

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, FREELAND ON THE 17th JANUARY 2022, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Roger Faulkner
	Vice-Chairman:	Mary Ann Canning
	Councillors:	Bill Phillips, Peter Foster, Andrew Bird, Amy Jackson, Andy Bain
	District Councillors:	Alaa Al-Yousuf, (till 9.10pm)
	County Councillor:	Not present
	Clerk:	Lisa Smith

At the time of this meeting taking place, the UK and rest of the world were still experiencing a Coronavirus (Covid -19) pandemic, and legislation and rules around this were constantly being updated. The current Government advice was for Council meetings to be held face to face, so the meeting was held in St Mary's Church to allow for social distancing and better ventilation (the Village Hall was unavailable).

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Two residents were present for this session, Kenny Wylie and Christian Silk who both wished to listen to the discussions.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Perrin Hatwell - ill, Marilyn Davies, Liam Walker.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT:

3.1 TO RECEIVE ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no amendments to the Register of Members' Interests.

3.2 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COUNCILLORS FOR MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING

Mary Ann Canning (personal) as a member of Freeland Charitable Foundation.

Roger Faulkner (personal) as Vice Chair of Freeland Community Benefit Society and Speedwatch Co-ordinator.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 20th December 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 20th December 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of those proceedings.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to report.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.1 Mobile coverage in Freeland – to receive an update on progress to improve mobile signal.

There was nothing further to update.

6.2 Yellow Rattle trial sites – to receive an update on progress

The Clerk had emailed Highways to ask them to reinstate the verge opposite the nursing home with wildflower seeds (to include Yellow Rattle), or alternatively to provide a financial contribution so that the Parish Council could plant the seeds. A response was awaited.

6.3 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations & Hedgerow Grant – to receive an update on the priority list for hedgerow planting and to consider any actions for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations including Big Lunch style event on 5th June

Russell Fisher had provided a priority list for Council approval that could then be passed to Wild Oxfordshire regarding how much hedgerow would be required. These were discussed last month and two areas from the list had been removed and it was noted the area in the churchyard would also require permission before planting could go ahead. It was agreed that the remainder of the hedgerow allowance could be used for the area in Vincent's Wood.

Councillors approved the priority list and the Clerk would forward this on to Catriona Bass at Wild Oxfordshire.

With regards to the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, as well as the tree planting, consideration needed to be given to the actual event on 5th June 2022, where the village hall had been booked for a Big Lunch style event. After a brief discussion it was felt that volunteers were needed to help organise the event, with perhaps the presence of the farmer's market, and stalls and activities on the field. It was agreed to place a note in the Grapevine and on social media, and to ask some village group leaders to see if they were interested in organising the event. The Clerk would make contact and place notes as above.

Action: Clerk to email hedgerow list to Catriona, and email club leaders and place note in Grapevine and on social media re Platinum Jubilee event.

6.4 WASP (Windrush Against Sewage Pollution) – to discuss whether to send another letter of concern to Thames Water following response received from them

Following the unsatisfactory response from Thames Water last month, it was agreed to write to them again to express the Council's dissatisfaction at the lack of action and continuation of sewage discharge into the local waterways.

It was also reported that the manhole cover in Blenheim Lane had overflowed yet again at the weekend, which was the third time this had happened with dirty smelly water being discharged all over the road. As this was a recurring problem it was agreed to include this in the letter of complaint. The Clerk would copy in Robert Courts to the letter to see if there was anything further that could be done.

Mary Ann would also invite a member of the Evenlode Catchment Partnership or WASP to do a presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action: Clerk to write letter of complaint as above, Mary Ann to invite members of ECP or WASP to do a presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting.

6.5 Annual Parish Meeting – to update on date of meeting and topics for discussion,

The village hall had been booked for **Friday 22nd April**. Last month, Christian Silk had emailed some suggestions on how to make the village more sustainable especially in view of the climate crisis. It was agreed some of this could be incorporated into the Annual Parish Meeting.

He suggested there were two areas to consider: reducing emissions (mitigation) to reduce the contribution to the climate crisis, and changing features of the village (adaptation) to enable us to deal with the climate crisis as it hits.

