

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, FREELAND ON THE 15TH NOVEMBER 2021, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:

Chairman:	Roger Faulkner
Vice-Chairman:	Mary Ann Canning
Councillors:	Bill Phillips, Andy Bain
	Peter Foster, Amy Jackson (till 9.30pm)
District Councillors:	Merilyn Davies (till 8.40pm)
County Councillor:	Liam Walker (from 9.00pm till 9.25pm)
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 the Village Hall to allow for social distancing and better ventilation.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Two members of the public were present for this session, Kenny Wylie and Peter Leigh who both wished to listen to the meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Andrew Bird - away, Alaa Al-Yousuf.

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 18th October 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 18th October 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 report and it was unlikely CTIL would make the final decision until the New Year. Peter would continue to keep the Council updated on progress.

6.2 Bench on The Green – to update on progress on bench order/installation

The bench had been ordered and delivery was expected in the next few days. Andy confirmed he was happy to carry out the installation and he would also remove and dispose of the old bench. The Clerk had contacted the Teddy Girls to advise them of the bench order and to thank them for their donation.

Action: Andy to install bench and remove and dispose of old bench.

6.3 Yellow Rattle trial sites – to receive an update on progress and to note concerns raised by resident

The trial sites at the Broadmarsh Lane amenity area, The Green and Oakland Close had all been planted up, and it was not clear if the Parklands site had also been done. The Clerk would obtain an update from Russell Fisher. One resident in Oakland Close had emailed some concerns about the lack of communication to residents and management of the sites, and Amy had visited them to explain how it would work and offer reassurance. It would now be a case of waiting and monitoring the sites to see how they developed over time.

Action: Clerk to obtain update from Russell.

6.4 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – to receive an update on possible tree planting sites for the initiative to “Plant Trees for the Jubilee” and application for tree saplings

Andy gave a brief update. He had applied to the Woodland Trust for an Urban pack of 15 tree saplings which would consist of a mixture of Hazel, Rowan, and Crab Apple trees with each sapling measuring around 20-60cm in height. These would be delivered in March next year. Andy had been in contact with Russell Fisher to identify possible planting sites around the village and had marked these out on a map. It was noted that a plan would be needed before March as to who was going to carry out the planting and who would be responsible for the maintenance of the trees, as well as agreeing the locations. Andy would review the possible planting locations with Russell before bringing to the next meeting for discussion.

Action: Andy to bring suggested locations to next meeting.

6.5 WASP (Windrush Against Sewage Pollution) – to note any response from Thames Water and Robert Courts MP following letters of concern

Following the Clerk's letter to Robert Courts and Thames Water last month, an acknowledgement had been received from Thames Water with a full response awaited. A response had been received from Robert Courts that had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting. In this response Robert Courts advised that the Government had announced a new amendment that was to be tabled to the Environment Bill that would ensure a legal duty on water companies to reduce the impact of storm overflows, which in turn would also put in place further protection against water pollution. This was all duly noted.

6.6 Freeland Methodist Church – to note response to letter of concern regarding current condition of building and to discuss if any further action is required

The Clerk had written to the Methodist Circuit last month to express the Council's concerns regarding the apparent lack of maintenance of the building since it was closed 5 years ago. The rather curt response received advised that a survey had been carried out in May this year and that there were no issues regarding the condition of the property that should cause any concern. They also advised that the property was still in use, and was visited regularly, although it was not clear what was meant by “still in use”. This was all duly noted.

7. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY – TO NOTE RESIGNATION OF CLLR. TOMKYS AND TO DISCUSS HOW TO FILL THE VACANCY

Councillors were extremely sorry to learn of Tony Tomkys' resignation from the Parish Council for personal reasons. The Clerk had notified the District Council and the notice of vacancy had been posted on the village notice board and social media. If no election was requested by 10 electors by Friday 26th November, then the vacancy could be filled by co-option.

It was suggested that this was an opportunity to increase diversity on the parish council and Councillors were asked to consider anyone that might be interested in the position. Details of the vacancy would also be placed in the Grapevine.

