

## FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2020, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Chairman:	Peter Newell
	Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
	Councillors:	Mary Ann Canning, Peter Foster, Matthew Ruddle, Véro McCoy, Bill Phillips, Tim Webster.
	District Councillors:	Merilyn Davies (till 8.23pm) Alaa al Yousuf (till 8.42pm)
	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 social distancing were being updated regularly. The current Government advice was to not allow public meetings to take place, but legislation had been changed to allow virtual meetings instead.**

#### 1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Four members of the public were present for this session – Kenny Wylie, who wished to listen to the meeting. Pip Squire and Mandy Fyson who wished to speak about the Inspired Villages planning proposal and Paul Gilford who wished to discuss some concerns about parking problems around Oakland Close.

##### Inspired Villages proposal

Mandy Fyson and Pip Squire were owners of the Coach House Veterinary Clinic in the village. They bought the business in April 2018 but the surgery has been on the current site for around 20 years. In the time they had been there they had got to know their clients well. They also had new clients joining most days.

They lease the premises from Eynsham Park Estate, which is managed through their agent Savills (their contact is Nick Pain). They knew that the estate was in negotiation with a developer when they took on the lease, but it was stressed at the time that the negotiations were confidential, and they were asked not to mention anything to anyone.

They gave a brief history of how they had tried to engage with the developers back in 2018 to see if they could get them to incorporate the practice into their plans. Unfortunately, they were told by Savills, that the negotiations were at a delicate stage and they would put their suggestion to them at a more opportune time. When they heard nothing back after several weeks, they pressed them again, and eventually received a reply which was wholly negative, effectively stating that the developer was not interested in including the practice in their plans. At this point they were still not allowed any direct contact with the developer.

They were then informed in 2019 that Inspired Villages had made early informal approaches to WODC on the proposal but that they had been rebuffed. However, it was clear that the site was still being pursued as numerous surveys for reptiles and bats etc were being conducted around the site.

They were told by Savills in mid-2020 that a pre-application would be going to WODC in the autumn of 2020. This was then put back to early 2021. Everything went quiet again until they saw the advert in the December Grapevine from Inspired Villages. It was understood to be quite a sudden decision to do this and was to gauge public opinion on the proposed development. However, neither Savills nor themselves had been informed of it prior to it going in the Grapevine, putting them in the rather embarrassing position of having to answer questions from clients about what was happening. They contacted the district councillors and the Parish Council regarding the development proposals. They had a very helpful meeting with Alaa on 3<sup>rd</sup> December at which it was agreed that given the situation with the local plan, Inspired Villages should be encouraged to include the practice in their plans.

They were also given contact names and an email address for Inspired Villages by Savills. They attended a remote meeting with Jamie Vaughn, Development Manager, and Stuart Garnett, Planning Director for Inspired Villages on 10<sup>th</sup> December. They felt it was a positive meeting and they

seemed open to ideas about how the veterinary clinic could be retained in the village, and possibly incorporated into the new development. They asked for some plans of the present building, and future ideas, which have been sent to them. They confirmed receipt and advised they would look at them before meeting WODC on 6<sup>th</sup> January to discuss the pre-application. Mandy and Pip wished to inform the Parish Council of their position and to seek the Council's support during the planning process to keep the practice in the village, ideally at its present location or close to it.

A brief discussion was held and Parish Councillors were sympathetic to the owners of the veterinary clinic. As the pre-application meeting was not too far away (due to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan) Councillors agreed to wait for the outcome of that meeting before considering any further action. They did however also agree to offer Parish Council support to retaining the veterinary clinic within the village, either at its current location or nearby. Mandy and Pip thanked the Councillors for their time and then left the meeting at 7.49pm.

