

MEETING OF  
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Finmere Village Hall

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

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (SC) (Parish Clerk and RFO), Cheryl Snudden (CS) (HS2 Community Engagement Manager) and Steve Randall (SR) (EK Traffic Manager)

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from County Councillor Ian Corkin and Parish Councillor Joanne Brooks, for possible lateness

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT (19.31)

ST declared an involvement in all issues involving the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee. JB declared an involvement in Section 5.03. MKB declared an involvement in Section 7.

3. MINUTES (19.33)

The minutes of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 were approved with corrections.

4. HS2 AND EK (19.35)

Apologies were given by Carley Richards (Fusion), CS introduced SR of EK who gave a slide presentation on the proposed traffic arrangements when construction is given the go ahead. This is likely to be at the end of 2019 with mobilization, construction of compounds etc, beginning some three months earlier.

SR explained that although several minor local roads were included in the list available to HS2 traffic it is intended to keep almost all lorry movements along the main roads – A43/A421/A4421/A422. There will need to be a very few movements along minor roads whilst the accommodation and service areas are built. A bridge needs to be built near Turweston in order to enable access to the track site from the A43 directly. This construction will take approximately two years, after which time most movements will be along the A43, avoiding the other main roads.

In addition to some very large plant there is approximately half a million tons of material to be moved southwards from Turweston along the ‘trace.’ EK works are due to last for 2-3 years. The actual laying of the track, installation of signalling etc will be carried out in the next stage with final completion expected in 2026.

Slip roads will be put in place to allow site access for all site traffic. It is possible that the right turn lane at the entrance to the quarry could be used by HS2 traffic wanting to turn right onto the site at this point. Both the A421 and the A4421 are likely to be closed for the weekend, perhaps several times, in order for these slip roads to be built. Site traffic will be allowed to traverse the road at certain site traffic crossings, but these will have traffic lights controlled by sensors and monitors and will aim to keep delays to the 'slight' category, less than a ten-minute wait.

Councillors pointed out that the concern in the village is that displaced traffic may use the village as a 'rat run'. SR explained that although he could not categorically stop people from driving through the village EK were liaising with both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils in an effort to minimise this. It is hoped that once people realise the delays on the main roads are not long then they will continue to use them as the fastest option. KG suggests that one mitigation might be to place an environmental weight restriction on the village roads, except for access. SR is to raise this with OCC.

MKB asks about money to mend local minor roads after the completion of the project, they are already in a poor state and any extra traffic is likely to make things much worse. SR explains that EK have no budget for side road restoration, this could be a matter for OCC to raise directly. They would need to carry out a pre-condition survey in order to measure the impact of the project. SC is to ask IC if this could be requested.

The bridge over the railway just to the west of the village is to be raised, the exact amount is not known as the design is not completed. MKB points out that even a metre of change will put the traffic noise above the hedge line, which will mean a lot more noise for the village. SR explains that HS2 will be carrying out planting along all affected roads. CS points out that HS2 are planting to replace any lost trees at a ratio of 3:1. KG points out that any planting will need to be high, not merely another hedge, and asks whether 'quiet tarmac' will be used to mitigate any effects. SR explains that SMA, which is the quieter surface, is used by EK as a default. However, some councils request the use of HRA as it is more durable, though noisier. SR will raise this request for SMA at the next meeting with the councils.

MKB raises the issue of mud on the road, which is already a problem due to the quarry. SR explains that earth moving will be generally carried out in the summer months. Rumble strips will be installed near site traffic crossings to shake off any excess material and there will be wheel washing facilities and physical checks at all exits from the site.

CS explains that she has been working with Finmere school on a project called Growing Spaces. A raised bed has been installed and there will be planting and other activities including recycling using this bed in the coming months. A booklet is being produced featuring all ten schools in the scheme, which covers the central HS2 area, who are putting forward two recipes each for inclusion. Copies of this booklet will be provided to schools to sell for fundraising.

The PC thanks CS and SR for all this helpful information and invites them to the Annual Parish Meeting in May, when more precise figures on lorry movements and the raised height of the bridge should be known. They are happy to attend. It is felt that this information needs to be put in a newsletter. SC is to ask SR for the slides from his presentation for MKB to use if possible. This is to be an agenda item at the APM.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING (21.00)