Action: Clerk to place details of vacancy in Grapevine as above.

It was agreed to bring item 11.2 forward so that the residents present could listen and then leave the meeting if they so wished.

11.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports: None.

11.2.1 Traffic calming measures – to receive an update from Traffic Calming Working Group, and to update on the traffic survey and to approve applying for 20mph limit in village

A brief update was provided by Mary Ann. As Tony had resigned a new Chair of the Group was required. In the absence of any other volunteers, Mary Ann agreed to resume this role. The updated maps had been emailed to Liam to request his support for the 20mph limit. Andy had heard back from

Kirtlington PC and had been sent a toolkit and he had also had a response from Colin Davies, the architect who was currently working with Kirtlington PC. Andy would forward all information to Mary Ann. It was also noted that a resident Ailsa Clarke was also interested in joining the group if additional members were required. It was noted that another meeting of the Traffic Calming Group was needed, ideally with a member from Highways present who could advise what was realistically achievable and permitted, plus it was also suggested looking at what could be done within the community to reduce emissions.

In the meantime, Council **resolved** to approve applying for a 20mph limit in Freeland and this would hopefully be done once the results of Liam's survey was known.

Action: Andy to forward info to Mary Ann, and Mary Ann to arrange meeting of TC group and invite Ailsa Clarke and Highways rep along to meeting.

11.2.2 Hedgerow & Wildflower Grants – to receive an update on whether the PC is eligible and to apply for the Wild Oxfordshire Hedgerow Grant and the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands Grant

Russell Fisher was investigating these grants and had also advised that Catriona Bass from Eynsham Nature Recovery Network had around 400m of hedgerow available for both Freeland and Hanborough to use. Apparently, this didn't necessarily have to be used in its entirety but could be used in Parish Council ran areas that needed to be patched in. Russell had marked an area of Freeland Playing field that could benefit from this grant as an example.

Council agreed that they wished to take up the offer of the hedgerow and to ask Russell to suggest how much would be needed for Freeland.

Action: Clerk to respond to Russell re the above.

11.2.3 Speedwatch – to receive an update from Speedwatch group and to update on the purchase of two Speedwatch signs

The Chairman provided a brief update on the Speedwatch activity. The two signs had been ordered and delivery was expected shortly. It was also reported that the Police & Crime Commissioner had confirmed that they could now provide these signs and/or speed guns free of charge to parishes which was duly noted. During the recent Cuckoo Lane closure, the Speedwatch team had increased their activity and had carried out both morning and afternoon sessions, with 12 sessions being carried out each week, rather than the usual 3. Thanks were passed to the Speedwatch team for carrying out this valuable work.

11.2.4 First and Last Mile – to update on progress and to approve an agreement between PC and First and Last Mile re procurement of bus services via S106 funds

The Chairman and Clerk had now signed an agreement between Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Parish Council regarding the provision of S106 funds to the PC to be passed on to First and Last Mile (FLM) for bus service provision.

A further meeting with FLM and OCC had been held and Councillors that attended had felt much happier about the arrangement, and satisfactory responses and reassurances were given to the concerns raised. Assurances had been given that the Parish Council was to be used as a conduit only and that there would be no other responsibility on them with regards to the running and monitoring of the service. A draft letter of understanding had been received from First and Last Mile and had been circulated to the Councillors for their approval. It was also noted that a separate bank account would not be required and that this could just be set up in the account software as a separate cost centre and cost code, which would then mean there would be no additional bank charges. It had also been confirmed that if there were any additional costs that the PC had to pay, then these could be ringfenced and deducted from the second tranche of funds to be transferred to FLM so that PC would not lose out financially for being a part of this arrangement.

After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to approve the signing of the letter of understanding and were happy to act purely as a conduit for OCC and First and Last Mile to enable the procurement of a community bus service.

Action: Clerk to forward signed copy of letter of understanding to FLM and arrange bank transfer.

