

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, ON THE 17TH MAY 2021, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Roger Faulkner
	Vice-Chairman:	Mary Ann Canning
	Councillors:	Peter Foster, Bill Phillips, Amy Jackson.
	District Councillors:	Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 8.51pm) Marilyn Davies (till 8.41pm)
	County Councillor:	Liam Walker (till 8.51pm)
	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 social distancing were being updated regularly. The current Government advice was to not allow virtual meetings from 6th May, but a number of Councillors were not happy about meeting face to face and did not feel safe. The Council therefore agreed to hold the meeting remotely.

Although not detailed in the April minutes, the April meeting date had had to be changed (from 19th to 26th April) due to local Government legislation surrounding the national period of mourning following the death of the Duke of Edinburgh.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Four members of the public were present for this session – Kenny Wylie, and two potential Parish Council candidates Andy Bain and Tony Tomkys, who all wished to listen to the meeting.

Christian Silk was also present who wished to say a few words about grass verges and biodiversity. There had been a huge collapse in many different species in the UK since the 1960s, including birds, insects, wildlife and plants. A WODC scheme had been promoted recently called “No Mow May” whereby residents were encouraged not to mow their gardens for the month of May (or ideally longer) to help give native insects food for pollination and help birds with the provision of seeds. The RSPB were currently recommending just mowing gardens once a year to give nature a chance to recover. Christian wished to make a request to the Parish Council to not mow some of the grass verges in the village, especially the ones near the allotments that would not restrict visibility for anyone, and the ones past the Green down the hill by the Freeland sign. This would help restore biodiversity and help nature recover which was a key factor in helping to deal with climate change, whilst also reducing the parish council’s grass cutting expenditure. It was noted that the verge down the hill by the Green may need to still be cut due to visibility for cyclists, motorists and neighbouring properties, and this was accepted.

This item was due to be discussed in more detail later in the meeting at item 10.2.2.

Christian then thanked the Council for their time and wished to sit and listen to the rest of the meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None.

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. All Councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office on camera and the Clerk asked for them to be posted to her so that she could then sign them as well.

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.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 26th April 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 26th April 2021 were approved and would be signed by the Chairman (outside of the meeting) 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.

A brief report was given. New contractors on behalf of CTIL had been instructed and a multi-skills site visit had been arranged for later this week. This would involve the radio planners, build contractors and acquisition agents all meeting on site to agree the location was a viable option. Once this had been agreed a planning application would be drawn up and submitted for approval. Peter would keep the Council updated on any further developments.

6.2 Community Led Plan review – to receive an update on the CLP review.

An addendum to the Transport section of the Community Led Plan (CLP) had been emailed around, this had been produced by the Freeland Transport Representative, Peter Leigh. However, the new Councillors had not yet seen it. Mary Ann advised she was going to tweak it slightly so it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting and the Clerk would email a copy to the new Councillors and then everyone could have a look at it and see if there were any amendments they wished to make.

Action: Clerk to add to next month's agenda and email a copy to new Councillors, Mary Ann to tweak document.

6.3 List of land ownership around Freeland – to note contents of list of landowners around the village.

The Clerk had made a start on the list and had emailed it to Robert Crocker for checking. A response was awaited.

Action: Clerk to chase Robert re list if necessary.

6.4 Parish Council vacancies - Co-option of new Councillors.

Following the uncontested election, 5 seats out of 8 were filled, and there were now 3 vacancies that would need filling by co-option. Since the last meeting, 4 residents had expressed their interest in joining the Council, and 2 were present at the meeting. After a brief discussion, as many of the Councillors did not feel as though they knew any of the candidates, it was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would arrange to meet with the applicants and then hopefully a decision could be made next month about who to co-opt.

Action: Chairman and Vice chairman to arrange to meet with candidates and report back at next meeting.

6.5 Membership of working groups – to review membership for Planning, Financial Audit and Garden of Remembrance Working Groups

As the Council still had 3 vacancies, it was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting when it was hoped some new members will be co-opted to the Council and then the membership of the above groups could be reviewed. In the meantime, it was agreed to add the Chairman to the Planning Team.

Action: Clerk to carry this item forward to next agenda.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received:

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.

With regards to the above application, it was noted that it was only received 7 days before the Parish Council meeting, and the new Councillors had not seen it. As there were some potential concerns with regards to access to the site and possible intrusion to neighbouring properties, it was agreed to ask if the Parish Council could delay sending in their comments until the new Councillors had been appointed and the full Council had been given a chance to look through the application. The Clerk

would contact the WODC Planning Department to ask for a decision to be deferred until June. It was also noted that no yellow planning sign had yet been erected on site, so it was likely the timing for submission of comments would be extended – Marilyn would chase up the sign. The Clerk would circulate the details of the planning application to the new Councillors.

