

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 3rd October 2017 in Finmere Village Hall

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

In attendance:- Mike Wasley (MW), (OCC Highways), Sharron Chalcraft (SC) (Parish Clerk and RFO) and four members of the public

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from County Councillor Ian Corkin (IC) (unable to attend if other meeting runs over time), Parish Councillors Amanda Hodgkins (AH), Mike Kirby (MK) and Kevin Ochel (KO) and from Paul Wilson (PW), OCC Highways

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT

ST declared an involvement in any matters to do with the VHPF Committee. JB declared an involvement in Valley Rd traffic issues.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 5th of September 2017 were approved with corrections.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.01 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has been in touch with Kathryn Gash (KGA), OCC Highways, and on September 8th KG emailed to confirm that this issue had been raised with OPC who should be out soon to inspect. Councillors confirm that no work has been carried out on the blocked gully. SC is to contact KGA again.
c/f

4.02 **Mixbury to Finmere footpath** c/f

4.03 **Spinney Acquisition** MKB has still not received a reply from the Mixbury Trust regarding the PC offer, he is to chase this matter up if possible. c/f

4.04 **Old Banbury Road Path** MW confirms that he will look into this matter and see if it is possible to fit a sensor to the eastern end gate of the gated section of the Old Banbury Road. c/f

4.05 **Footpath stiles** SC has had a reply from Sarah Aldous (SA), OCC Footpaths Officer, concerning the cost of a new stile, this issue will be addressed at a later date because of extra work load due to reorganisation and vacancies.

SC has been in correspondence with Adrian Goosey (AG), the tenant of the field, regarding the PC responsibilities and proposed actions over the delapidated fence as Mr Goosey is about to have the work carried out on the remaining fencing which he is responsible for. MKB is to send a copy of the plans to Mr Goosey so that he can see the area which the PC will be fencing, though with a much simpler fence than the post and rail stock fence that Mr Goosey will be installing. SC is to try and find a price for installation of a stile from local contractors, though this must of course meet specifications. c/f

- 4.06 **Road signs** This painting is still to be completed. c/f
- 4.07 **Cross Tree Signpost** MW confirms that Peter Egawhary (PE), OCC Highways, is no longer in post. SC is to forward the emails showing location and condition to MW but this matter may have to wait until a successor to PE is appointed. c/f
- 4.08 **Faulty Manhole Covers** The repairs have now been completed. SC confirms that Thames Water are responsible for all clean water installations in the village while Anglia Water is responsible for drainage. These covers were both replaced by Thames Water, Anglia Water did attend and confirm that they had no responsibility.
- 4.09 **Grass Cutting Agreement** The payment of the grant has now been received. KGA confirms that the OCC side of the verge is only cut once a year and this has already been carried out. Bucks CC confirmed that no action was outstanding on SC's raised report. It is felt that perhaps the grass cutters are not cutting all the verge they are responsible for. SC is to liaise with KGA on this matter. This item will be called simply Grass Cutting from now on in the interests of clarity. c/f
- 4.10 **Register of Members Interests – Diclosable Pecuniary Interest** SC has received the final outstanding form at this meeting and will place all forms on the website and liaise with CDC regarding any updates before the next meeting. c/f
- 4.11 **Defibrillator signs** The sign has now been placed. The invoice has been paid.
- 4.12 **Insurance and Governance of Village Hall and Playing Field** MKB is still to confirm why OALC advised other PC's against entering village halls on the asset register. SC will not alter the asset register on the website until confirmation is forthcoming. A risk assessment will need to be carried out if the hall is added to assets. MKB has spoken with Mike Geelan (MG), Chairman of the Sports Association. He has suggested the SA bequeathing the pavilion to the PC at the cost of £1 so that the PC will then be responsible for upkeep, insurance, risk assessment etc. The Football Club still need to be consulted on the full implications of this. ST feels that the VHPFC would need to be consulted also as this would entail considerable work. It would possibly mean that a groundsman would have to be taken on part time. The SA would of course pay a fee for use of the field and other cricket teams in the area are keen to rent grounds, particularly one with the lovely setting and all-weather strip that Finmere has. ST suggests that SC should write to Illa Moss (IM), VHPFC Chair, explaining the suggestion. MKB is to continue liaising with MG. This will need to be an agenda item in the future. c/f
- 4.13 **Stable Close Bund Proposals** Nothing further has been heard from Jonathan Carpenter of Berry's regarding the valuation bill. This will still need to be settled at