11.2.5 Memorial trees – to note post on memorial tree by GOR is rotting and needs replacing and to discuss any action required

It had been reported to the Clerk that the post by the memorial tree by the Garden of Remembrance was rotting and needed replacing. It was also reported that one of the posts on the frame around one

of the trees along this verge was also broken and needed replacing. Council agreed to ask Graham Lay, a local contractor, to carry out the work.

Action: Clerk to contact Graham Lay as above re replacing posts.

The rest of the agenda was then taken in the usual order.

8. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

8.1 Applications Received:

- 21/03680/HHD ROWAN, WITNEY ROAD, FREELAND.**
Erection of a single storey side and rear extensions for Mrs Penny Young
- 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.

After reviewing the above two applications, Council agreed there were no objections they wished to make regarding the proposed changes to the properties.

It was suggested having a conversation with members of Cuckoo Wood Farm to see if they could divert their HGVs around Cuckoo Lane where possible rather than bringing them through the village as part of the Traffic Calming measures that the Traffic Calming Group were trying to achieve. However, some concerns and differing opinions were voiced and no final decision about this was reached.

8.2 Applications Approved:

- 21/02359/HHD 8 PARKLANDS, FREELAND.**
Single and two storey rear extensions, extension over garage for Mr E Tweedie And Mrs A Tweedie-Wood.
- 21/03106/HHD 1 CHURCH VIEW, FREELAND.**
Erection of rear and side storey extensions for Ms Maria Admans.

8.3 Applications Refused: None.

8.4 Applications Withdrawn: None.

8.5 Applications Awaiting Decision:

- 20/01734/OUT LAND NORTH OF A40, A40 SECTION FROM BARNARD GATE TO EYNHAM ROUNDABOUT, 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.

8.6 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

Amy gave a brief update. A virtual meeting had been arranged with Astrid Harvey, Community Planning Officer from WODC on Wednesday 24th November and various members from the community who had expressed an interest in helping create a Neighbourhood Plan would also be in attendance. The goals for the meeting were to (as far as possible):

- Agree (if possible) a position within the group about what could be 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;
- Agree next steps in terms of engaging the community to determine support for the agreed goal and strategy.

It was noted that the previous default position of the village was to have no development, but this may have changed and it was felt important to discover whether this was still the case. It was also suggested that views could be sought at the Annual Parish Meeting next year. Amy would update the Council following the meeting.

8.7 Oxfordshire 2050 consultation – to note response to consultation submitted

A response to the Oxfordshire 2050 consultation had been submitted.

8.8 OxCam Arc Spatial Framework Vision consultation – to note response to consultation not submitted

No response was submitted to the Oxford/Cambridge Arc consultation, which was felt to be misleading with the questions being asked. The consultation contained over 40 very bland questions with little or no information or detail about numbers of houses, jobs or anything of great substance. It was therefore felt preferable not to submit a response at this stage until further information was available.

8.9 WODC Planning Policy - Adoption of Affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document – details emailed around

Details of the above had been emailed around for information.

9. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

No report had been received from Alaa.

Merilyn provided a brief update on a type of Good Neighbour Scheme she was working on which would be more like a website where people could volunteer and sign up to offer their services. Some good examples of this had been seen in Bristol and Pembrokeshire and Merilyn would provide further information as it became available.

In Liam's update he provided information about a consultation regarding the temporary closure of Witney High Street to vehicles (during the Covid lockdown) that was due to run until 3rd December to see whether the road would be reopened or remain closed. He also advised the Council that following the OCC Cabinet meeting regarding support for 20mph speed limits in rural villages, he had published a mini consultation on social media for residents to give their thoughts on whether they would support a 20mph limit implemented in Freeland. This consultation would run until 31st January 2022, so following this he would feedback the results to the Council at the February meeting. It was noted that not all residents would be able to access the information online, so the Clerk would give details of the consultation in her Grapevine notes and include the County Hall address so they could write to Liam if they preferred.

Liam also passed on his thanks to the Parish Council for the very positive meeting held with First and Last Mile regarding the community bus proposal.

Merilyn and Liam were both thanked for their updates and Merilyn left the meeting at 8.40pm and Liam stayed until 9.25pm.

