

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 7th March 2017 in Finmere Village Hall

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

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

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from District Councillor Ian Corkin and Parish Councillors Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman) and Mike Kirby (MK)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

ST declared an interest in Item 5.1 (as a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee and as the Councillor liaising with Operation Playground) and in Item 13 for the same reason.

3. MINUTES

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

At this point Item 9 was considered as there had been a quarry liaison meeting and Barbara Cunningham (BC), village representative, was present to give a report.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.01 **Operation Playground** The hedge trimming has been carried out and the resulting trimmings will be burnt shortly. c/f

5.02 **List of assets (the pond)** The Tompkins have kindly supplied the PC with copies of both the letters and the map they had received in the 90's, one letter contains a key to the colour coded map which is very detailed and clearly shows the area of the surround which the PC is responsible for. The pond itself is included with another

piece of the surround and so is not the responsibility of the PC. MKB will now carry out a risk assessment. c/f

- 5.03 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has reported the matter to Kathryn Gash, OCC Highways, and is awaiting a reply. c/f
- 5.04 **Internal and External Audit – Bank Signatory Forms** All seven councillors are now able to sign cheques. SC is still included as a signatory as she administers the account but she will not sign any cheques from now on.
- 5.05 **Stable Close Bund** JB has visited Stable Close and spoken to Peter Ing regarding the problem with encroaching trees. There are 5 silver birch and 2 maple trees within 2-3 metres of the wall with evidence of surface roots. These have unfortunately been planted on the house side of the soil bund rather than the field side and are gravitating toward the houses. JB has contacted Rhodri Jones, CDC Arboricultural Officer, to see if there are any restrictions on what the PC can do with the trees on the mound but she has so far had no reply. MKB can chase this matter up if necessary. JB has obtained a quote for removal of 4 silver birch and both maples at £340+VAT. If neighbours are also concerned then more work to remove other silver birch could be carried out at a cost of £420+VAT. At least one more quote must be obtained and ST suggests John Donaldson as he has worked on the bund before. All the homeowners will need to be consulted. The point is raised that the PC had looked at selling the bund in the past to the bordering properties. This fell through as not all were interested. This could be an option to consider in the future. ST points out that a tree surgeon did examine the trees on the bund some two years ago and he was happy with them at the time. c/f
- 5.06 **A421 Verge to roundabout** SC has reported this again to Bucks CC but had no contact details for Alan Tredwell. The hedge has been cut anyway and the verge looks a lot better now.
- 5.07 **Mixbury to Fimere footpath** SC has talked to Anita Bilbo who is unaware of any problem with the gate, the matter will be raised at the next Poors Plot meeting and Anita will ask Pete Lepper who rents the field whether it has been secured for any reason. SC will forward any information concerning the gate from the Fianders to the Poors Plot. c/f
- 5.08 **Paving slabs in Chinalls Close** SC has informed the volunteers that they can now work safely on the area as they are registered with the PC insurers.
- 5.09 **Application for land opposite Red Lion, Little Tingewick** This has still not been decided, MKB has received more phone calls from the applicant's agent explaining that his family has been receiving anonymous phone calls and that there will be an appeal for non-determination if the matter is not decided shortly. SC has received a letter from a Leicestershire resident concerning comments about the application. There has since been confirmation that the application goes to committee on March 16th. c/f
- 5.10 **Road repairs** In the matter of the Valley Road kerbing works MKB has visited the residents concerned several times but is yet to find them at home. ST circulated an email after he had looked at the road explaining that it is doubtful that a fire engine

could get through the gap left if a vehicle is parked at the narrowest point. JB confirms that a busy time for their machinery will come soon and she is concerned about the implications. MKB has had the suggestion put to him that perhaps the owners of Finmere House would be able to make some space available on their drive for others to park, it is worth asking about this and MKB will do so once he has spoken to the residents. It is felt that SC should write to OCC Highways and ask how this situation is to be managed going forward as there may be implications for safety if emergency vehicles have no access. It may be that parking on the road is now an offence as an obstruction is being caused. SC should ask OCC to confirm that parked cars will not prejudice safety.

SC has reported the pothole on the Water Stratford Rd to fix-my-street, and has received notification of a repair. c/f