#### Oakland Close parking

Paul Gilford, a resident of Oakland Close who had lived in the village for around 17 years wished to address the Council about some parking issues. He recognised that whilst parking problems around the school had been a long-standing problem, it had been tolerable, but he felt that it had become worse over the recent months. He pointed out that the junction at Parklands had had white lines painted around both corners up to the post box on Wroslyn Road, and that there were also zig-zag lines painted on the road directly outside of the school. However, there were no such lines on the Oakland close junction where many parents parked their cars at school drop off and pick-up times. He explained that the painting of the white lines had in effect caused a displacement of cars from Parklands into the surrounding roads, including Oakland Close which was a much narrower road with no pavement. Two cars can just about pass safely in Oakland Close as long as it was done carefully and slowly. There was a general pressure building in Oakland Close from residents to discourage parents parking in this road and cones had recently been placed around the area near the junction which wasn't really a solution.

Mr Gilford wished to propose asking Highways if white lines could also be painted around the Oakland Close junction to mirror those at Parklands to try and help balance up the road markings which may help with the parking problems.

It was explained to Mr Gilford that a possible reason for the parking problems becoming worse recently was that the school had asked parents not to park or drive down Parklands for the past number of months. This was for 2 reasons, one because there was building work going on directly opposite the school with vans etc coming and going, and due to the Coronavirus pandemic, parents were not allowed on school premises and so were dropping off and picking up at staggered times and having to use the pavements around the school to socially distance when collecting their children. This was duly noted.

This item would be discussed later in the meeting, so Mr Gilford then thanked the Parish Council for their time and left the meeting at 8.00pm.

## **2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – 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.

Robert Crocker (personal) as a member of Freeland Charitable Foundation (FCF) and as having a local business.

Matthew Ruddle (personal) as caretaker of the Little Free Library and as a member of 1<sup>st</sup> Hanborough/Freeland Scouts Committee.

Tim Webster (personal) as having a local business.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 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**

There was very little to report. Another survey had been carried out although the results were not yet known. It was likely they would return to the site that already had planning consent although no action was imminent.

Peter F would keep the Council updated on any further developments.

##### **6.2 PC Noticeboard – to update on progress to remove PC notice board on the corner of Parklands**

The Clerk had asked a local contractor to remove the noticeboard and dispose of it, which they had agreed to do. There would be an approximate charge of £65 to carry out this work which was approved by the Council last month. The contractor advised that the board was possibly attached to the neighbouring property's fence so the Clerk had spoken to the resident who was going to reinforce the fence before the noticeboard was removed.

##### **6.3 Fibre to the Premises Broadband – to discuss any updates regarding work being carried out by Gigaclear around Freeland**

The Clerk had been informed that the permit for digging up Parklands had been cancelled in December. Gigaclear were originally going to do the work in Freeland in two phases, but as they understood that lots of residents already had BT fibre to their homes, they were now rethinking their plan. Gigaclear would keep the Clerk informed as to when the work was likely to restart. It was queried whether homes did in fact have fibre to their premises, rather than to the cabinet so the Clerk would forward the info she received to Merilyn who would speak to Will Barton at WODC.

They had also altered their plans to dig up Nash Lane following concerns raised by residents about possible damage to the water mains that the work would cause. Gigaclear confirmed they were now going to use existing infrastructure in Nash Lane rather than dig up the road. This was all duly noted.

**Action:** Clerk to forward info to Merilyn.

#### **7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:**

##### **7.1 Applications Received:**

**20/03458/HHD**

**20 BLENHEIM LANE, FREELAND.**

Erection of two-storey rear and side extensions to replace existing garage and utility and construction of new garage for Mr & Mrs Lay.

After reviewing the above application, Councillors agreed not to raise any comments or objections.

##### **7.2 Applications Approved:**

**20/02423/HHD**

**89 BROADMARSH LANE, FREELAND.**

Erection of single storey rear extension for Ms M Birch.

##### **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.

**20/02310/HHD**

**PIPERS, 163 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.**

Partial demolition of existing garage and rear extension and replace with a two-storey side extension for Mr G Bull.

**20/02311/LBC**

**PIPERS, 163 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.**

Internal and external alterations to include partial demolition of existing garage and rear extension and replace with a two-storey side extension together with changes to internal layout for Mr G Bull.