10. FINANCIAL MATTERS

10.1 Presentation of the monthly financial report

The monthly financial report for September was presented to the Council showing details of the bank balance at 31st October 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. The Clerk advised that the way in which the S106 funds for Play Facilities was showing on the

report needed to be amended as it was affecting the final figures. As it was money that had not actually been received but had to be reclaimed the Clerk was querying with Scribe accounts how to show this in the system and would make some amendments next month. This was accepted.

10.2 Clerk's laptop – to approve purchase of new laptop and monitor

The Clerk had circulated a report to the Council prior to the meeting with a request to purchase a new laptop. The current Parish Council laptop was purchased back in July 2015 and had started showing signs of becoming unstable and unreliable.

Whilst it was noted that there was insufficient funds in the Office Equipment budget, the laptop was deemed an essential piece of kit that had to be ordered and there were plenty of funds in the general reserve funds that could cover the overspend.

Council therefore **resolved** to approve the Clerk's request to purchase an updated version of the current laptop, a Dell Precision M3560 — 15" Mobile Workstation laptop costing **£1,259** (exc VAT and shipping). The Clerk also requested ordering a new screen monitor to replace the existing one that had just broken beyond repair, and a docking station.

With these two additional extras the total price of the laptop would be **£1,713 (exc VAT)** which included £20 shipping). This was also approved.

The Clerk thanked the Council for their approval and would arrange ordering the laptop.

Action: Clerk to order laptop as above.

10.3 To note and discuss requests for donations received x 3

Three requests for donations had been received, one from Volunteer Link Up in Witney who the Parish Council had donated £100 to in the past. The other two were from Witney Baby Bank and Cleanslate, both of which had not been donated to before. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to donate £100 to Volunteer Link-Up, but not to offer a donation to the other two charities. The Clerk would arrange payment.

Action: Clerk to arrange donation as above.

10.4 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 089	Freeland Village Hall Bookings	Hall hire 15.11.21 & NR hire 03.11.21	31.00
BACS 090	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - November*	950.42
BACS 091	Pete Bunting	Removal & disposal of notice board at Parklands	75.00
BACS 092	Sustainable Furniture UK Ltd	New bench on The Green	560.00
BACS 093	Sign Wizzard	Speedwatch signs x 2	280.12
BACS 094	Summit Trees	Trimming of oak tree opposite 140 Wroslyn Rd	300.00
BACS 095	OALC	Planning training - Roger	60.00
BACS 096	Russell Fisher	Reimbursement for wildflower seed expenses	97.00
BACS 097	Play Inspection Company	Annual play area inspection	180.00
BACS 098	Barlow & Sons (Hermitage) Ltd	Metal gate spring for playing field	15.71
BACS 099	Arthur Treherne	Gate work x 2, wood disposal in play park	36.00
		Total:	2,585.25
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for November 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).		

10.5 Consideration of Budget and Precept Requirement for 2022/23

Details of expenditure in 2020/21 and to date for 2021/22, together with precept figures for the previous year had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and were available to councillors at the meeting.

Notification had been received from WODC, regarding the tax base for Freeland PC which had been estimated to be 707.63 for next year (up from 693.37 to 707.63). The setting of the Taxbase was a complex process with numerous factors affecting the calculations. After going through each budget

line, figures for the budget for 2022/23 were provisionally agreed, totalling **£68,265**, an increase of 3.42% from last year (£66,005).

Particular reference was made to the following items:

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS:

Clerk's Salary – No national pay award had been agreed so the Clerk did not leave the room for this item. Council **resolved** to decrease the budget figure to £12,000 (down from £12,300) as there was likely to be a small surplus left over in this budget at the year end. This would still allow for a potential increase of up to 2%, although it was recognised this may not be the actual salary figure. This would be agreed once the outcome of the national pay negotiations was known.

National Insurance Contributions – NI contributions so far this year totalled £413, leaving £185 remaining from the £500 budgeted. It was anticipated that a further £353 was left to pay in NI contributions for this financial year.

The NI Contribution budget was therefore likely to be overspent this year by around £168, Council therefore agreed to increase the budgeted figure from £500 to £700 for the coming year.