Action: Clerk to contact WODC Planning Dept as above and circulate the application to the new Councillors, Marilyn to chase up yellow sign.

7.2 Applications Approved: None.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

7.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

20/01734/OUT

LAND NORTH OF A40, A40 SECTION FROM BARNARD GATE TO EYNSHAM ROUNDABOUT, EYNSHAM (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.

R3.0057/19

LAND WEST OF CUCKOO LANE AND ADJACENT TO THE A40, EYNSHAM, WEST OXFORDSHIRE, OX29 4PU

Construction of a park & ride car park providing 850 car parking spaces, cycle spaces, motorcycle spaces, electric vehicle charging points, bus shelters, landscaping, external lighting, public open space, toilets, seating, fencing, habitat creation, drainage features, new access from Cuckoo Lane, new roundabout with access onto A40, an eastbound bus lane approximately 6.5km in length from the park & ride site to the A40 bridge over the Dukes Cut canal, two sections of westbound bus lane (each approximately 500m in length), new shared use footway/cycleway, widening of Cassington New Bridge, junction improvements, new crossings, new footbridge alongside Cassington Halt Bridge, and associated works for Oxfordshire County Council.

7.6 Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) – Inspector's Notes

An email about the above had been circulated containing lots of information contained within three documents. The hearing dates for the examination of the Area Action Plan had been set for a 2-week period between 28th June and 9th July 2021. There was an opportunity to make representations to the Planning Inspector and Russ Canning was happy to draft such a response on behalf of the Council. Councillors were asked to feedback any comments to Mary Ann who would pass them to Russ to include in the feedback. The Clerk would forward the information to the new Councillors.

Action: Councillors to feedback any comments to Mary Ann, Clerk to forward email to new Councillors.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

Congratulations were offered to Liam and Alaa on their recent re-election. Alaa had nothing further he wished to report.

Marilyn gave a brief report in which she encouraged the Parish Council to consider producing a Neighbourhood Plan, and to possibly work together with Hanborough Parish Council to help safeguard certain areas of the village. The Planning Group would be asked to consider this once they had full membership after the co-options had taken place. Marilyn was thanked for her update and then left the meeting at 8.41pm.

In Liam's report he advised that a new leader of OCC was due to be announced tomorrow following Ian Hudspeth's unsuccessful re-election. The Conservatives had lost 9 seats so there was no overall

control for any party, so it was likely there would be some sort of coalition between the Green Party, Labour and Liberal Democrats, although nothing final had been arranged.

The 20mph funding programme was still in place and Hanborough Parish Council were due to meet tomorrow to agree to carry out their speed survey. Council noted that Freeland did not wish to wait for Hanborough and wanted to go ahead with their own speed survey as soon as possible. Liam would chase this up and it was agreed that the Traffic Calming Working Group would come up with possible locations for the black boxes and email them to Liam. The central white lines through the village had not been repainted as requested at the last meeting, and it was noted that Liam should attend the next Traffic Calming Working Group to obtain an update and see what he could do to help move things forward.

A query had also been raised last month to see if the white gates on the A4095 could be repainted or updated as they were currently looking very tired. The Clerk had contacted Highways to request this be done but so far, no action had been taken. Liam suggested just getting a contractor to carry out the work, but concerns were raised about whether the contractor would have the necessary public liability insurance to work on the Highway. Liam would investigate this and report back.

Alaa and Liam were both thanked for their reports, and both left the meeting at 8.51pm.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

9.1 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 30th April 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 would be signed by Bill outside of the meeting.

9.2 To approve annual donations to village clubs and groups

Annual donations were normally given to the following village groups:

Freeland Parochial Church Council - £500 towards the upkeep of the St Mary's Churchyard;

Freeland Grapevine - £100 donation towards the printing of the Grapevine;

Long Hanborough Day Centre - £80 donation towards their work providing a day centre to help the elderly with social interaction/lunch etc.

After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to approve making the above donations again this year.