- 5.01 **Cross Tree Drainage Problems** Councillors confirm that still no action has been taken on clearing this gully. SC has emailed to Mike Wasley (MW) (OCC Highways) asking for clarification on all currently outstanding highways issues and asked for contact details of the drainage department who are supposed to have dealt with this under the 28 day rule. No reply has been received. IC has confirmed to MKB that MW is extremely busy at the moment and has few or no staff to help him. c/f
- 5.02 **Cross Tree Signpost** MKB needs photographs to send to the contractor he has found, it is hoped that the cost will be around £220. SC is to forward JB's photographs of the signpost which were taken to send to OCC. c/f
- 5.03 **Traffic problems in Valley Rd/Mere Rd** SC has been in touch with MW, see 5.01 above. c/f
- 5.04 **Fencing & Stile for Stable Close bund boundary** MKB has spoken to the contractor who hopes to carry out the work soon. c/f
- 5.05 **Sports Pavilion Issues** The heads of terms of the lease have been discussed at a meeting with the SC committee. ST and MKB were present for the PC. It was explained that the PC would like the SC to pay the legal costs of the lease. This the SC refuses to do. ST points out that if the SC are unable to pay the costs up front it may be possible to increase the annual rent, £10, for a few years to clear the costs. This is to be suggested. The lease is needed by the SC in order to obtain grants for the pavilion, for showers and other improvements. If no lease is granted it is possible that the pavilion could fall into disuse if the SC moved elsewhere, which would be a shame as the SC is an asset to the village. There is to be a further meeting to discuss the idea of adding the costs to the rent over time or the possibility of the PC paying for some or all of the costs if it can afford to, but the amount of the costs needs to be known first. MKB is waiting to hear the approximate cost from the solicitor and will deal with this under urgent business.

There is also the issue of the terms of the lease. The SC would like to relax the rules currently listed, they would like to be able to have advertising banners/hoardings at matches, to use the pavilion for fundraising events and to keep open the option of adding other sports to the SC in addition to cricket and football. ST feels that this could get out of control, especially with the clash over use of the carpark that would come with fundraising events clashing with events at the hall. JB points out that users of the hall, who have paid a premium for the venue, should have priority over use of the carpark. In the past this issue has been overcome by opening up the gate and having the SC cars park on the field, but since the movement of the play area this is more of a health and safety issue.

These issues are to be pursued with the SC. c/f

- 5.06 **Fulwell Rd Manhole Cover** SC has been in touch with MW, see 5.01 above. c/f

- 5.07 **Stable Close Bund Issues** SC has had no further communication from residents. The PC will form a work party to clear the ivy on Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup>. ST is to visit the site and see if it is possible for the PC to cut the required branches, otherwise quotes will need to be obtained as previous quotes are not applicable due to the change in nature of the work required. c/f
- 5.08 **Stable Close Fencing** This work is still outstanding, MK and PG point out that a further section has been damaged. c/f
- 5.09 **Data Protection Contract Progress** SC has not altered her monthly payment amount yet as she wanted to wait and see what the monthly invoice would comprise. The back payment of monies owed (£6 plus £1.20) and the alteration of the monthly payment can now be carried out after the monthly invoice was received in the sum of £1.20. This was less than the expected £6 pcm as the initial offer was for the whole year, not just the first month. SC continues to liaise with Paul Nash (PN), former website administrator, over the technicalities of posting to the site and it may be that she needs to visit him again and carry out some supervised operations in order to get things right. ST points out that a villager had tried to email both the village hall and the parish council email addresses and had both emails returned. SC is to check the site and liaise with PN. c/f
- 5.10 **Dog Mess on the Field** This item has now been in a newsletter.
- 5.11 **Trees of Remembrance Project** ST will ask the VHMC (Village Hall Management Committee) where they would like the second tree to go at their next meeting. SC has informed OCC that the first tree was planted beside the bench to replace the previous tree there which had died, no permission is needed for this replacement planting. c/f
- 5.12 **Comet Bus Service** SC has still not received an invoice from IC. This service needs to go into the next newsletter. c/f
- 5.13 **Salt and Grit Bins** The salt bag was brought to Fimmere Grounds Farm but Johnnie Brooks turned it away as there is already too much salt stored there. With two large bags in store it is thought best to wait for the free bag to become available next year.
- 5.14 **Christmas Lights Donation and Invoice** The donation has been paid into the PC account and JB has been reimbursed for the invoice amount.
- 5.15 **Safeguarding Policy** This has been produced but is still to be placed on the web and the link to it is still to be circulated to volunteers. c/f
- 5.16 **Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure** This has been updated and placed on the web.
- 5.17 **Spinney Acquisition Funding** MKB has still had no reply from Martin Ayres, head of the Mixbury Trust, regarding the Trust's feelings about a TPO. c/f

- 5.18 **NHS Leaflets** These were left in the hall for public access and SC informed Phillip Rushforth (PR), VHMC. He was happy to have the leaflets there and thanked the PC for informing him.
- 5.19 **ICO Renewal** SC has paid the renewal charge and a receipt has been received along with the new registration certificate.
- 5.20 **TTRO for Water Stratford Rd** This is still to be placed on the web. c/f
- 5.21 **Silent Soldier** This has been taken down by ST and is to be stored until next year by KG.

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT (21.48)

The quarterly financial report and quarterly bank reconciliation were presented, and the reconciliation signed, proposed MKB, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

It was reported that there was £6,811.98 in the Treasurer Account and £4,809.82 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The transactions for October and November are shown in the November and December minutes.

The following had been paid in during December:

£157.00 from the Red Lion, a donation toward the Christmas lights

The following had been paid out during December:

£40.00 to ICO (Information Commissioners Office) (general admin – subscriptions)

£187.10 to Festive Lights, c/o JB (capital expenditure)

£296.07 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

The asset register had been updated to show the new value of the lights.