Pension Contributions –£232 had been paid so far in pension contributions, and an estimated further £165 in total was due to be paid in this financial year. It was therefore agreed to keep the allocated figure at £200 for the coming year as there was £585 left in the budget that could be used to cover some of the costs next year.

Insurance – The insurance budget figure was reduced to £2,300 (down from £2,500) as only £2,125 was spent this year and this would still allow for any increases to the premium next year.

Audit fee –The audit fee for the 2019/20 audit had just been paid and amounted to £300. There had been no significantly high income or expenditure during 2021/22 so far, although the receipt of the S106 funds for the bus service and the new play equipment in the toddler area had the potential to possibly push the income/expenditure into the next bracket which would mean the audit fee could increase to £400 for this year. Council therefore agreed to increase the audit figure from £300 to £400 for the coming year.

Office Equipment – The new laptop was being purchased this year so no further new equipment was required. The Office Equipment budget was showing a positive balance of £241, so it was agreed to increase the allocation to £1,000 for the coming year so that some of the overspend on the laptop could be covered.

Training - Clerks and Councillors – £95 had been spent so far this year on training, leaving an unspent balance of £188 in the current year's budget. As there were a number of new Councillors this year, Council agreed to keep the allocation at £100 to cover any further training for the coming year.

Hall Hire – The hall hire budget was showing a positive balance of £227.50 which would easily cover the remaining hall hire charges for this year and leave some funds remaining. Only £50 had been allocated last year, and as meetings were now returning to the Newell Room or Village Hall, it was agreed to allocate £100 to this budget for the coming year.

Elections – The last round of elections were held this year (delayed from 2020 due to the pandemic), and would not be recharged from WODC next year. The elections budget currently showed a balance of £1,100 so it was agreed to add just £100 to this budget.

Accounts software – It was agreed to keep the allocation at £300 for the accounts software as there was £433 of unspent funds in this budget (although the subscription for Scribe had not yet been paid this year) which should allow for some excess that could be used if the premium increased.

Bank service charges – as the Council had moved to online banking, there was a monthly charge for the bank account. Therefore, it was agreed to allocate £100 to cover these costs.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE ITEMS:

Garden of Remembrance Development – £4,950 was currently held in unspent funds in the GOR Development budget, and no capital expenditure was anticipated for the coming year. It was therefore agreed that no further funds were to be allocated to this budget for the coming year.

Garden of Remembrance Maintenance – £712 was currently held in unspent funds in the GOR Maintenance budget, and it was agreed to keep the allocated figure of £1,000 for the coming year to cover the maintenance costs of the GOR.

PLAYING FIELD ITEMS:

Play Area Development – The play area development fund currently had £3,068 being held. Some capital expenditure was being made this year on the new play equipment in the toddler play area, although this was being funded via the S106 allocation. No further capital expenditure for play equipment was necessary, although a suggestion had been made to create a scooter trail across the

playing field, but there were no plans in place for this currently. In view of this Council **resolved** not to include any additional funds to this budget for next year.

Play Area Maintenance - The play area maintenance budget had £1,266 remaining, with further invoices to be paid before the end of the financial year. Council therefore agreed to keep the budgeted allocation at £1,000 to cover ongoing maintenance costs.

Playing Field Maintenance – The playing field maintenance budget was currently showing a positive balance of £3,308, but the invoice for the recent verti-draining work was due to be paid next month, and shockwave treatment may also be required. It was agreed to reduce the allocated figure from £2,500 to £1,000 for the coming year.

SECTION 137 ITEMS:

Donations given out: This was showing a positive balance of £2,590, and another donation request had been considered and approved at item 9.3. It was therefore agreed not to allocate any funds to this budget for next year.

Subscriptions: As there was £642 of unspent funds which would easily cover the subscription costs for this year (which had not yet been paid), it was agreed not to allocate any funds to this budget for next year as there should be sufficient funds left at year end to cover next year's expenditure.

Other S137 - £3,751 was currently being held in reserve funds to cover any items that could not be authorised under any other expenditure powers. It was agreed not to allocate any further funds for next year.