- 5.11 **Parish Precept review** MKB has obtained the figures and Finmere PC are not in the top ten for increases or amounts charged. He has also written an item for the newsletter.
- 5.12 **Newsletter** This will be produced by the end of this week as it contains news of the spring clean. c/f
- 5.13 **Spinney Acquisition** MKB has sent off the letter and the Rector has confirmed that the Mixbury Trust will inform the PC of their thoughts shortly. c/f
- 5.14 **Sports Association Loan** SC has been in touch with the Chairman, they are having signatory problems similar to the PC's. The cheque has been promised by the end of the month.
- 5.15 **Electricity supply costs** SC has tried various companies after visiting a comparison site. Most of the cheapest only deal with domestic supply. Only the 'big six' will be able to provide an unmetered supply certificate. SC has contacted EDF and they will need the usage assessment provided with the certificate in order to make a quote. They warn however that the most part of the price will be the administration cost which is a set amount enforced by the national grid, only the units assessed will vary in cost according to supplier and as there is only a single light these will be very low. It is decided that the saving involved is not worth the time spent sorting all this out.
- 5.16 **Old Banbury Road Path** The working party is to meet at 10am on Saturday. ST is to bring his heavy duty hedge trimmer. KO and MKB will bring chainsaws though these may not be needed. It may be a good idea to obtain a key for the gate at the end of the closed piece of the Old Banbury Rd for vehicle access if necessary. c/f
- 5.17 **Carers letter** SC has read the letter carefully and it transpires that the Carers Oxfordshire group will be in touch shortly about meeting up and it is then that she can invite them to the APM. c/f
- 5.18 **Spring Clean** SC has returned the form and the delivery has been confirmed. MKB books the hall with Phillip Rushforth (PR), VHPFC, who is present at the meeting and had anticipated the request after reading last month's minutes on the web.

- 5.19 **Oxfordshire Clinical Consultation** SC has circulated the link.
- 5.20 **SCAS Charity Appeal** SC has paid £100 to the South Central Ambulance Charity.
- 5.21 **Sports Pavilion Showers** SC has informed Jon How, Football Club, that she, as Clerk, should be registered as the owner of the land.
- 5.22 **One Oxfordshire Meeting Invite** SC has circulated the information.
- 5.23 **Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Strategy Consultation** SC has circulated the link.
- 5.24 **New Water Stratford Road Pothole** SC has reported this to fix-my-street, Kathryn Gash has confirmed by email that she has visited the site and marked it for urgent repair, it should be filled this week. c/f

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £222.01 in the Treasurer Account and £5,302.78 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out:

£100 to SCAC (S137 – village benefit – for defibrillator service improvements)
£287.50 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

Renewal subscription demands had been received from several organisations:

OALC - £133.07 – to be paid by bacs – proposed MKB, seconded AH, carried unanimously
SLCC - £78 – to be paid by bacs – proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously
OPFA - £40 – proposed MKB, seconded KO, carried unanimously

SC is to transfer funds from the Money Manager account to the Community account to cover these commitments. It is felt that once the new charity to administer the hall and playing field is established it may be for them to cover the membership costs of OPFA.

In the OALC update circulated this month there was an item detailing the 1% rise in Clerk's pay to be brought in on April 1st, this is the second tranche of the agreed increase. This will mean that SC's hourly rate rises from £11.302 to £11.415.

7. S19/S137

No requests were received.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was carried out.

9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

As explained above this item was dealt with after Section 3.

Following representations by MKB a quarry liaison meeting was held on March 6th at the village hall. In attendance were Ben Wragg and Colin Hart of Opes, David Stephenson of the Administrators, Guy Titman of MJCA, Bill Stewart-Jones and David Periam of OCC, Louise Greenwood of the EA, MKB of the PC and Barbara Cunningham (BC), village representative. Barbara gave the following report of the meeting:

This was the first quarry liaison meeting since 2nd March 2016. David Stephenson (DS) confirmed that the administrators had been appointed on 9th March 2016. Venture capitalists are owed 'substantial sums' amounting to some £7 million. The administrator's job is to maintain the business as best they can, progress the insurance claim following the fire at the MRF and find a buyer. DS also explained that it is unusual for the administrators to be in place and maintain trade for this long a period.

The insurance claim is holding everything up as the insurers have not yet admitted liability. They are not denying liability but will not accept it either. BC asked whether this was as a result of the short period between insurance being taken out and the fire and it was felt that this was probably the main reason. The cause of the fire is not known, it could have been an internal combustion of waste or a gas cylinder in the waste. The majority of the MRF equipment was destroyed. DS is confident that a buyer will be found in the not too distant future as he does not intend to let the situation drag on. Any potential buyer would not benefit from the insurance claim but would start with a clean slate, ie no debts. There are three prospective purchasers at the moment. BC asks if any are previous owners and DS confirms that they are. It is possible that the Diani's are again interested in the site.

Waste is being accepted at a reduced level for the landfill, which is now filling up more quickly than anticipated as the waste is not being reduced by the MRF. The MRF building is still unsafe and cordoned off, BC asks when this hazardous eyesore will be demolished and it appears this will be the responsibility of the new owners. MKB asks how much leachate is now being removed and DS confirms that 13 tankers are leaving the site every week.

Under administration all powers of the management have been suspended. Ben Wragg is operations director but all decisions are taken by the administrators.

Ben Wragg (BW), Opes, confirms that since the fire on 28th February 2016 inert waste has been deposited into Cell 7a, amounting to some 10,000 cubic tonnes in 2016. An application has been made to change the phasing of the completion. Tree planting and capping are now behind schedule. Tree planting is hopefully to take place in the autumn with all capping finished by the end of the year. Cell 7 is almost full. The gasification permissions have now expired so the new owners will have to extend their time and also that for clay extraction. The end date of the site is still 2035 but this could change in the future. HS2 will affect the site.