An example of mitigation might be planting more trees to absorb carbon, lower speed limits or 'no drive days' to reduce emissions, encouraging people to waste less food and move to a more vegetarian diet or perhaps buy local schemes and repair shops.

An example of adaptation might be to plant more trees on Wroslyn Road so people had shade in summer when it gets hot or look at drainage around the primary school where the road often floods during heavy rain as this was set to get worse, especially as run off from new housing estates increased.

Christian was currently studying Sustainability and Behaviour Change MSc and was very happy to help the village or give a presentation at the APM if required. Other suggestions of topics included Traffic Calming update, Planning update to include Neighbourhood Plan group update, Inspired Villages update, First and Last Mile bus promotion, Garden of Remembrance sculpture ideas, village sustainability – to include water pollution, naturehood. It was noted that time would not allow all of these to be included, so after some discussion, it was agreed that the following would be presented at the APM, and the other topics could be included in the Chairman's update:

- Sustainability in Freeland – a look at ways in which we can help to make the village more sustainable especially in view of the climate crisis;

- Local river water quality and sewage works pollution – a look at how much pollution is being dumped in our local rivers from nearby sewage works and what can be done about it (to include a talk by ECP or WASP (see item 6.4)
- Freeland Naturehood Group – an update from the Group as to what is being done in Freeland to enhance nature and biodiversity, eg Verge Restoration Project, tree planting etc
- Freeland 2030 - a Vision – a look at what Freeland will look like by 2030 and a chance for residents to give their views on how they would like it to look and how this can be achieved.

Action: The Clerk would advertise this on social media and in the Grapevine and send round the agenda and previous APM minutes to the Chairman for information.

6.6 Oxfordshire Treescapes Project – to receive an update on whether to take part in project and review report

Mary Ann had been in touch with the Treescapes Project and had ordered a detailed report for Freeland. She would report back again next month.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received: None.

7.2 Applications Approved:

21/03680/HHD ROWAN, WITNEY ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of a single storey side and rear extensions for Mrs Penny Young

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

21/03258/FUL 3 CUCKOO WOOD CARAVAN PARK, EYNHAM ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of detached building for the garaging of heavy goods vehicles for Mr Perry Hatwell.

20/01734/OUT LAND NORTH OF A40, A40 SECTION FROM BARNARD GATE TO EYNHAM ROUNABOUT, EYNHAM (NEIGHBOURING PARISH)

Outline application with means of access for a mixed-use Garden Village, comprising residential, retail, food and drink, health and community facilities, hotel, class B1, B2 and B8 employment uses, education provision, burial ground, public open space with sports pitches together with ancillary facilities, landscaping and associated infrastructure and works for Grosvenor Developments Ltd.

21/00961/FUL LAND SOUTH OF SHASTON, THE GREEN, FREELAND.

New Build Chalet Bungalow with detached double Garage for Mr & Mrs Neil and Catherine Tregear.

21/02627/OUT LAND OFF THE WEST SIDE OF WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Outline planning application for the erection of a retirement community of up to 160 extra care units (C2 use class) with associated communal facilities and open space, with access from Wroslyn Road, (all matters reserved except access) and retention of veterinary practice in the coach house for Inspired Villages.

21/03953/HHD 5 WALKERS CLOSE, FREELAND.

Erection of a single storey extension to front and side for Mr Oliver Puddle.

7.6 Neighbourhood Plan – to receive an update on progress with next steps to kick starting the process for a Neighbourhood Plan and discuss ways of encouraging involvement from residents, plus to consider topics to include in a village survey, and to consider how to achieve community involvement with sustainability in Freeland

Amy provided a brief update. Following on from the meeting held with Astrid Harvey, Community Planning Officer at WODC on 4th December, a follow up meeting was being held on Thursday 20th January about understanding Neighbourhood Planning and whether it's for Freeland or not. As already mentioned in the December minutes, at the January follow up meeting it was hoped to discuss the following:

- Agree (if possible) a proposal within the group about what it thinks is desirable/appropriate/needed for Freeland in terms of development;
- Agree whether a Neighbourhood Plan is the right mechanism to achieve this goal, and if not, what is the right strategy (re-engaging with Astrid for guidance on this);
- Agree next steps in terms of engaging the community to determine support for the agreed goal and strategy.