some point in the future though hopefully at a reduced rate. Chandler Ray feel that it would not be too difficult to remove the covenant and allow the land to be sold. The PC would need to write to Redrow and obtain a deed of variation with their permission to change the terms. Legal costs are likely to be 2-3 hours at £400-600 for the change of terms and the same again for liaising with homeowners. It is felt that money could be saved by the PC dealing with the homeowners. JB is to write to Redrow. c/f

- 4.14 **Computer** A subscription for Microsoft Office 365 has been obtained but no bill is payable until the end of October. SC has found drivers but is still unable to add the printer to the list. Ink for this computer costs £39.95 per cartridge from the IJT website. Ink for SC's husband's printer costs £6.49 for each colour cartridge and £8.95 for black. These cartridges do not of course last as long. SC is to contact IJT regarding drivers and tech support as they supplied the printer to MKB in the first place. c/f
- 4.15 **Invoice Payments** All invoices have been paid as agreed at the September meeting.
- 4.16 **External Audit** All documents have been posted as required.
- 4.17 **HS2 Liaison** SC has been in contact with Lorraine Kelly (LK) of Fusion. There is little to report so far but LK will come to the November meeting or possibly the December one, depending on how much information is forthcoming. c/f
- 4.18 **17/01667/F** – 13 Town Close, Mere Road – proposed two storey side and rear extension and single storey rear extension – ST visited neighbours regarding this proposal, SC obtained an extension, ST circulated comments from neighbours under urgent business and the PC entered a response of no objection with comments regarding boundary criteria, ongoing maintenance access and access during construction.
- 4.19 **MW 0060/17** - AT Contracting & Plant Hire Limited, Finmere Landfill Site - for the Replacement Site Reception Compound and Related Facilities – SC circulated the link for this application the PC made no comments.
- 4.20 **Christmas lights** These are to be checked before the Carol Service on December 1st and any repairs carried out.
- 4.21 **Community grants** No requests have been forthcoming,

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

The quarterly financial report was presented. Details for transactions for July and August are in the September minutes.

It was reported that there was £7,853.59 in the Treasurer Account and £4,804.24 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out during September:

£390.00 to John Donaldson (running costs – grass cutting)

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

£120.00 to BDO Stoy Hayward (general admin – external audit)

£17.48 to Seton (S144 (LG Act 1972) Encourage visitors)

The following had been paid in:

£5,500.00 from CDC – Parish precept

£760.76 from OCC – Grass cutting grant

The quarterly bank reconciliation was presented and signed. There were no outstanding cheques or payments.

The Clerk's hours diary was presented. The total for the quarter was 66.5, slightly up on the corresponding quarter last year but within parameters.

6. S19/S137/URGENT BUSINESS

No requests were received. The two planning applications detailed in Section 4 above were dealt with under urgent business.

7. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

An email has been received from Phillip Rushforth, resident, the height of the mound above cells 1-6 has risen by about 6 metres, this means several hundred tonnes has been deposited. MKB explains that this is soil being put in place to pull down over the cells at the rear of the mound to cap them. He will check with the operators that no other material is being deposited. There is to be a quarry liaison meeting in the week starting October 30th and this can be confirmed then.

8. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

Progress regarding the lease is still ongoing.

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

9. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are no new residents this month.

10. NEW MOWER FOR PLAYING FIELD

Given the discussion under Section 4 above it is decided to postpone consideration of the new mower request. It is probable that any groundskeeper who is engaged will have his own equipment. This would save on capital outlay for the mower and any storage facility.