VILLAGE HALL/CRF ITEMS:

Servicing Village Hall and CRF Loans – This remained at £5,559 to cover the two fixed payments of £2,779.14 per year made on the loan for the CRF, and the Village Hall figure remained at £23,656 to cover the two fixed payments of £11,827.81 per year made on the loan. These together totalled £29,215 which was allocated for next year.

Village Hall/CRF Maintenance – It was agreed to increase the allocation from £1,500 to £2,000 as costs were increasing for mowing and hedge cutting around the hall, and it was likely this budget would be slightly overspent at the end of the year.

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE ITEMS:

Grass cutting – As there was £4,678 in unspent funds in this budget, it was agreed not to allocate any further funds to this budget for the coming year.

Litter Collection – Bill Phillips advised the Council that he did not wish to have an increase in his payment so did not leave the room for this item. Councillors thanked Bill for this gesture and therefore agreed to keep the payment at £1,000 for the litter collection work done.

Tree work – £1,820 was currently being held in reserve, although various tree work had been carried out recently so this amount would reduce significantly once the invoices were paid. As there may well be further tree work required next year, Council agreed to increase the allocated amount from £500 to £2,000 to cover any additional tree work required in the coming year.

Pond Maintenance – As no funds had been spent on the pond so far this year and there was £3,125 being held in reserve, it was agreed not to allocate any further funds for the coming year.

Seat Repairs – £515 had been spent on seat repairs this year, leaving £1,485 in the budget with further seat repair work required next year. It was therefore agreed to keep the allocated figure at £500 for next year.

Highways/Footpath maintenance – In view of the likely costs of the traffic calming work that was still being worked on, it was likely that this budget would need to be significantly increased as anything traffic calming related was not cheap, and the costs of the traffic survey had yet to be paid. Although there was £11,888 held in reserve currently, the majority of these funds would be used to cover the costs of two new VAS (vehicle activated sign) that had been purchased (these would cost approximately 8,714), if the invoice was ever received. After some discussion Council resolved to add £8,000 to this budget to cover traffic calming costs which were likely to be expensive.

Dog bin emptying – £172 had been spent on dog bin emptying this year, which covered a 6-month period with further expenditure anticipated by the end of the financial year. There was currently £609 being held in this budget, so Council agreed not to allocate any funds to this budget for the coming year.

General Reserves – the general reserves was showing a balance of £11,585 and it was noted that the amount held should reflect at least half of the amount of the half yearly precept figure (i.e. 3 months of Council expenditure) which would be approximately £16,000. Council therefore agreed to allocate £5,000 to the General Reserves.

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

The previous Chairman and Robert Crocker had carried out the review last year. It was agreed that the new Chairman and Peter Foster would carry out the review this year, which needed to be done by the end of January 2022. They would arrange a date to meet with the Clerk in January.

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

10.7 Any other financial business – to receive an update on change of bank signatories

Confirmation had been received from the bank that Tony was now set up as an authorized signatory on the Parish Council account. As Tony had now resigned, it was noted that he needed to be removed from the account. Council agreed no replacement signatory was deemed necessary as there were 4 signatories for online banking which was felt to be sufficient.

Action: Clerk to remove Tony as signatory from bank account.

11. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

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

11.1.1 Play area reports: Play area reports – Gates at each end of field - Blenheim Lane & PHL gates both need attention; Zip wire steps – to decide whether to go ahead with these.

Pink book– Peter had the pink book and noted that Tony was next on the rota so Peter agreed to cover this. A new rota was required so the Clerk would draft a new one and email it around. An update on the items reported last month was as follows:

Gates at each end of field – The new spring had been installed on the Pigeon House Lane gate and a new long lever on the latch on the Blenheim Lane gate had also been done.

Zip wire steps – a suggestion was made last month of adding some steps to the rear of the platform to help grandparents access the platform which was quite high. However Sawscapes advised that making the zip wire accessible with steps meant that it also made the zip wire accessible for younger children, which the equipment wasn't necessarily aimed at or suitable for and this would probably be highlighted as a risk on the next play inspection report. Council agreed not to pursue this any further.

