Playground update villagers on the project, which should be in place by then, and also any plans for the future that they are working on. SC is to invite them. MKB points out that by that time there will be a new County Councillor. SC is to inform all the candidates so that whoever wins will be able to attend. PC Shaun Sullivan is also to be invited as he always likes to keep the community apprised of policing issues.

16. PARISH REMUNERATION PANEL'S REPORT

SC has put up the posters sent with the report and circulated it to Councillors beforehand. It is pointed out that with the increasing calls on Councillors to travel to attend planning meetings etc it may be that allowances would be a good idea. JB and KG agree that maybe to attract younger candidates an allowance for mileage etc would help. ST feels it is valid for the PC to review their previous policy of not claiming allowances, but only if such costs had been budgeted in advance, therefore to delay such a review until next year. If voted on the allowances do not have to be drawn; a Councillor can opt out of taking them. This is an annual issue and as it has not been budgeted for this year it is decided not to give allowances this year. Proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously. This is to be given consideration in the budget discussions for next year.

17. REVIEW OF PROCEDURES AND INTERNAL AUDIT

The sheets had been circulated to Councillors beforehand. The risk assessment and the review of the internal audit were agreed as read. Proposed ST, seconded MKB, carried unanimously.

18. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The regulations had been circulated beforehand. No changes are proposed and the PC will keep the existing regulations in place. Proposed MKB, seconded MK, carried unanimously.

19. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The orders had been circulated beforehand. No changes are proposed and the PC will keep the existing orders in place. Proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously. SC points out that Section 2 j, referring to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held in May where officers are appointed, states that financial regulations and standing orders should be reviewed among other items. Therefore Sections 18 and 19 will appear again on the May agenda and will remain there annually from now on.

20. WAR MEMORIAL PLANTING VOLUNTEERS

Following KG's volunteering for maintaining the planting around the war memorial MKB has received emails from more volunteers. David and Jackie Ridgeway and Paul Webber are very interested in helping. SC is to write to them all and suggest that they share the duties between them; this will make the task easier for all. SC is to remind all that the PC is to be invoiced for the cost of the flowers.

21. GRASS CUTTING AGREEMENT

SC has received two copies of a formal agreement from OCC for the PC to sign. This is intended to put the grass cutting on a formal basis. MKB is not happy with some of the wording of the agreement; it seems to tie the PC into both urban and rural cutting. ST is not happy to sign something so complicated without further perusal. SC is to ask OCC for the agreement in electronic form so that all Councillors can consider it. SC is to check on the deadline for signature and this can be completed under urgent business if necessary.

22. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16/01209/OUT – Heatherstone Lodge, Banbury Rd – residential development and associated infrastructure – appeal – the PC's former comments will be submitted automatically but they are able to add more if there are any further points to make. It is felt that the PC should approach District Councillor Barry Wood to see if any relevant appeal results could be cited. SC is to write the comments when any relevant information is in her possession, circulating the comments before submission

13/00973/CM – Finmere landfill – removal of conditions 1, 7, 8 and 29 – to provide for the deposit of waste in the haul road area that cuts through Cell 6 as part of the capping works to Cells 3, 6 and 9; the tree planting on Cells 4, 5 and 8 by 31st March 2017 and for the restoration of Cells 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9 by 31st December 2017 - additional information – MKB is now able to word comments and will circulate before submission

17/00063/LB – Finmere House, Banbury Rd – Application to replace 13 No complete sash windows and 5 No kitchen window panels, replacements to be hand made in hardwood, matching existing windows but including slim line heritage double glazing – the PC has no objections – SC is to return the application

23. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

Community First Oxfordshire subscription request – see Section 6 above

E.on deemed contract rate increase letter – prices per kwh rising from 14.40p to 15.75p. No action required

Unitary authority appeal information – SC is to circulate the link – see Section 8 above

MKB has received an email from AMV playgrounds concerning 100% funding for playground equipment, this is more suitable for older children, KG feels this is too good an opportunity to ignore, ST is to forward to Operation Playground

Emails printed -

OCC Highways email conversation about post box drain – see Section 5.03

Fix-my-street report on pothole on Water Stratford Road – see Section 5.14

War memorial volunteer emails – see Section 20 above

Emails forwarded –

Extraordinary meeting of parishes on unitary authority proposals invite – nobody was able to attend, webcast link to be circulated

Info from OCC on unitary proposals – no action required

March OALC update – no action required

Governance and accountability advice update – this is to be used next year

Oxfordshire Health consultation reminder – some Councillors are still to respond

Usual reports

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AVDC Planning Meeting ST and JB attended the meeting considering the Little Tingewick land application along with CDC and residents of Little Tingewick. They were unhappy with the level of discussion and consideration given to the application and the lack of rigour demonstrated as compared to the other applications considered that afternoon. There seemed to be more interest in the welfare of the proposed resident horse than in the nearby residents and there seemed to be very little knowledge of the locale or the layout surrounding the site. ST has written a letter and is to circulate it to see if the PC wishes to make an issue of the matter, possibly forwarding it to the Chairman of the Planning Committee as he was not present on the day. It may be that a copy should be sent to Tingewick PC also. A judicial review would be expensive and the Local Government Ombudsman cannot overturn the decision but may only offer compensation. MKB feels that the lack of consultation was due to many of the interested parties being resident in a different county. Also AVDC is short on its quota of gypsy sites. The sending of the letter is to be dealt with under urgent business if necessary.

Cross Tree Signpost This is a really nice old style 'finger pointing' sign, of the sort that can be unscrewed and moved around as in war time, and it has unfortunately had one 'finger' broken off. SC is to check with CDC as to whether it can be repaired.

No Cold Calling Zone Signs PR points out that he regularly has cold callers and as he lives in the middle of the village it is likely they have called on many houses before his. Even religious calling is forbidden in a No Cold Call zone. MKB regularly services the signs around the village, replacing damaged ones from his spare supply. This matter is to be brought up in the Chairman's Address at the APM.

Faulty Manhole Covers JB and ST discovered a broken and very insecure manhole cover during the spring clean on the right hand verge (when leaving Finmere in the direction of Fulwell) in the entrance to the land at the rear of Greensleeves, on the Fulwell Road. The hole is full of water and is quite deep, posing a significant drowning risk to children and

injury to horses, and therefore is extremely dangerous and needs resolving without delay. Another adjacent cover is similarly corroded and potentially insecure and looks unsafe. MKB is to place a cone above the hole. SC is to report urgently to fix-my-street.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

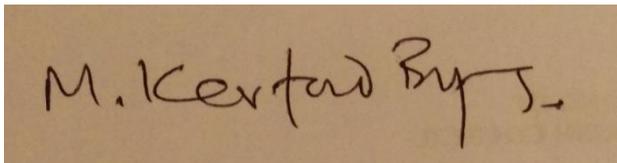
The date of the next meeting, the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, is Tuesday 2nd of May 2017 with the Annual Parish Meeting on May 9th.

MK apologises for the May 2nd meeting.

Meeting closed at 22.40.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Glasdon leaflet

A rectangular photograph of a handwritten signature in brown ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "M. Kerford By J." in a cursive style.