9.3 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 via the bank account with Unity Trust. 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 046	Smith & Sons (Bletchington)Ltd	Path gravel for new shed	427.88
BACS 047	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - May*	950.42
BACS 048	Freeland Parochial Church Council	Annual donation	500.00
BACS 049	Long Hanborough Day Centre	Annual donation	80.00
BACS 050	Freeland Grapevine	Annual donation	100.00
BACS 051	Barlows & Sons (Hermitage) Ltd	Wood cladding for shed	146.35
BACS 052	Barlows & Sons (Hermitage) Ltd	Gate materials for field	103.58
		Total:	2,308.23
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for May salary payment.		
	*Pay award pending for Clerk's salary - negotiations still taking place so previous salary continued.		
	NI rate has slightly decreased so £23.50 has been deducted this month (rather than £24.10).		

9.4 Change of bank signatories – to agree new signatories for bank account going forward.

As many of the departing Councillors were authorised bank signatories, it was noted that new signatories were required. Council **resolved** to add the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Peter to the

bank account, and to remove the outgoing Councillors. Additional signatories could be added once the new Councillors were co-opted.

Action: Clerk to add Roger, Mary Ann and Peter as authorised signatories to the PC bank account.

9.5 Any other financial business:

Change to bank charges - A letter had been received from Unity Trust bank that stated that with effect from 1st July 2021, following an annual review and in line with their service tariff and terms and conditions, the Parish Council fee will be £6 per month per account, plus a 15p charge for each individual credit and debit transaction. This is because the credit turnover had gone over £100,000 but was less than £2m. This was duly noted.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

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

10.1.1 Play area reports – damaged zip wire chain sleeve.

Bill had the pink book and there were no problems reported in the book. However, the trampoline tile needed gluing again or possibly a new tile ordered as it had already started to lift and become unstuck. It was agreed to ask the manufacturer for a quote for 2 or 3 new tiles.

The zip wire chain sleeve on the seat had become damaged and the Clerk had contacted the manufacturer to enquire about a replacement. The cost for a replacement sleeve would be £55.07 (exc VAT) and this was for supply only, so fitting would need to be arranged. Some instructions from the supplier had been provided, so it was agreed to ask the local handyman if it was something he would be able to do.

A new play equipment rota was also needed but this would be done once the new Councillors had been co-opted.

Action: Clerk to do new play equipment rota and to obtain quote for tiles, and to ask local contractor if he could take a look at the zip wire chain sleeve.

10.1.2 New storage building on field – to receive an update on progress.

Mary Ann gave a brief update. The shed was finally complete, and it was suggested placing some fencing around the new landscaping plants to protect them whilst they bedded in. Mary Ann would arrange a quote for the fencing.

Two new warning signs had been purchased to warn of reversing vehicles, and one to place inside the shed to warn of pedestrians. The Clerk had passed both signs to Simon Brown who had agreed to put them up.

Action: Mary Ann to arrange quote for fencing to place around plants.

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

Robert Crocker would be carrying out some work to rake out the roots by the zip wire, so once this was done, he had agreed to connect a pipe and send the details to Thames Water to see if this was acceptable. Once this was done the pipe could then be laid.

Action: Robert to arrange connection to pipework.

10.1.5 Play equipment replacement for wooden climber and toddler area development – to receive an update from working group and to discuss first design proposals and layout.

The design proposals with costings from a manufacturer had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting. Lots of detailed information was contained within them, with different items of equipment shown including a bespoke wooden climb-on tractor, a covered sand pit, some new sensory equipment, a trampette and some spring rockers, plus new safety surfacing. Councillors were positive about the initial ideas, although it was clear that the overall cost quoted was way over budget, so it would need to be done in phases whilst funds were raised for different parts of it. As the old wooden climber needed replacing, it was suggested that the wooden tractor could perhaps be the first priority. It was also suggested speaking with the parents again to gain their thoughts on the priorities and whether they were happy with the proposals.

Mary Ann would also look at wooden tractors from alternative suppliers to obtain comparable quotes.

Action: Mary Ann to obtain further quotes and to speak to parents with Clerk re design proposals.

10.1.6 Weed Spraying of field – to consider whether weed spraying work is required this year and to review/approve quotes for this work.

Two quotes had been received for this work, one from the company the Parish Council had used in previous years, and the other from a company that a Groundsman at Cokethorpe School had recommended.

After a brief discussion, Council approved the cheaper quote totalling £330 + VAT from the company they had used previously. The Clerk would arrange the work.

Action: Clerk to arrange field spraying work with contractor.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports: Hedge trimming on Pigeon House Lane.

A resident had reported in April that a branch was sticking out of the hedge near the top end of Pigeon House Lane that needed cutting back as it was hitting cars. Robert Crocker had agreed at the time to get this cut back. The Clerk would chase this up.