Wooden wicket on games wall – this had been replaced.

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

There was nothing further to report. A road closure licence was being applied for by Thames Water to enable the connection to be made. Robert Crocker would advise the Clerk when the connection had been completed.

11.1.3 Play equipment replacement for wooden climber and toddler area development – to receive an update on order and installation of new equipment and to confirm whether post installation inspection is required, and if so, who will carry this out

Mary Ann gave a brief update. The new equipment had been ordered and was due to be installed week commencing 22nd November. It had been queried whether a post installation inspection would be required and a response was awaited from the inspection company. Meantime Council approved this to be carried out if required.

Action: Mary Ann/Clerk to arrange post installation inspection if required.

11.1.4 Shockwave treatment for field – to approve request to have shockwave treatment carried out on field to improve drainage

A request had been received from the Football Club to have shockwave treatment carried out on the field to help improve the drainage. This was last carried out in December 2020 at a cost of £1,100 + VAT. The quote was received by Simon Hole from a trusted supplier, and he had advised they can carry out the work again this year for the same price. Since then Simon had confirmed that it would be more beneficial to have verti-draining carried out, rather than shockwave treatment, although the cost was almost identical. After a brief discussion, Council **resolved** to pay for the verti-draining this year, but to ask that the Football Club supply funds for this going forward (possibly via a grant?).

Action: Clerk to respond to Football Club re verti-draining work as above.

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

As Andrew was not present there was nothing further to report on this item.

11.1.6 Tractor Winter Service – to discuss whether this is required to be carried out this year.

The tractor manufacturer had contacted the Council to see if a winter service was required this year. The tractor was last serviced in July 2020 at a cost of £586.88 + VAT. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to leave it till next year before having another service carried out.

11.1.7 Playground Annual Inspection – to note report following inspection and to approve quote for replacement safety surfacing under junior slide

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.

However, the safety surfacing under the junior slide had been identified as needing attention due to being possibly inadequate for the fall height. There was also some sign of metal fatigue on the junior slide with a small hole visible in the metal. There was also sign of wear on other pieces of equipment and some of the fixings were loose and needed securing, and there were some bolt caps missing or damaged that also needed replacing.

After a brief discussion it was agreed to ask the toddler area contractor to quote for the safety surfacing and see if they could also fix the metal on the slide and the fixings/bolt caps whilst they were site from 22nd November.. Council approved expenditure of up to £5K for the quote for the safety surfacing so that the work could be carried out.

Action: Mary Ann to speak to contractor and arrange quote for safety surfacing and other work detailed above.

11.1.8 Bins – to decide whether to keep litter bins in toddler play area and by youth shelter or to replace with new style combined bin and decide on location, and to confirm relocation of bin by 18 Wroslyn Road

During the WODC litter and dog bin replacement programme that was currently being carried out, a couple of queries had been raised.

Firstly, the PC were asked to consider whether they wished to have one dual bin at the back of the playing field between the two play parks or a straightforward replacement of the existing two that are already there. After a brief discussion Councillors preferred to have a straightforward replacement of the current bins as they did not like the idea of dog waste being placed in bins so close to where parents and children often had picnics in the summer.

WODC would be paying for the new bins and the installation unless the parish council requested additional bins. WODC records showed that the PC were currently paying for 4 bins in total, 2 at the GOR and 2 at the playing field, however there were in fact 3 bins at the playing field.

Secondly, if the PC agreed that the 2 bins at the Garden of Remembrance were replaced with a dual bin that would ensure the number being paid for would remain at 4 as the additional bin on the field had to be accounted for. Council approved replacing the 2 bins at the GOR with one dual bin to be sited where the GOR litter bin was currently.

It had also been identified that the litter bin by 18 Wroslyn Road needed replacing and would benefit from moving to the other side of the road to be more visible. This was also approved.

Action: Clerk to advise WODC re the above.

