

MEETING OF  
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman), Kevin Ochel (KO), Mike Kirby (KO), 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 County Councillor Ian Corkin (IC) and Parish Councillor Amanda Hodgkins (AH)

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

ST declared an interest in any matters to do with the VHPF Committee or Operation Playground. JB declared an interest in Valley Rd traffic issues. MKB declared an interest in the Heatherstone Lodge planning application.

## 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2017 were approved with corrections.

## 4. MATTERS ARISING

4.01 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** No action appears to have been taken on this. SC is to chase up again with Kathryn Gash (KG), OCC Highways. c/f

4.02 **Mixbury to Finmere footpath** KO has walked the whole path and taken photographs. There is a stile at the Poors Plot entrance to the field. The large gate is rusty but can be opened, although many seem to be walking through a gap beside it. The only problem that KO found was that at the Warren Farm end of the path it is extremely overgrown with nettles and the only way to walk along it requires you to squeeze against an electrified fence. It is believed that the property at this point belongs to HS2. KO is to make enquiries with the residents. c/f

4.03 **Road repairs (Traffic Problems)** In the interests of clarity this item will be called Traffic Problems from now on. SC sent the revised letter to the householders in the area. No comments have been made in reply. The situation has not improved although householders are understanding; with the busiest time of the year approaching for large agricultural vehicles a system of knocking and waiting for vehicles to be moved will be unworkable. SC has talked to Peter Egawhary (PE), OCC, and he has provided contact details for OCC Highways managers who will be

able to attend a PC meeting. SC has contacted them but has had no reply as yet. SC is to write to them and explain the full details of the situation. OCC Highways definitely need to do more about this problem. SC is also to contact PC Shaun Sullivan and see if he can attend a PC meeting or liaise with villagers himself. ST emailed the PC with the observations of John Donaldson, grass cutting contractor, who explained that it is impossible to cut the verge below the wall as the ground is completely covered in stones, grit etc. SC is to contact OCC Highways and ask that the ground be made good. This matter is also to be referred to County Councillor Ian Corkin so that he can provide any support possible in getting things sorted out. c/f

- 4.04 **Spinney Acquisition** MKB has heard from the Mixbury Trust regarding the PC offer and other matters; Hugh Smith has now left the Trustees, Alec Howard and Martin Ayres are now those dealing with the matter and they do not want the PC to play a role in keeping the spinney boundary defined. The Charities Commission has rejected the PC's offer as inadequate and advised the Trust to put the land on the open market to obtain offers. This will be costly and the Trust is not keen. It may be that they will need to place conditions on the sale such as clearing the old play area, fencing the land entirely or keeping the trees. To this end it is possible the PC could apply for TPO's on some of the trees in the spinney, given their connection with the village school and their history. Berry's made a valuation of the spinney land some 18 months ago which may be helpful. The PC decides to make an offer increased by 33% to the Trust to see if the Charities Commission will accept this. Proposed ST, seconded JB, carried unanimously. c/f
- 4.05 **Old Banbury Road Path** SC has talked with PE and obtained a contact for OCC who can sort out the matter of a sensor for the gate at the eastern end of the gated section; it may be that it is possible to fit one. c/f
- 4.06 **Footpath stiles** Adrian Goosey (AG) the tenant of the field to the south of Stables Close, has sent the PC a quote for replacement of the fence along the bund. This quote was quite a high one and MKB has checked on the PC's responsibilities in this regard. The PC is not obliged to maintain a stock-proof fence along the boundary, but merely to delineate the boundary. It is felt best that councillors go and view the fence. It may be that the PC can cooperate with the tenant and share reasonable costs, especially if the fence can be repaired rather than replaced. The stile is however in a complete state of collapse and the PC will need to replace it. SC is to contact Sarah Aldous (SA), OCC Footpaths Officer, and obtain a quote for provision of a stile. c/f
- 4.07 **Road signs** This painting is still to be done over the summer. c/f
- 4.08 **War Memorial Planting Volunteers** SC has let the Ridgways know that they can start and ST reports he has seen work being carried out on the memorial planting.
- 4.09 **13/00973/CM - Finmere Landfill – removal of conditions** MKB compiled a reply, circulated and submitted it.
- 4.10 **AVDC Planning Meeting** MKB has called the Chairman of the Planning Committee and discussed the PC's concerns and he is aware of the issue going forward.
- 4.11 **Cross Tree Signpost** SC has spoken with PE and he apologises for not getting in touch before, OCC are undergoing a transition. The absence of the broken piece will

