

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL, HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, ON THE 26TH APRIL 2021, IN THE COUNTY OF OXFORDSHIRE AT 7.30PM.

PRESENT:	Chairman:	Peter Newell
	Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
	Councillors:	Mary Ann Canning, Peter Foster, Matthew Ruddle, , Bill Phillips.
	District Councillors:	Alaa Al-Yousuf (till 8.30pm)
	County Councillor:	Liam Walker (till 8.30pm)
	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 and Roger Faulkner, who both wished to listen to the meeting, Andy Murray who wished to say a few words and Amy Jackson joined at 7.45pm to also listen to the meeting and left at 9.35pm.

Andy wished to pass on his heartfelt thanks to the Parish Councillors for their time, hard work and devotion to the village and their many years of service. A great deal had been achieved over the years and the improvements made on behalf of the village were much appreciated. He thanked everyone and offered his very best wishes to those who were leaving the Council.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Tim Webster, Véro McCoy, Marilyn Davies.

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 1st Hanborough/Freeland Scouts Committee.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 15th March 2021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15th March 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

There was very little to report since the last meeting. Peter F's contact at CTIL had left the business and a new contractor had been instructed. BT had approved the site initially and a site visit was due to take place. Peter F 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. After some discussion it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when the new Council 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.

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

Robert confirmed the list had not been written yet but would be done shortly.

Action: Robert to produce list of landowners around Freeland and pass to Clerk.

6.4 Annual Parish Meeting – to consider holding virtual style meeting (or live streaming)

After some discussion about whether to hold the APM this year, since it was unlikely to be able to hold it in person before 1st June and in view of the challenges of holding a virtual style meeting for possibly 100+ residents, it was agreed to leave it for now and maybe hold a village meeting later in the year when it was safe to do so.

6.5 Freeland PC Election – to note results of election.

Following the uncontested election, it was confirmed that Peter Foster, Mary Ann Canning, Bill Phillips, Roger Faulkner and Amy Jackson had all been elected as Parish Councillors from the 10th May. Congratulations were offered to all 5 candidates. This meant that 5 seats out of 8 were filled, and there were now 3 vacancies that would need filling by co-option. Two residents had already expressed their interest in joining the Council and a further one was required. The Clerk would advertise this on social media and in the Grapevine to see if anyone would be interested.

At the next meeting due to be held on 17th May, the co-option of any new Councillors could take place, and the outgoing Chairman's last duty was to preside over the Annual Meeting until a new Chairman was appointed.

It was suggested the 5 members of the new Council could perhaps meet informally before the 17th May to discuss who may wish to take on the Chairman/Vice Chairman role rather than wait until the meeting to save anyone feeling uncomfortable and to be clear on who may prefer to put themselves forward.

6.6 Coronavirus – an update – to include discussion about whether to keep food bank going

The Clerk gave a brief update. The prescription volunteer service had ceased with shops reopening and many people in the vulnerable age brackets having now received at least their first vaccination. The food bank box was almost empty, and it was queried whether this was still needed. The food bank was originally set up as an emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic when there were various food shortages in shops, and it was there to help key workers and those who were struggling. With everything now reopening and no major food shortages, plus the fact that its usage had been limited recently, and with other food banks available locally, Council agreed that this was no longer needed, and the box would be used for extra storage for the Little Free Library.

The Clerk would place a note on social media and in the Grapevine to let residents know.

Action: Clerk to place note as above.

7. PLANNING - Applications received & WODC Decisions plus:

7.1 Applications Received: None.

7.2 Applications Approved:

21/00351/HHD 2A BLENHEIM LANE, FREELAND.

Erection of single storey side extension for Mr & Mrs Foster.

21/00068/HHD 59 WROSLYN ROAD, FREELAND.

Erection of a two-storey side extension, single story rear extension and conversion of loft space with rear dormer for Mrs Evens.

7.3 Applications Refused: None.

7.4 Applications Withdrawn:

21/00323/HHD 5 HURST LANE, FREELAND.

Erection of a detached bike shed for Ms Veronique McCoy.

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 Eynsham Park and Ride Consultation

The Parish Council response to the above consultation had been submitted and the Chairman wished to pass on his sincere thanks to Russ Canning for all his work in preparing an excellent response on behalf of the Council covering all the main points.

7.7 Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) – Inspector’s Notes

An email about the above had literally just been received that day and Councillors had not had time to read the information contained within the 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. As there had been no time to view the information it was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk to carry forward to next agenda.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS

In Liam’s report he provided an update about the resurfacing work on Wroslyn Road that had been carried out recently and which seemed overall to be well received. The “Keep Clear” white lines around the junction of Oakland Close had been painted as well as the access protection markings outside 165/167 Wroslyn Road. The Traffic Calming Working Group were looking at various options in the village, one of which was possibly to remove the central white lines and a request had been made to put on hold the repainting of the white lines in the village whilst the group finalised their plan. Liam confirmed that the central white lines would not be repainted but the 30mph roundels and parking bay lines would be. A query was raised about the traffic survey black boxes, which was on hold until next week whilst the Council was in purdah.