**7.6 Inspired Villages proposal – to note concerns regarding possible loss of veterinary practice and to discuss suitable response to proposals**

This had already been discussed at item 1 and no further action was required. As the pre-application meeting was not too far away (due to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan) Councillors agreed to wait for the outcome of that meeting before considering any further action. They did also agree to offer Parish Council support to retaining the veterinary clinic within the village, either at its current location or nearby.

**7.7 A40 Park and Ride consultation, revised proposals – to approve Parish Council response to the consultation**

Details of the revised proposed response to the A40 Park and Ride consultation had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Council wished to pass on their thanks to Russ and Mary Ann Canning for producing the excellent report, which Council **resolved** to submit as the Parish Council's formal response.

**Action:** Clerk to submit response to consultation.

**8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Merilyn did not have anything further to update the Council.

In Alaa's update he provided some information about a motion that had been passed at OCC on introducing 20mph zones in the County. The details were still to be worked out and Liam would be writing to all Town and Parish Councils at some point in the near future. He also provided some information about some funding for Hanborough Station that WODC that would be match funded by OCC. It was hoped to encourage walking, cycling and use of buses to the station to alleviate the use for cars. The Comet Bus was running again, but the funding for it was due to finish at the end of February and it was unclear if the service would continue. Lots of vulnerable residents used the service so it was important to find an alternative if the Comet Bus couldn't continue. Alaa was working on something but couldn't provide any further details at this point.

With regards to the problems with HGVs using Pigeon House Lane, Alaa suggested it may be down to a confusing message caused by signage problems and encouraged Councillors to walk down there and just look at the signage (some of which were obscured by vegetation). The signs started off with an "unsuitable for HGVs" sign plus a warning about horses and a 30mph limit, then just after the built-up area the first sign to be seen was the National Speed Limit sign. It was suggested removing the obstructions and maybe reducing the size of the NSL sign and adding some pedestrian/cyclist warning signs. It was also suggested co-ordinating with Hanborough PC so that the signs could be mirrored at each end of the lane. It was also noted that HGV drivers should be using an HGV specific sat nav, but it was likely that many of them were using car specific sat navs instead.

The District Councillors were thanked for their updates and Merilyn then left the meeting at 8.23pm, Alaa left the meeting at 8.42pm.

**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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 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 Matthew or Bill outside of the meeting.

## 9.2 **Annual audit – To receive an update on progress**

The Clerk gave a brief update on the audit. The audit had now been completed and a completion notice had been received from the auditors. A minor point had been highlighted by the auditors regarding the period of exercise of public rights, this was duly noted by the Council. The Clerk confirmed that a copy of the auditor's report had been placed on the village noticeboards and the Chairman would place it on the village website.

The Clerk was thanked for all the work she had done in getting the audit completed.

## 9.3 **Online banking – to receive an update on changing bank account from Barclays to Unity Trust Bank**

The new bank account was now up and running and the Council were due to pay their first set of payments online this month. The account with Barclays had also been closed from 30<sup>th</sup> November. There had been one slight issue with the direct debit to NEST which hadn't been paid, so a new direct debit mandate had been printed and would be signed outside of the meeting by 2 councillors so that this could be rectified as soon as possible.

## 9.4 **Review of Budget and Precept Requirement for 2021/22**

It was noted that last year, the Parish Council were informed that WODC had overestimated house completions (i.e. the tax base) in two years for 2018-19 and 2019-20, which resulted in the precept figure for 2020-21 showing an increase of 10.5% rather than what was actually budgeted which was an increase of just 1.4%.

Having provisionally now set the precept for next year which shows an increase of 1.85%, it was queried how this would translate when WODC calculate the tax base into the figures. The Clerk had asked WODC but their response was that this information was not yet known. It was agreed to ask WODC if the precept figures could be submitted after the PC meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January by which time it was hoped they would know what the tax base calculation would be for next year.