A village survey was also suggested as a way of finding out what the village actually wants going forward. This needed to be done in February/early March so that the results could be analyzed before the Annual Parish Meeting. Amy had invited the Community Led Plan (CLP) working group members to the follow up meeting to increase village involvement and the CLP was something that could also potentially be revisited. It was also noted that it was important to manage residents' expectations.

Councillors were asked to consider what other things they would wish to find out in the survey and what possible questions they would like to be asked and to let Amy know as soon as possible before the next meeting.

Action: All Councillors to consider questions for survey and email Amy with ideas before next meeting.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

No report had been received from Merilyn. Liam had emailed to remind everyone to encourage completion of the 20mph survey that was open until 31st January. He would report back the findings at the February meeting. The Clerk would place a reminder on social media to encourage residents to complete survey.

Alaa advised that he would be writing an explanatory report in the Grapevine next month regarding the precept and how this influenced the council tax calculation. The Clerk would forward Alaa the precept request form with the most up to date figures so that he could compile his report.

Alaa also provided an update on the Local Plan review process that had commenced during which the WODC housing supply figures would be reviewed. It was likely the whole review process would take until at least 2023 to complete.

Alaa also reported that Blenheim had submitted a "scoping opinion" request to the WODC Planning Department for a potential development of up to 150 houses on the North field on the A4095. This was not a formal planning application so it was not the right time to submit comments, but it was noted this needed to be closely monitored for any further updates as the Parish Council would want to submit comments on it.

Alaa was thanked for his update and he left the meeting at 9.10pm (Christian Silk also left the meeting at this point).

Action: Clerk to place reminder on social media re Liam's survey and to send precept figures to Alaa.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report for December was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 31st December 2021 and the receipts and payments received or paid out in the last month. The bank statement was checked as agreeing with the figures on the finance sheet and was signed by Bill.

9.2 Approval of invoices for payment

The Council approved invoices for payment as listed on the invoices for payment sheet distributed with the meeting. These invoices would all be paid by BACS online. Council therefore **resolved** to approve all of the following invoices for payment:

The following invoices are requested to be approved for payment:			
BACS Ref Number	To whom paid	Details	Amount (£)
BACS 114	St Mary's Church PCC	Church hire 17.01.22	25.00
BACS 115	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - January*	950.42
BACS 116	Bill Phillips	Litter picking - Oct/Nov/Dec	250.00
BACS 117	Parish Online	Mapping software	118.80
BACS 118	Long Hanborough Methodist Church	Meeting room hire 20.01.22 for NP meeting	15.00
BACS 119	Community First Oxfordshire	Membership renewal 2022	70.00
		Total:	1,429.22
Plus: NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for January salary payment.			
*Pay award pending for Clerk's salary - negotiations still taking place so previous salary continued.			

9.3 To update on the review the effectiveness of internal audit process (to include review of financial system)

The Chairman and Peter Foster had arranged to meet the Clerk on Tuesday 25th January to carry out the review this year. They would report back their findings next month.

Action: Chairman and Peter F to meet Clerk to carry out review.

9.4 Any other financial business

Fundraising: The Freeland Teddy Girls had approached the Chairman to see if there were any upcoming Parish Council projects that they could help fund raise towards. The bench on the Green had recently been purchased with funds raised by them and the wildflower verge restoration project was suggested as a suitable next project. The Council had already previously authorized up to £200 to spend on wildflower seeds, and after some discussion, Council **resolved** to increase this amount to up to £400 and then the Teddy Girls could fundraise towards the costs of the seeds. Another suggestion was to help towards the cost of the suggested sculpture/mosaic for the Garden of Remembrance, for which some S106 Public Art funds were available but they may not cover the full amount. The Chairman would respond to the Teddy Girls with the two options and let them choose which they preferred.