11.3 Footpath & Bridleway matters/Footpath Book – to receive any reports: Footpath signage on BR1 needs attention

The footpath rota had been completed for the year and the book could be returned to the Clerk to retain till the Spring. There were some signage issues on BR1 that the Clerk had already reported to OCC Public Rights of Way Team and an acknowledgement had been received.

Action: Footpath book to be returned to Clerk, Clerk to chase up response re BR1 if needed.

11.4 Garden of Remembrance – to receive any reports:

There was nothing to report.

11.4.1 Bins – to decide whether to keep both dog bin & litter bin or to replace both with one new style combined bin and decide on location (within or outside GOR gates)

This had already been covered at item 11.1.8 and it was agreed to replace both bins at the GOR with one dual bin to be located within the GOR gates on the same site as the current litter bin.

11.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports

Bill gave a brief update. The curtains were due to be replaced shortly and the boilers had been serviced. The Hall was due to be closed during the first week in January as the floor was going to be sanded and sealed.

11.6 Village Pond – to discuss any action required re removal of bulrushes and to discuss and approve additional tree work around pond

Robert Crocker had offered to remove the bulrushes in the pond, once the pond had dried up which was likely to be next year.

He had also advised that there was a third crack willow tree that required pollarding and a dead acer type tree that needed removing. After some discussion, it was agreed to ask the tree contractor to pollard the crack willow, but to leave the acer tree and monitor to see if it grew next year. The Council were happy for Rob to remove the bulrushes next year.

It was also suggested seeing if Russell Fisher and the Naturehood group would like to be involved with the pond area, Mary Ann would speak to Rob initially and see what needed doing.

Action: Clerk to arrange tree work as above and Mary Ann to speak to Rob re pond.

11.7 Broadmarsh Lane Amenity Area – to note unauthorized tree trimming has taken place and to discuss if any action required

It has been reported to the Clerk last week about some tree work that had been carried out in the amenity area in Broadmarsh Lane. Unfortunately, someone had cut off branches of two of the trees and had dumped them within the amenity area. The trees now looked very imbalanced as they had only been cut on one side. The Clerk had no evidence as to who had done this but no permission had been sought from the PC to have this work carried out. This now created additional work to clear the area.

It was noted that Councillors needed to keep an eye on this area to ensure trees weren't just cut without the Parish Council's permission, as the Parish Council did maintain this land.

In the meantime, a note had been placed on the social media page and the Clerk would include it in her next set of Grapevine notes.

Action: Clerk to place note in Grapevine.

12. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE DATES AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Possible dates for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) were suggested as either Wednesday 20th April 2022 or Friday 22nd April 2022. The Clerk would check the availability of the Hall.

Possible topics for discussion were Neighbourhood Plan, Traffic Calming, Naturehood update, Inspired Villages application, and sustainability of the village.

It was also noted that the April 2022 meeting would fall on Easter Monday, so it was agreed to see if it could be moved to the Tuesday 19th April instead.

Action: All Councillors to consider topics for discussion at APM, Clerk to book Village Hall and move date of April 2022 meeting as above.

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

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

(b) WODC – Electric Vehicle Charging Points to be introduced across district – details had been emailed around.

(c) WODC – Fraud & Scam Awareness – to discuss setting up a presentation in the village hall for residents to attend – details had been emailed around. Councillors thought it would be a good idea to try and set up a meeting in the Hall for residents to attend, so the Clerk had asked whether it would be possible to set up a meeting at the weekend with Trading Standards and the local Police in attendance. It was suggested also arranging for defibrillator training at the same time. The Clerk would investigate this further.

Action: Clerk to investigate setting up meeting and training as above.

14. CIRCULATION

No November circulation.

15. TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY UPDATE REGARDING FREELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Year 5 & 6 children had successfully attended their residential trip to The Gower. Penny McCarthy had been appointed as Headteacher.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS – FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ONLY

None.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Councillors agreed to move the December meeting back to the Newell Room if possible, and to arrange all future meetings next year in the Newell Room. The Clerk would arrange this

Action: Clerk to book Newell Room as above.

The next meeting of the Council would be held on **Monday 20th December 2021 at 7.30pm in the Newell Room.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.20pm.