**Action:** Clerk to contact WODC to ask re tax base as above.

## 9.5 **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 new 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 001	Smith & Sons Ltd	Crushed limestone for shed base	588.00
BACS 002	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - December	949.82
BACS 003	Peter Newell	Website expenses	77.71
BACS 004	TT Supplies	Shockwave treatment on field	1,320.00
BACS 005	Ubico Ltd	New litter bin by Newell Room & emptying	744.31
BACS 006	Nigel Green	Mowing & hedge cutting	1,305.00
BACS 007	Moore	Audit fee	480.00
BACS 008	Graham Lay	Replacement post on Memorial tree	25.00
BACS 009	Lisa Smith	Refund overpaid NEST pension contributions	368.30
BACS 010	Higgins Groundwork	Concreting of new shed	700.00
BACS 011	R A Crocker Ltd	Labour and materials for new shed	3,578.36
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>10,136.50</b>
<b>Plus:</b>			
New NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The new amount of £18.91 has been deducted from			
Clerk's salary for December salary payment.			

It was also noted that the final invoice for the doors on the storage building had not yet been paid, as the doors had not yet been fitted. Council **resolved** that the final invoice for £2,310 + VAT could be paid between meetings once the doors had been fitted to their satisfaction.

**9.6 To review the effectiveness of internal audit process (to include review of financial system)**

The Chairman and Robert were due to carry out the review this year, which needed to be done by the end of January 2021. The Clerk would book a date to meet with them both in early January, although it was likely this would need to be done remotely via Zoom.

**Action:** Clerk to book date with Chairman and Robert to carry out review.

**9.7 Website expenses – to discuss and approve some possible changes to the website that may result in additional expenses**

The Chairman explained about some website issues that he had come across recently. The website kept experiencing time out errors and when he investigated with the provider (EverWeb) it was apparent that the disk space had run out. The Parish Council currently pays for 2GB of disk space on the server which had now been exceeded, and although some files had been deleted to try and free up some space, it was noted this would be a recurring problem. The charges for the website were currently £77.71 pa for 2GB of disk space, for 10GB of disk space the price would increase to £155 pa. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to pay the higher cost of £155 for 10GB of disk space to solve this problem. The Chairman would arrange this.

**Action:** Chairman to arrange 10Gb of disk space with website provider.

**9.8 Any other financial business – none.**

**10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS**

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

**10.1.1 Play area reports –to update on removal of barbed wire in hedge behind zip wire; to update on trampoline tile gluing**

Vero had the pink book but was currently self isolating so would check the equipment when she was able to go back out.

The barbed wire in the hedge behind the zip wire was still to be removed and would be discussed further at item 10.1.6.

The trampoline tile had not been glued due to the damp weather conditions. It was agreed to leave this until the Spring when the weather would be much drier and the tile could then be glued successfully.

**10.1.2 New storage building on field – to update on progress on installation of new shed**

Robert gave an update. The concrete floor had now been completed so doors could now go ahead and be installed. The Clerk would contact the shed company to arrange installation of the doors. It was suggested that the internal walls were lined with 18mm shuttering ply, to allow for shelving and to make the shed more secure from theft. Approximately 24 sheets would be needed at an approximate cost of £22.00 per sheet, total being around £528. Council **resolved** to approve this expenditure and Robert would arrange the work.

The roll bar height on the tractor was 2.45m, and the clearance available now that the concrete floor had been laid was 2.48m, so with only 2.5cm clearance it was going to be very tight to get the tractor in and out of the shed. The Clerk would email Jacksons to ask them to contact Robert before fitting the new doors.

It was noted that the shed was a superb structure and thanks were passed to Mary Ann and Robert for getting this far with the project.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Jacksons as above, Robert to arrange shuttering ply.

**10.1.3 Replacement of Hornbeam trees on the playing field – to update on replacement of the dead Hornbeam trees on the playing field**

All 3 replacement trees were healthy and being regularly watered and looked after by Robert, and they would be planted when weather conditions allowed, hopefully in early January.