Action: Clerk to chase up hedge cutting as above.

10.2.1 Traffic calming measures – to receive an update from Traffic Calming Working Group, including the traffic survey, public consultation, 20mph zones and deterring HGVs using Pigeon House Lane.

A large-scale map that had been annotated with lots of ideas and suggestions about various traffic calming measures had been emailed around to the Councillors prior to the meeting and had been talked through at the last Parish Council meeting. It was suggested placing a note on social media and in the Grapevine to ask for interested people to join the working group to gain ideas and to increase public involvement. It was also noted that Liam Walker should also be involved with his connections to Highways, and he would be invited to attend the next working group meeting. It was important to pinpoint on the map where the preferred locations would be for the traffic survey black boxes, and the group already had some ideas about this. Mary Ann agreed to annotate the map with the proposed locations and email them to Liam. It was also suggested asking Liam if there were any ideas from the trial scheme being carried out at Cuxham that could be shared, this could be asked at the next working group meeting.

Action: Clerk to place note on social media and in Grapevine to ask for volunteers to join group, and Liam to be invited to attend next working group meeting. Mary Ann to annotate map with suggested locations for traffic survey black boxes.

10.2.2 “No Mow May” – to consider a request to not mow the grass verges in the village for the month of May to encourage wildlife and aid pollination.

Following Christian's brief talk about protecting wildlife and biodiversity, Council wished to support this initiative and agreed to not cut the grass verge from the allotments down to the Green, and to leave it uncut until late August/early September. They also agreed to do the same for the grass verge from Pigeon House Lane to the Garden of Remembrance, although it was noted that the entrance to the Garden of Remembrance needed to be cut and kept tidy. The Clerk would contact the local contractor who carried out this work to ask him not to cut the verge.

A note would be placed in the Grapevine and on social media to inform residents why this was being done, and Christian agreed to draft something and send to the Clerk.

It was also noted that within the plans for the traffic calming, various boundaries and parking areas/cut outs could also be utilised to plant wildflowers to encourage wildlife. Christian Silk then left the meeting at 10.00pm.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine and on social media as above, and to contact contractor re not cutting grass verges.

10.3 Footpath & Bridleway matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports: None.

Bill had the book and would pass it on to Peter. He also advised a new rota was required. The Clerk would arrange this once the new councillors had been co-opted.

Action: Clerk to arrange footpath rota.

10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports:

No reports had been received. Tim Webster was finishing off the maintenance work. Some of the box hedging needed replacing and the use of rosemary plants was being considered. The Chairman wished to see a copy of the new GOR brochure, so the Clerk would pass one to him.

Action: Clerk to pass copy of GOR brochure to Chairman.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports:

There was nothing much to report. The Hall had re-opened, and some exercise groups had started to return.

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

(a) OALC April update – details had been emailed around, the Clerk would forward this to the new Councillors.

(b) OALC – the end of virtual meetings – details has been emailed around – no virtual meetings were permitted from now on, so it was suggested meeting in the village hall initially if everyone felt comfortable in doing so. The Clerk would check the Hall availability and book it for the June and July meetings and email everyone to check they felt safe to meet there.

Action: Clerk to book Hall for June meeting and email Council about meeting in person.

(c) Royal British Legion – VE Day celebrations – to consider purchasing a Tommy Soldier.

A suggestion was made last month about purchasing a Tommy Soldier statue to place in the village for Remembrance Day. Details had been sent to the Clerk by the RBLI and each statue costs £200. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to purchase one Tommy soldier, (with the wording “We will remember them” on the bottom), which could be placed on The Green in the lead up to Remembrance Day. The Clerk would place the order.

Action: Clerk to order Tommy Soldier as above.

Plus additional items since agenda sent out:

(d) Request for support to co-ordinate a community group – details had been emailed around. Marilyn had raised a query about this so no further discussion would take place until clarification about her query had been received.

(e) Preschool/School road sign – Preschool were asking Highways for a road sign to be placed on Wroslyn Road pointing into Parklands – an email had literally just been received that day so it was agreed to place this on the next agenda for discussion.

Action: Clerk to place on next agenda.

12. CIRCULATION

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, no papers were currently being circulated.

13. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

There was nothing to report.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

Queen’s Jubilee 2022 – A suggestion was made to hold a village event for the Queen’s 70th Jubilee next year, this would be put on the next agenda for discussion. In the meantime, the Clerk would book the Hall for 2nd and 3rd June next year.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Council would be held on **Monday 21st June 2021 at 7.30pm.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.34pm.