Groundwater monitoring boreholes are to be upgraded. There were 3 groundwater breaches in the period and groundwater quality is a continuing problem as the source of the contamination cannot be determined. BC stresses that she finds this situation very worrying. It is thought that the pollution is probably ammonia and chloride as found in September 2015.

Bill Stewart-Jones (BSJ) of OCC confirms that he has walked over the site both back in August 2016 and again recently and very little has changed. There has been a slight over tip from Cell 3 to Cell 1. The EA were content at the time to have this over fill moved. BC points out that it has to be hoped that this remains the case as the waste is not now so fresh. Japanese Knotweed has been found on land at the Widmore cutting but this is part of Shelswell Park land and therefore not the administrators responsibility.

Louise Greenwood (LG) of EA confirms that she has carried out regular inspections of the site every 6 to 8 weeks. The site ended 2016 in Band D with lower points due to groundwater quality and the leachate management plan.

MKB of the PC raised the issue of ragwort on the site. This is to be dealt with this year.

The next meeting will take place in 6 months time or as soon as a buyer is found.

MKB explains that HS2 have now become involved as the route crosses one part of the land committed for gravel extraction. The plan was to extract the gravel from the area quickly and replace with soil. HS2 have now placed a holding objection on the permission as they do not feel the work will be completed in time.

MKB did not write an objection for the planning application detailed at the February meeting as it has been withdrawn for a change of wording. When the new form of wording is submitted MKB will write an objection.

10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB is still awaiting the copies of the model leases from the OALC solicitor.

PR (VHPFC) has walked the field this month and reports it to be in a satisfactory condition.

11. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

ST has delivered a letter to the new residents in White Houses, Mere Road. There are no other new arrivals this month.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

One Oxfordshire information brochures – handed out

OPFA subscription renewal – see Section 6 above

SLCC subscription – see Section 6 above

OALC subscription – see Section 6 above

Norris and Fisher Insurance Brokers letter – kept for reference

Letter concerning Little Tingewick – see Item 5.09

Emails printed -

Steve Trice – concerning Valley Road parking – see Item 5.10

Paul Nash – concerning VHPFC AGM – ST attended

NPMS – concerning plant volunteers – to be handed to the school

OALC – S137 amount confirmation – kept for reference

Thames Valley Police – concerning current priorities in policing – the PC are happy that the current priorities are appropriate – SC is to inform them

Emails forwarded –

Barry Wood – regarding unitary authorities

Barry Wood – update

HS2 – proposed ground investigations – there will be more information to come on this matter

OALC February update

OCC – regarding unitary authority proposals

HS2 Royal Assent Information Pack

OCC – updated unitary proposals

Oxfordshire NHS – regarding ‘voice of the community’ nominations – no nominees are proposed

Usual reports

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Operation playground unexpected costs ST raises the matter of some unexpected costs to do with the project. There has to be a post installation inspection of the new play area and the cost will not be covered by the installers as previously understood. John Hicks (JH), playground inspector, has confirmed that he will carry out the inspection for £250 plus VAT. ST asks that if he can persuade JH to combine this with the normal annual inspection of Stable Close play area then the PC will contribute their normal inspection fee to the total. This is acceptable, proposed KO, seconded MKB, carried unanimously. It is proposed by the VHPFC to clear the previous play area adjacent to the spinney of its equipment and open it up for ease of maintenance. JB wonders if something could be installed for older children in the area. ST and PR point out that this would incur a considerable initial cost and maintenance and inspection costs in the future.

Litter JB raises the matter of dumping of litter around the village which is getting worse. A car parked in her drive recently and deposited the wrappers and cartons from a takeaway

lunch afterward. The perpetrators are not necessarily villagers but it is felt that an item in the newsletter would be a good idea. It would be good to encourage people to report incidents to the PC so that matters can be addressed. If children are walking dogs and not being taught how to dispose of dog waste bags in the bins provided this can also exacerbate the problem.

Footpath Stiles The stiles on the path across Boyd's field are in a bad state of repair. SC is to report this matter again to Sarah Aldous, OCC Footpaths Officer, who has had problems in the past with contacting the landowner.

Road signs MKB would like to paint the road signs this summer but a former volunteer to help him has moved away and this will be quite a large job.

Play Area Entrance sign JB reports that this was hit by the flail when the hedges were cut recently and has been bent out of shape. It is still readable and MKB will take a look during the spring clean to see if it can be straightened out by a working party.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 4th of April 2017.

AH and ST apologise for the April meeting.

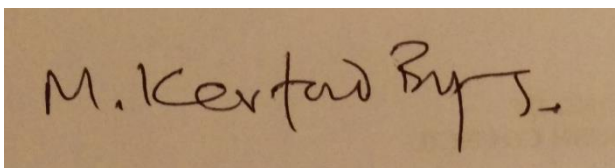
Meeting closed at 21.50.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Broxap leaflet

Clerks and Councils Direct January 2017

Clerks and Councils Direct March 2017

A rectangular photograph of a piece of light brown paper with a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature reads "M. Kerford By J." in a cursive, slightly slanted script.