**Action:** Robert to replace Hornbeam trees on field.

**10.1.4 Water for cricket square – to consider response from Thames Water in relation to a quote for adding a water supply to the new storage shed**

The Clerk had contacted Thames Water to investigate costs for a possible water supply. The quote had been received and stated the cost would be £3,340 + VAT to connect to the water supply in Pigeon House Lane. The Clerk queried the quote with Thames Water this month and asked for the

quote to be reviewed. Unfortunately, Thames Water replied stating that the prices were set by the water industry regulator. They stated that the cost included permits, the price for contractors and the work to take place, and that they had had the quote double checked and all was in order. It was noted that S106 funds could be used to pay for the connection which would be a long-term investment overall.

After further discussion, Council **resolved** to spend S106 funds to go ahead with the water connection.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange work with Thames Water.

#### **10.1.5 Play area annual inspection report – to discuss and agree any actions arising from inspection report carried out in October and to note feedback from parents re possible replacement options for wooden climber**

The annual play area inspection report had been received and had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Many items identified were for monitoring only or were classed as either low risk or very low risk.

The Clerk had asked parents on social media (and via the Village Pre-school) about any ideas for preferred equipment to replace the hanging tyres wooden climber.

Ideas received so far were:

Pirate ship, disability friendly swing (but to be placed outside of toddler area) , rope net pyramid, climber, low balance beams, trim trails, wooden climbing vehicle (eg tractor or bus), springy/wobbly sit on bikes/bugs, more swings. Other feedback included suggestions for a more textured, grippy surface as it can get slippery when damp, and perhaps some variations with heights.

It was suggested setting up a working group to look at this in more detail and to include a maximum of 6 parents to be involved. Mary Ann agreed to set up a working group.

**Action:** Mary Ann to set up working group and to write to max. 6 parents to get involved.

#### **10.1.6 Northern boundary of playing field (including area behind zip wire) – to discuss and approve quote to tidy up northern boundary of field and to discuss how to develop this area going forward**

A quote from Steve Sparrowhawk for the tidying up the northern boundary of the field and to remove some hawthorn trees and plum suckers had been received, total cost being £600. Councillors resolved to approve this quote and the Clerk would ask Steve to contact Robert before starting the work. Robert had also asked Steve to remove the barbed wire at the same time.

The screening of the shed and replanting the area around it needed to be costed, plus it was suggested replanting the northern boundary with something more interesting than the plum suckers. It was also suggested installing a gravel path across the field to link Blenheim Lane with Pigeon House Lane. Robert would cost this work and get a proposal ready for the January meeting.

**Action:** Robert to provide quote and details of proposed work at northern boundary of field.

#### **10.1.7 Cricket Scoreboard – to discuss and approve a proposal to build a wooden swing out style scoreboard to attach to the wooden fence by Newell Room**

This would be carried forward to the next meeting as no report had been received.

#### **10.1.8 Oak tree on playing field – to note concerns raised re oak tree and to discuss whether any action is to be taken**

The Vice-Chair took over the Chairmanship of the meeting for this item as the resident was the Chairman's brother-in-law. The Chairman did not take part in any discussion of this item.

A resident had raised concerns about the oak tree on the Eastern side of the playing field and was concerned about some of the larger branches taking on a threatening stance during high winds. Smaller branches were also getting close to the rear of their house and they asked whether a fairly extensive trimming could be carried out.

They also advised that the hedge at the village end of Pigeon House Lane was growing into the road and in serious need of trimming back.

Councillors felt that the oak tree was not causing any harm at the current time and a check had been carried out to look at the branches which all seemed fine. It was agreed that if the resident required the tree to be trimmed and have the crown lifted, it could be carried out at their expense.

Robert agreed to get the Pigeon House Lane hedge trimmed.

The Chairmanship was then passed back to the Chairman.

**Action:** Robert to trim hedge, Clerk to write to resident with decision about oak tree.

#### **10.1.9 Freeland Farmer's Market – to discuss and approve a request to hold the farmer's market on the field when the village hall car park is not available**

A request had been received from the organiser of the Freeland Farmer's market to be able to use the playing field for the market when the village hall car park was not available. Councillors were very supportive of the market and noted that the organiser had done a brilliant job in bringing the market to the village, which was a great event that brought people together.