11. GRASS VERGE NEAR THE PINES

The PC has received a letter from a resident regarding the verge being chewed up by vehicles parking on it, damaging the verge markers. The road surface here is also poor. The southern side of the entrance to The Pines is the area being affected. MW confirms that OCC Highways will look at this. He will need to check records to make sure that the verge is the responsibility of OCC. Bollards would be a more solid barrier and would stop parking but the PC would have to pay for them. Any planting would need the permission of OCC.

12. CAROL SERVICE

The carol service will take place on December 1st. JB suggests that the PC should ask Paul and Sylvia Nash to turn on the lights. SC is to write to them. MKB is happy to read the lesson.

13. MEMORIAL WREATH

Following the circulation of the catalogue it is decided to order the usual wreath, the Civic Wreath type G. It is decided to make the usual donation of £100. Proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

14. QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE TREE

KG is to carry out the clearing work on the ivy and suckers at the base of the tree.

15. TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN VALLEY RD/MERE RD

Following considerable discussion at previous meetings and much correspondence with residents OCC Highways representative MW is present to give an official viewpoint on the issues. MKB throws the item open to the floor for comment as this would seem the best way for MW to hear the views of the village.

Clive Birch – Valley Rd resident – I feel that the parking side of things has been largely resolved following our cooperation with farm vehicle operators but the issue of traffic passing problems is the most important point. I forwarded pictures of such an incident to SC today.

SC passes round the pictures showing a large agricultural vehicle being forced to mount the kerb as it passes a car driving the other way at the Old Banbury Rd end of the top section of Valley Rd.

Clive Birch – I feel that something like a circulatory system where vehicles travel down Valley Rd and along Mere Rd to the junction by the Red Lion would work best. I have had an architect measure the roads and Mere Rd is the widest even with parked cars along it.

ST – There are times of very heavy traffic on Mere Rd with the school run. Also parking along the road on both sides can mean that the road is a lot narrower.

Johnnie Brooks – Farmer – Yes the parking makes it impossible to get a long vehicle down Mere Road.

Clive Birch – There are no markings at the school, it would be a lot better for safety if there were. The junction at the Red Lion end of Mere Road is much better sighted than the junction at the top of Valley Rd which is blind. Perhaps ‘Village Only’ signs could be provided.

SC and MKB point out that the PC has asked for markings at the school and we are still on the waiting list, which has taken a long time so far.

Howard Jones – Valley Rd resident – There has been a history of damage to the medieval wall on my property. I feel that the priority should be given to traffic control.

Johnnie Brooks – Everywhere is the same, roads were not designed for current traffic levels and signs, chicanes etc are tried everywhere but to no avail.

Clive Birch – Well hopefully we will be able to cooperate as villagers as we have over the parking.

ST – What about other road users? Fire engines would have difficulty getting through with vehicles parked.

Clive Birch – As the signs say the road is unsuitable for HGV’s but they can get by. When I checked with the Brigade they explained that in an emergency they can always move a vehicle out of the way.

ST – There could still be a situation where an emergency vehicle could be delayed, if traffic was already snarled up as in the photos.

Clive Birch – That would be an extreme situation and the rule is that you do not legislate for extremes. The brigade also pointed out that their current routing is down Mere Road.

JB – Why was the road made so much smaller when the kerb was added?

MW – This was to preserve the wall by restoring the verge width, the kerb was made a double height to retain the soil and prevent any further undermining.

Clive Birch – There is a problem of cracking, vibration from fast and heavy traffic causes this. There is also property damage on both sides of the road, my porch was destroyed by a car avoiding a heavy vehicle, when I was standing in it!

Various suggestions are put forward:

Priority signs for one direction – there is too short a visibility for priority signs.

Circulatory system – MW and MKB point out that the turn by the Jubilee Tree would be far too tight for large or long vehicles.