Action: Chairman to report back to Teddy Girls as above.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

10.1 Play areas/Playing Field – to receive any reports:

10.1.1 Play area reports: Play area reports:

Pink book– Amy had the pink book and would pass it on to Bill. The wobbly bridge on the toddler Multiplay was slippery and needed a scrub with soapy water to remove the algae and moss. Mary Ann and Peter agreed to do this.

Sand Shack: A few bags of sand had been purchased for the new sand shack which was already getting good use, but the sand was already starting to go down as it was spilling out. It was agreed to monitor this as more would be needed going forward. A suggestion was made of perhaps asking parents for a donation towards the sand, and creating a QR code for donations. The Clerk would double check with OALC that this was permitted.

Bug hotels: It was reported that St Mary's Church had agreed to install two bug hotels in the graveyard and the local primary school will be asked if some of the older children would like to be involved in collecting some of the materials that would be required.

Tree Trail: The Clerk had emailed around some information about a tree trail that had been created in another parish in Weymouth, to educate children about the different types and benefits of trees. It was suggested doing something similar in Freeland – this would be discussed further next month as it had only just been sent round.

Bench donation – it was also reported that a former resident had donated a bench to the village which was currently being stored at the garden centre and would need moving by Easter. Councillors were asked to consider suitable locations to install the bench, and it was also suggested asking the village so the Clerk would place a note in the Grapevine and on social media to gather some suggestions.

Action: Mary Ann and Peter to clean wobbly bridge, Clerk to check re donations with OALC and place note in Grapevine and on social media , and Clerk to place tree trail on next agenda.

10.1.2 Water for cricket square – to update on progress with adding a water supply to the new storage shed.

There was nothing further to report. Notification had been received from Oxfordshire County Council to advise that a road closure licence had been applied for to close Pigeon House Lane from 16-18 March 2022 for Thames Water to provide a new water mains connection. Robert Crocker would advise the Clerk when the connection had been completed.

10.1.3 Playground Inspection Training - to receive an update on progress on updating the weekly play area checklist following Playground Inspection Training

Andrew advised this had now been completed.

10.1.4 Cricket net matting replacement – to consider a request from the Cricket Club to replace the matting by the cricket nets

A request had been received from the Cricket Club to replace the cricket net matting. No financial assistance was required from the Parish Council. The matting was currently in 4 pieces, with a gap between the bowling and batting mats. The request was to get rid of the gaps so they would have a continuous piece of matting, which would be better for the younger children.

The gaps to be filled were 9.5m x 2m. This was the area between the bowling mat and the batting mat, where the younger children tended to bowl from which increased their risk of slipping.

Two areas of concrete would be put down as a base and the depth of the concrete would be 10cm. There would be a wooden frame around the concrete which would allow for the new matting to be nailed in and secured.

After a brief discussion, Council were happy to approve this request. The Clerk would inform the Cricket Club.

Action: Clerk to feedback to Cricket Club as above.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports:

Advertising board – an advertising board had been attached to the VAS sign on the hill by Heritage Cottage which was felt to be a distraction for motorists. The Clerk would ask the company to remove it.

Action: Clerk to request removal of advertising board.

10.2.1 Traffic calming measures – to receive an update from Traffic Calming Working Group

There was nothing further to update at the current time. The results of Liam's 20mph survey were awaited and these would be reported at the February meeting. Mary Ann was going to contact an architect Colin Davies who had worked with other parishes to see if he was willing to work with Freeland regarding traffic calming measures and then arrange a meeting of the group with a Highways representative present. It was also noted that it was important to increase communication to gain a wider involvement with residents, the Speedwatch group, and school parents so that they could all be part of the discussions and solutions. This was agreed.

Action: Mary Ann to contact Colin Davies and arrange meeting of group.

10.2.2 Speedwatch– to receive an update from Speedwatch group

The Chairman provided a brief update on the Speedwatch activity. The team of 8 volunteers took a well-deserved break over Christmas and had now resumed their activities and were operating regularly. It was already noted that their activities were having an impact and there were fewer high speed drivers, with no cars having been caught exceeding 50mph in the 30mph limit for several weeks.