However, it was noted that it would be difficult to agree to use the field as if the cricket was being played then the market traders would be in danger of being hit by a ball, or if football was being played the same for a football. Councillors agreed it would be better if they could find a suitable alternative, eg the school field or the industrial estate. It was suggested that it was worth the organiser cross checking with the village hall first about dates for the market and then they would know in advance for which dates they needed to find an alternative venue.

**Action:** Clerk to write to organiser as above.

#### **10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports: New salt bin installed by Village Hall**

The new salt bin had been installed on the grass verge by the Village Hall.

##### **10.2.1 Traffic calming measures – to receive any update from Traffic Calming Working Group**

The Traffic Calming Group were due to meet in the New Year and would invite some of the residents who had shown an interest in this, as well as the Speedwatch team to the meeting. Mary Ann would prepare a large-scale plan of the village to look at possible 20mph zones.

**Action:** Mary Ann to prepare large scale plan of village and to arrange meeting of group.

##### **10.2.2 Overgrown hedge in Broadmarsh Lane – to discuss any action that may be taken regarding an overgrown laurel hedge on unregistered land in Broadmarsh Lane**

A resident has raised concerns about the large laurel hedge that runs opposite the terraced houses in Broadmarsh Lane. It was cut back a couple of years ago by the resident at Broad Oak. However, according to the Land Registry this hedge is not owned by them so it is assumed it was done as a good will gesture or because it was encroaching on their garden the other side. The resident raising concerns has been in touch with Highways who have confirmed that after carrying out further Land Registry searches it has been confirmed that this area of land is unregistered apart from a very small area which is the responsibility of Thames Water.

In later email correspondence, an Arboricultural Officer at OCC in June 2016 stated that, as a general rule, the Highway Authority do not maintain hedges as they are normally considered a boundary feature. They state that it is accepted in highway related common law that, historically, hedges were planted to enclose the neighbouring land from the adjacent highway, and therefore are considered the responsibility of the adjacent landowner to maintain. They go on to state that in this case, the hedge on Broadmarsh lane is the boundary feature and as such maintainable by the adjacent landowner and not by the county council in its capacity as local highway authority. However, they did then cut back the hedge by 1 metre as a gesture of good will.

Following last month's meeting it was agreed to write to the residents of Broad Oak to ask if they would be willing to cut it back and state that Highways believe it is their responsibility. The owners have since contacted the Clerk to advise this land is not on their deeds and is outside of their property boundary and is therefore not their responsibility. It was therefore agreed to go back to Highways to advise them of this and to ask them again to cut the hedge back.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Highways as above.

##### **10.2.3 School parents' parking around Oakland Close – to discuss concerns raised by resident regarding parking problems around Oakland Close at school drop off and pick-up times**

Following on from item 1 where Mr Gilford gave some concerns about parking issues around Oakland Close, Councillors agreed to ask Highways if it was possible to have white lines painted around the Oakland Close junction to mirror those in Parklands.

**Action:** Clerk to make request to Highways as above.



**10.2.4 20mph speed limit in villages – to discuss arranging a meeting with representatives from Hanborough PC to see if something can be jointly achieved regarding introducing 20mph speed limits in villages**

Hanborough Parish Council have asked to work together in finding a way to deter HGVs using this land and setting up 20mph zones. It was agreed to set up a joint working party with them to discuss possible solutions. The Clerk would arrange a meeting.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange joint meeting as above.

**10.2.5 Concerns about HGVs using Pigeon House Lane – to discuss ways to deter HGVs using this lane**

See item 10.2.4.

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

Robert had the book and although the rota was complete for this year, he would dig out the book and return to the Clerk.

**Action:** Robert to return footpath book to Clerk.

**10.3.1 Slow Ways Initiative – to approve providing support to the Slow Ways Initiative to review and promote the use of footpaths in the parish**

The principle aim of Slow Ways was to create a network of safe walking routes that will connect cities, towns and villages across the country. In the first instance existing rights of way will be utilised and a network established that can be accessed through their website.