## 7. S19/S137/URGENT BUSINESS (21.53)

A request for funding had been received from FOFSA who are fundraising for new play equipment for the school. MKB declares an involvement as his grandson attends the school and takes no part in the discussion or the vote. Some £10k to £15k needs to be raised but there will be funding available from landfill grants etc provided a 10% deposit is raised. The PC decides to make a contribution of £200. Proposed ST, seconded KG, carried unanimously. SC is to contact FOFSA and arrange payment.

MKB circulated the probable cost of mending the Cross Tree signpost under urgent business.

#### 8. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE (22.05)

The site is still not accepting waste although soil needed for restoration work is being brought in. A planning application is in the pipeline to allow a mound of waste earth to be kept in situ until the land to the east is able to be worked.

#### 9. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION (22.07)

The sorting out of the lease is still ongoing in conjunction now with the Sports Association lease.

KG confirms that she has walked the field this month and all is well.

#### 10. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS (22.08)

PR asked the organisations which use the hall if they could be included on the welcome letter but unfortunately very few replied. SC has rewritten the letter with those details which were provided. There is a link to the website for the bus timetable as this allows the letter to be kept to one sheet – which is easily ‘pinned to the fridge door’ by new residents. The letter is approved, proposed MK, seconded KG, carried unanimously. SC is to circulate it.

#### 11. ROAD REPAIRS (22.09)

The large pothole in the Water Stratford Rd at the end of the Church track has re-opened. SC asks if anyone can get photos as these are best for Fix-my-street. ST undertakes to report the pothole, though he doubts it is severe enough to be actionable.

MKB has had a talk with IC and heard news of a new road repair fund. SC has had no email on this and is to ask IC to send one. Mere Rd, Valley Rd, Fulwell Rd and Water Stratford road are all candidates for resurfacing. c/f

#### 12. PARISH CLERK HOURS DIARY (22.12)

The total for the quarter was 74.5 hours. This is five and a half hours more than the same quarter last year, this being due to work on taking over the website. Overall figures for the year should still be in line with last year.

#### 13. PARISH PRECEPT REVIEW (22.14)

A revenue and expenditure estimates sheet had been produced and circulated with explanations of the various headings. If legal costs for next year (ongoing work on the leases and the possible purchase of the spinney) are only £500, S137 is kept to only £1,500 and a sum of £1,500 is set aside as earmarked funds for the replacement of the mower then the

precept will be enough to cover all costs with some spare money for contingencies or to bring reserves up to the required level.

It is felt that possible legal fees should be increased to £1,500 whilst only £1,000 needs to be put aside for the mower. This still means a requirement of £10,660 with the precept currently at £11,330.

S137 has been increased next year to £3,142.44. In order to keep the full amount available for any village projects the precept would need to be raised to some £12,300. This is not felt to be necessary.

Other possible expenses for next year are training costs. OALC in their latest update stressed the importance of all councillors receiving training. A one-day training course costs some £90 so for all councillors to attend one in the year would add some £550 to the budget. It was suggested when last years Parish Remuneration Report was presented that the PC should look at paying allowances. The current allowances are 45p a mile for petrol for all journeys carried out on PC business. The Chairman gets an annual allowance of £324 and councillors get £216. These figures are likely to rise for 2019-20. MKB and JB state that they would not accept allowances. The PC concurs that there is no need to consider allowances. Training is to be looked at however, councillors are to look at the training programme contained in the OALC report and perhaps three could attend training this year and three next.

A reserve of one year's precept is recommended for PC's. Although still short this year the PC should have moved closer to this ideal.

In view of the above it was decided to keep the precept at its current level for the year 2019-20. Proposed MKB, seconded JB, carried unanimously. SC is to submit the precept request.

#### 14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS (22.25)

18/01875/F – Land adjoining and west of the The Kings Head, Banbury Rd – erection of 6 dwellings with new vehicular access – withdrawn

#### 15. CORRESPONDENCE (22.26)

##### **Correspondence for meeting –**

Invoice from Ionos 1&1 – monthly payment of £1.20 – see Section 5.09

Appeal for funds from School – see Section 7

Notification of approval of plan to relocate Swan Practice in Buckingham to the London Rd

Renewal request from Sport England for information on sports facilities – returned by SC

##### **Emails printed –**

Highways letter to 16 Valley Rd – this is just to confirm that OCC Highways have signed off on the work carried out to relocate the fence onto the correct highway boundary.

Issues above

**Emails forwarded –**

Consultation on Oxfordshire plan of Community involvement – for information

Oxfordshire Matters – for information

OALC December update – new salary scale to be on Feb or March agenda

Council tax increase survey – for submissions

Older People's Strategy consultation – for submissions

Cherwell Wellbeing Activity Map info – for information

Oxfordshire Resilience Group community meeting info – nobody is able to attend

Community Wardens news from IC – for information

Usual reports – for information

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (22.32)**

**New dog bin** A request has been received from a neighbour that the new dog bin be relocated to a less prominent post. MKB will move the bin shortly.

**17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (22.34)**

The date of the next meeting is February 5<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Meeting closed at 22.35.

**CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED**

Clerks and Councils Direct January 2019

Parker Bulbs Spring Sale catalogue