10.2.3 Memorial trees – to update on progress in getting broken/rotten posts replaced

The posts had not yet been replaced but would be done shortly. It was also suggested that it was a good time to prune the extra growth on the trees, Amy and Mary Ann agreed to do this, and Mary Ann would also involve Robert Crocker too.

Action: Amy, Mary Ann (and possibly Rob) to prune memorial trees.

10.2.4 Bus shelter on A4095 – to update on progress in getting a new shelter installed on A4095

Confirmation had been received from Oxfordshire County Council that they had received the S106 funds for the bus shelter, and a 3-bay shelter costing £9,500 had been requested (choice was either a 2-bay with no front panel or a 3-bay with a front panel, the 3-bay shelter was recommended by OCC). This would leave a surplus of £1,000 to be transferred to the Parish Council for maintenance. An estimated installation date from the contractor was now awaited.

10.3 Footpath & Bridleway matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports:

The footpath rota had been completed for the year and would restart again in the Spring. The footpath book was returned to the Clerk so a new rota could be drawn up. The signage on BR1 needed checking to see if it still needed attention – when the rota restarted this could be checked.

Action: Clerk to do new footpath rota. Councillors to check signage on BR1 in the Spring.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports plus:

No reports were received.

10.4.1 S106 Public Art funds – to discuss whether to use some S106 Public Art money to fund a new mosaic/inscription/sculpture at the GOR

Following on from last month's suggestion of using the S106 Public Art money to fund a new sculpture or statue or mosaic inscription in the Garden of Remembrance, Mary Ann would circulate the ideas that the local artist had produced previously to the Councillors and it was also suggested this could be presented or discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action: Mary Ann to circulate ideas from local artist to Councillors.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

Bill gave a brief update. The Hall floor was supposed to be being treated and sealed but this had had to be delayed. It was now being rescheduled for Christmas 2022 due to the availability of the Hall. New curtains were also due to be hung in the hall very soon.

10.6 Village Pond – to receive any reports

There was nothing further to report.

11. CORRESPONDENCE – To discuss and agree any actions arising from:

(a) OALC December update – details had been emailed around .

(b) OCC – Traffic Regulation Order – A Traffic Regulation Order had been received from G2 Energy Ltd for a temporary overnight road closure to apply to a section of Eynsham Road/Cuckoo Lane whilst the installation of ducting for an electrical supply is carried out – details had been emailed around and would be placed on social media and in the Grapevine.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine and on social media.

(c) OCC Drainage Survey on A40 – Drainage surveys and vegetation clearance works were due to start from 17 January 2022 between Hill Farm Junction on the A40 (east of Witney) to the Duke's Cut bridge. The works were expected to take up to 4 weeks to complete, subject to weather and site conditions and would be carried out mostly at night – details had been emailed around and would be placed in the Grapevine and on social media.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine and on social media.

(d) Parish Online mapping training – to receive an update following training course attended – details had been emailed around and Mary Ann would set up all Councillors with a user name and log in so that they could have a look at the system.

Action: Mary Ann to set up all councillors with a log in for Parish Online.

Plus additional items received since the meeting papers sent out:

(e) Hall Bookings – The Village Hall had been booked for the first 6 months of 2022 for Parish Council meetings, however the Hall was unavailable for 3 dates - 17th January, 19th April and 16th May. The Newell Room was available as an alternative, or there was the option of using the church again. It was agreed to review this again next month and see what the Covid situation was like nearer the time.

(f) OALC Training Schedule 2022 – details had been emailed around and Councillors were asked to email the Clerk if there were any courses they wished to attend so she could book them a place.

(g) Community First Oxfordshire – membership subscription renewal details for 2022 – details had been emailed around.

(h) Tree work in Amenity Area – more tree work was reported to have taken place in the Amenity Area behind 46 Broadmarsh Lane where a number of trees and bushes had been cut down and dumped in the area. The Clerk would place a note in the Grapevine and on social media.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine and on social media.

12. CIRCULATION

January circulation – out at meeting.

No December circulation.

13. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

There was nothing to report.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

None.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Council would be held on **Monday 21st February 2022 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.** There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.25pm.