In the current situation with Covid-19 it was apparent that many more people were using walking as a means to get out of the house to provide exercise resulting in a benefit to both physical health and mental wellbeing too.

Local councils were being approached to enquire as to whether they would support this initiative and so Freeland Parish Council were asked if they would be willing to:

1. Pass a formal motion stating the Council's support for Slow Ways;
2. Promote Slow Ways through its various ways of communication (Council minutes, website, Grapevine etc) for residents of Freeland to walk, review and use the routes within the parish and surrounding areas;
3. To consider, when and if appropriate, where new paths might strengthen the Slow Ways network.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to support the Slow Ways Initiative, and to ask Roger Faulkner to write a piece about Slow Ways for the Grapevine and the website.

**Action:** Clerk to ask Roger to write article as above.

**10.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports**

No reports had been received.

**10.4.1 To receive an update on progress of maintenance work required at the GOR and on the GOR gates**

Basic maintenance had been carried out and Tim was going to review it again after Christmas.

As reported last month the GOR gates needed some attention, mainly painting and the top bar was rotten although still felt to be ok. Robert advised he had another set of gates which unfortunately were not quite wide enough, although if 2 additional gate posts were fitted then they could be used.

He would circulate some pictures of the gates to the Councillors. Alternatively, some metal gates could be used so that there would be very little maintenance going forward. He would obtain a quote for a pair of metal gates and show the wooden ones so Councillors could decide their preference.

**Action:** Tim to continue with various jobs at GOR, Robert to circulate pictures of gates to Councillors and obtain quote for metal gates.

**10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports**

There was nothing much to report as the Hall was currently closed due to the second Covid-19 lockdown regulations.

**10.6 Amenity Area – to review reinstatement of ground works following fence installation at nearby property and to discuss hedge planting and other development work, plus to note report received and to approve report recommendations**

A report proposing some planting of trees and hedging in the amenity area had been circulated to Councillors for their consideration. Other tidying up work was suggested at the last meeting, plus some additional planting of bulbs etc. It was agreed last month to ask a local contractor for a quote to remove the old cherry trees and prune back some of the branches to tidy the area. It was suggested the contractor could meet Mary Ann or Robert on site to discuss the work. The Clerk would contact the contractor to arrange a quote. It was also agreed that Mary Ann could plant some hazel trees or hornbeam/beech trees in the area.

A report had also been circulated to Councillors with a recommendation to allow the removal of two oak trees at a resident's expense. The recommendations of this report were approved. The Clerk would write to the resident to advise of the decision.

**Action:** Clerk to contact contractor re quote and to write to resident as above.

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

(a) OALC October & November updates – details had been emailed around.

(b) OALC Training Programme 2021 – details had been emailed around.

(c) Census 2021 – to note Census will take place across Oxfordshire in Spring 2021 – details had been emailed around.

Plus additional items received since meeting papers were sent out:

(d) OCC Climate Action Framework – details had been emailed around.

(e) Bus shelter on A4095 by Mears Development – update had been emailed around which advised that the shelter could not be ordered yet due to OCC rules around fair, competitive procurement. It was hoped it could be ordered around February time, and the Clerk would chase for an update as necessary.

**12. CIRCULATION**

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

**13. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021/ BIG LUNCH 2021 – To discuss whether to start planning for these events to take place next year**

In the current very uncertain times, it was agreed not to plan anything for these events for the moment. It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next meeting when more would be known about vaccination roll outs and possible further lockdowns.

**Action:** Clerk to carry forward this item to next month.

**14. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

There was nothing to report this month.

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY**

Freeland post ladies – it was noted that the two Freeland post ladies had received a national award for being the best post people in the country. They were successful over 20,000 applicants, which was quite an achievement. Council agreed to write to the ladies to congratulate them on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Action:** Clerk to write letter as above.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Until the regulations changed about public meetings, the next meeting of the Council would be held remotely via Zoom on **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.30pm.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.05pm.