make any repair more expensive but PE will obtain a quote for the PC as soon as possible. c/f

- 4.12 **Cold Calling Signs** MKB is to place the last sign shortly. c/f
- 4.13 **Faulty Manhole Covers** Nobody is able to confirm whether the repairs have been carried out. SC is to contact KG and Thames Water to see if the Section 81 is to be actioned soon. c/f
- 4.14 **Operation Playground** ST attended the ceremony and spoke a few words. District Councillor Barry Wood (BW) cut the ribbon and an enjoyable day was had by all.
- 4.15 **Internal Audit Invoice** SC contacted Phil Hood (PH), internal auditor and asked for the PC to be marked compliant. This was done, the internal audit report was put on the website and the invoice paid.
- 4.16 **Play area invoices** SC paid the invoice from John Hicks for the installation inspection and the first instalment of the Wicksteed invoice. The financial report for May was amended to show the cheque dated May 31<sup>st</sup> and the VAT for April and May has been reclaimed, payment is awaited.
- 4.17 **Grass Cutting Agreement** This was returned as the relevant schedules were not attached. It is duly signed again by the PC, proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously. SC is to chase up both Bucks CC and OCC about the cutting of the village approach.
- 4.18 **Internal Audit Report** SC has addressed the various points raised by PH. The amended asset register will not be put on the web yet as conflicting advice has been received, see Section 12 below. SC has submitted the Annual Return to BDO and posted the public consultation notices and all documents required for Transparency.
- 4.19 **Register of Members Interests – Diclosable Pecuniary Interest** SC spoke to James Doble, CDC Monitoring Officer, concerning the issues raised regarding pensions etc. Only land and assets within the parish need to be declared. Only pensions/trust funds which apply directly to the parish need to be declared. SC is to get the updated forms for all councillors onto the website and also liase with CDC to update their website.
- 4.20 **Dispute Resolution Adoptions** SC has completed all the adopted measures and placed them on the web.
- 4.21 **17/01005/F – 24 Town Close, Mere Rd – erection of first floor rear extension** SC obtained an extension. JB consulted with neighbours and submitted a no objection with observations return which detailed some residents concerns regarding the size of the gable end window.
- 4.22 **Gritting** SC has contacted KG regarding this issue and obtained a reply from Paul Wilson (PW), OCC Environment and Economy. The salt and bins, other than those purchased by the PC, remain the property of OCC and the PC is not responsible for spreading the grit, although some PC's do appoint a snow warden who oversees actions in the event of harsh weather.

- 4.23 **Play area insurance** SC has entered the play area equipment onto the asset register of the PC and it is covered for both public liability and theft/damage. It may be that when the new lease is sorted out with the VHPFC that the play area becomes the responsibility of the committee.
- 4.24 **HS2 news of works** This information has been placed on the web.
- 4.25 **Police Victims First** This information has been placed on the web.
- 4.26 **VAS sign request** This has been forwarded to MKB.
- 4.27 **Defibrillator signs** Dick Tracey, SCAS, forwarded links to two catalogues. The signs cost approximately £40. SC is to order a sign for placement outside the school. Proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

## 5. FINANCIAL REPORT

The quarterly financial report was presented.

It was reported that there was £4,243.74 in the Treasurer Account and £4,803.76 in the Business Money Manager Account.