A passing place by Howard Jones' gate – this would be too tight a space.

Clive Birch – I have taken advice about the value of my house, being unable to park near my house could take 10 – 15% off the value and it would take longer to sell.

Howard Jones – Things will only get worse when we get the HS2 traffic.

MKB – Mere Road is the designated route for traffic displaced by HS2 activities.

MW – It would seem there is a need for communal cooperation in this matter. No decision or recommendation can really be made because there really is no solution.

Clive Birch – If there is to be much more traffic because of HS2 could traffic lights be a solution?

MW – They are a possibility but they would be very expensive, costing at least £100k. OCC will brainstorm this matter in the office and will notify the PC of any solution they can think of.

The residents then leave the meeting. ST said he was concerned that, given the stance adopted by the PC during the discussion, the PC had sent a message to those present which effectively condoned the current parking practices, which in his view constituted an obstruction of the public highway. ST suggested the PC's view should be clarified in the minutes, to all concerned. MKB points out that the issue of parking on Mere Rd was also shown to be causing an obstruction. It would be difficult to enforce parking restrictions on such a large area, MW points out that it is up to the police to enforce these things, OCC is not involved. MW is to look at google maps satellite imaging of both roads and visit in daylight if necessary before brainstorming in the office.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

17/00682/F – Finmere Playing Field – 2 rear extensions to the rear of the Sports Pavilion to accommodate Home and Away showers – permission subject to conditions

17/01900/F – Five Gables, Fulwell Road – single storey rear extension – taken by JB

17/01864/F – Fuzz Field, Fulwell Road – erection of a timber cabin (temporary agricultural workers dwelling) – the PC had no objections or comment

17. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Update - filed

Changes to DIY charging at household waste recycling centres - filed

Aon letter about cessation of insurance next year - filed

BHIB letter about replacing insurance next year – to be confirmed before renewal

Emails printed –

Kathryn Gash about drains/grass/manholes – see Section 4 above

Adrian Goosey about bund fence – see Section 4 above

Sarah Aldous about bund stile – see Section 4 above

DC Corkin regarding landfill issues – confirming that David Flavin, Senior Planning Officer OCC, has been in touch with officers from Development Management to attend quarry liaison meetings. Also confirming that the matter of possible class C residents at the Foxley Fields part of the quarry site has been referred to the Planning Enforcement Team at CDC.

Emails forwarded –

Invitation to conservation area conference – JB may be able to attend

Carol service date – see Section 12 above

OALC yellow book offer – this is not thought necessary

Wreath catalogue – see Section 13 above

Advanced notification of planning app to continue extraction at landfill – see application notification below

Preparing for Emergencies Community Guide link – this will be an agenda item in November or December

Emails concerning fence on bund land – see Section 4 above

Signpost catalogue – none of these were thought suitable

Oxfordshire Rural Grants event notification – nobody can attend

National Highway and Transport Satisfaction survey – to be submitted by Oct 9th – this has been circulated – comments to be sent to SC

MW 0074/17 – details pursuant to Condition 2 – time period calculation on extraction – this will need to be dealt with under urgent business. Any comments to SC by October 22nd.

OALC September update – very useful training on Local Councils and Charities to be held on October 18th – SC is to check with OALC for alternate dates or for notes on the meeting.

IC – latest update from OCC – for information – Growth Board, Public Health Annual Report, Open Access Children’s Services, Daytime Support, Electric Blanket Testing

Usual reports

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tree Surgery on Playing Field JB has heard from Rosemary Crabtree, resident, explaining that Barbara Cunningham (BC), resident, has taken some photos of the memorial tree planted for her daughter Belinda. BC feels that it may be necessary to lift the crown of the tree and is happy to pay for a tree surgeon if that is the case. JB is to check on the tree and if necessary this can be an agenda item in November or may be dealt with under urgent business if it is felt that the work is urgent.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is November 7th.

Meeting closed at 22.27.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

None