Details of April transactions were given at the May meeting.

The revised transactions for May were:

The following had been paid in:

£36,543.76 Landfill tax grant from Grantscape

The following had been paid out:

£370.00 to John Donaldson (running costs – relaying of paving slabs)

£44.88 to Wel Medical Ltd (running costs – defibrillator pads)

£180.04 to Aon Ltd (general administration – insurance)

£290.33 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

£36,500.00 to Wicksteed (capital expenditure – play area equipment and installation instalment 1)

The transactions for June were:

The following had been paid in:

£150.10 from HMRC – VAT repayment

£760.76 from OCC – grass cutting grant for 2016-17

The following had been paid out:

£555.00 to John Donaldson (running costs – grass cutting)

£300.00 to John Hicks (running costs – playing fields)

£184.76 to Arrow Accounting (general admin – internal audit)

£290.33 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

## 6. S19/S137/URGENT BUSINESS

An email was received from Caroline Tucker (CT), Headteacher at Finmere School, requesting a donation towards the placing of an advertisement in the Educational Supplement produced by The Bucks & Winslow Advertiser. It was decided to pay for a half page advert at the cost of £200 (excluding VAT). The school should be able to reclaim the VAT costs. Proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

## 7. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

MKB received a positive reply concerning his submission on the planning application. OCC will be keeping a close eye on compliance at the site. John Cunningham (JC), villager, called MKB regarding activity on the top of the mound which had caused him concern. As the planning application has been approved, see Section 16 below, it is likely that this lorry movement is part of the continuation of normal working. The barn at Foxley Bungalow has caravans parked outside it and building work is going on. It is thought that a planning application may be imminent. The PC could contact Paul Ehringer at CDC but need to be sure. MK is to walk the path and check the situation.

## 8. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB has obtained more information about a lease for the VHPFC, see Section 12 below.

MK confirms that he has walked the field this month and all is ok.

## 9. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are new residents at 16 Stable Close and will soon be some at 1 Stable Close. MK is to deliver the welcome letter to both addresses. There is a new resident at the central house of the Greensleeves development. KG is to deliver a welcome letter to this address.

## 10. ROAD REPAIRS

ST reports that a previously repaired pothole in Valley Rd, near the entrance to The Pines, has opened up again. There is also a drain cover in the road near the Jubilee Tree and the water pump which is loose. SC is to report both issues to fix-my-street.

## 11. PARISH CLERK HOURS DIARY

The total for the quarter was 100 hours. This is just 45 mins less than the same quarter last year so overall the quarterly figures are in line with last year.

## 12. INSURANCE AND GOVERNANCE OF VILLAGE HALL AND PLAYING FIELD

Following discussions about insuring the play area at the June meeting many emails have been exchanged between the PC and the VHPFC. ST, as a member of both, has been liaising along with SC. The play area and all its equipment have been added to the PC asset list for now and are insured, see Section 4.23 above. MKB has been liaising with two other parish councils regarding their experiences with model leases and establishing governance of village halls. The advice given to them by OALC was not to put the village hall on their asset register. SC is to refrain from posting the revised asset register on the web until MKB can find out more on the matter. The VHPFC have confirmed that they insure the village hall to its rebuild value and that this value is currently being reviewed. A risk assessment will need to be carried out if the hall is added to the register. No response has been received from the Sports Association regarding the pavilion. SC is to pursue this matter.

## 13. MOTION TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM ITEM 14 (Commercial Sensitivity)

The motion was not enforced as no commercially sensitive issues were to be discussed.

## 14. STABLE CLOSE BUND PROPOSALS

SC and MKB had been unable to find a copy of the covenant in the PC's papers so SC contacted Tay Homes, who have now become Redrow Homes, and asked if they could provide one. This arrived today and the land, in its entirety, is covenanted to remain public amenity land. This would mean that any sale of the bund could not move forward. The PC will still need to pay for the valuation carried out but JB asks that the PC waits for her to speak to the valuer. During searches the covenant should have been discovered which would have prevented the full valuation charge from falling due. JB is also to look into the possibility, and any consequent costs, of getting the covenant lifted. It may be that being able to dispose of the bund and save any further expenditure on trees will be a saving in the long run.

## 15. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

17/00727/F – Barrick House, Fulwell Road – erection of new double garage and storage – amending previous permission – permission subject to conditions

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

## 16. CORRESPONDENCE

### **Correspondence for meeting –**

SLCC training letter – this would be difficult for SC to attend and offers only a short discussion on each topic – the PC do not feel that the expense is warranted

MW.0004/17 – amendment of planning permission reference 13/00973/CM – permission for continuation without complying with conditions 1, 7, 8 and 29

17/01328/OUT – Land east of Heatherstone Lodge – residential development – This is a completely new application for 25 houses. SC is to apply for an extension, as long as possible, as several councillors will be away on holiday in July and MKB is unable to participate due to a disclosable pecuniary interest. SC is to ask Barry Wood or Ian Corkin if they would chair a village meeting to discuss the application, it is customary to hold a village meeting for such applications. This will hopefully be able to take place in August. Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evenings are possible as the village hall is free.

### **Emails printed -**

An email was received from Barbara Cunningham (BC), villager, regarding the ivy and suckers around Queen Victoria's Jubilee Tree. The necessary clearing work was done for many years by BC but she is unable to continue it now. JB and MK have cleared the tree before; MK confirms that the growth is considerable this year. MK is to clear the suckers and ivy away shortly.

Email from Kathryn Gash, OCC, about grit bins – see Section 4.22 above

Emails from ST and JB about grass cutting near the new Valley Rd kerb – see Section 4.03 above

Various emails concerning insurance of the village hall and play equipment – see Section 12 above

Email from Fimmere School requesting a donation – see Section 6 above

### **Emails forwarded –**

Adrian Goosey – quote for fencing bund and mending stile – see Section 4.06 above

Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting agenda – for information

Work adviser about new employment service – to be placed in a future newsletter

OCC historic mapping and Living Landscapes project – for information

June report from County Councillor Ian Corkin – for information

Household Waste and Broadband links from County Councillor Ian Corkin – for information

Local Plan alteration consultation notification – no action

Dick Tracey – defibrillator sign catalogue links – see Section 4.27 above

Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting notes – for information

OALC June update – SC is to download the pdf of the new Good Councillor’s Guide and circulate

Usual reports

#### 17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

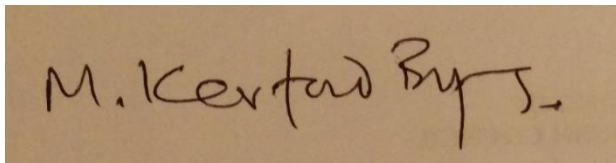
**Computer** SC requests that the PC authorise her to spend a sum on a new laptop so that she can transfer documents and accustom herself to the new operating system over the summer break. SC will pay for the computer using her credit card, get the invoice made out to the PC for VAT purposes, and then reimburse herself the sum involved. It is decided that SC should be given a budget of £400 (up to £500 if software is required), proposed ST, seconded MK, carried unanimously. It is important that the correct software to keep abreast of technology is included, Office 365 is recommended, and that the new machine can run Money Manager. This may be difficult due to the age of the program but it would be possible to keep the current PC machine simply for accounts. MK suggests going to John Lewis rather than PC world as they are much more customer friendly and better informed about their products and state that they are not beaten on price. A thirty day exchange policy should be available.

#### 18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is September 5<sup>th</sup>. Meeting closed at 22.35.

#### CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

J Parkers Bulbs Autumn 2017

A photograph of a handwritten signature on a piece of light brown paper. The signature is written in dark ink and reads "M. Kerford By J.".