Liam passed on his thanks to those Councillors leaving the Council this year and to those who were staying on for everything they had contributed.

Alaa had written a post on social media in response to residents’ requests for an update on the Inspired Villages proposals. An informal consultation had been announced in the March issue of the Grapevine and it was supposed to take place online during the period 5-12 March, but it had been subsequently extended by one week at Alaa’s request. A small team of concerned residents had produced and distributed an information leaflet to the village, and residents were expecting Inspired Villages to publish an update in the April or May issue of the Grapevine, but this had not happened. Alaa and the Parish Council Chairman held a Zoom call with Inspired Villages during which they were informed that out of a total of 45 responses, 35 were against, 8 were for and 2 offered constructive criticism and suggestions. The relatively low number of responses was open to interpretations, but it

was felt likely that residents were aware that it was only an informal consultation, and they were reserving their comments to a formal one if or when an outline planning application was submitted. Whilst it was not clear what Inspired Villages would do next, they were mindful of (a) WODC's refusal which they received in response to their pre-application consultation earlier this year, and

(b) Freeland's residents' views.

So, there were significant financial and reputational risks attached to submitting an outline planning application in these circumstances.

Alaa had also been in contact with the Clerk to see if the white gates on the A4095 could be painted or updated as they were currently looking very tired. The Clerk had contacted Highways to request this be done but as yet no action had been taken. The Clerk asked Liam if this could be chased up, but it was unclear who the gates belonged to. Liam agreed to see if he could get anything done.

Alaa and Liam both passed on their thanks and good wishes to the outgoing Councillors. They were both also thanked for their updates and both left the meeting at 8.30pm.

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 31st March 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 Matthew or Bill outside of the meeting.

9.2 Draft Statement of Receipts and Payments 01.04.20 – 31.03.21 for approval

The Council **resolved** to approve the receipts and payments for the year 01.04.20 to 31.03.21.

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 033	Ubico Ltd	Dog & litter bin emptying GOR 01.10.20 - 31.03.21	326.35
BACS 034	Lisa Smith	Clerk's salary - April*	950.42
BACS 035	The Flying Press Ltd	GOR booklet printing x 25	48.81
BACS 036	WODC	Dog bin emptying 01.10.20 - 31.03.21	102.98
BACS 037	Ubico Ltd	Litter bin emptying on field 01.10.20 - 31.03.21	223.90
BACS 038	Arthur Treherne	Cladding on new shed	721.03
BACS 039	OALC	Good Councillor's Guide x 5	26.00
BACS 040	Barlows & Sons (Hermitage) Ltd	Concrete materials for shed	135.36
BACS 041	Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd	Limestone shingle	294.59
BACS 042	Bill Phillips	Litter picking Jan/Feb/March 2021	250.00
BACS 043	RA Crocker Ltd	Work on field & around shed (labour & materials)	3,719.91
BACS 044	HMRC	Employer's NI contributions for Clerk Jan/Feb/Mar	60.09
BACS 045	Steve Lay	Repair to leaking tap in GOR	72.00
		Total:	6,931.44
Plus:	NEST pension payment of £33.09 (employee & employer contributions). The amount of £18.91 has been deducted from Clerk's salary for April 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).		

When paying the above invoices, it was noticed that the amount paid to R A Crocker Ltd should in fact read £3,719.71 (not £3,719.91). The correct amount had been inputted into the online banking system, so this was a typo in the above table.

9.4 Review of VAT Reclaim

The VAT reclaim for Q4 was reviewed and accepted by the Council.

9.5 Any other financial business

The Clerk advised that she was currently in the process of transferring the accounting software Scribe over to a web-based version as the current version would not be supported after May this year.

10. PARISH COUNCIL STANDING ITEMS

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

10.1.1 Play area reports – to update on trampoline tile gluing; damaged zip wire chain sleeve; loose slat on wobbly bridge.

Vero or Tim had the pink book and as they were not present it was unclear if there were any problems to report.

The trampoline tile had been glued down, unfortunately the tile had split before the gluing was carried out, but nevertheless it had been glued and it just needed monitoring.

The zip wire chain sleeve on the seat had become damaged and the Clerk had contacted the manufacturer to enquire about a replacement. It was noted that at present the chain was still intact, but Robert agreed to take a look to see if a temporary fix could be done whilst waiting to hear back from the manufacturer.

The loose slat on the wobbly bridge had been repaired by a local builder so again this just needed monitoring.

Action: Robert to take a look at zip wire chain sleeve to see if it can be temporarily fixed.

10.1.2 New storage building on field – to update on progress of new shed, and path reinstatement, plus to consider suggestion to install a warning sign by gate.

Robert gave an update. The internal cladding had now been installed and the shed was finally complete. The tractor fitted into the shed (just!) and it was suggested monitoring the area to ensure the shed was kept tidy and orderly.

The gravel on the new path would eventually set once it had been rained on, and the rails on the old-gated access would be put back when the official gate would be opened.

It was suggested placing a warning sign by the gate to warn of reversing vehicles, and to perhaps place a sign inside the shed to warn of pedestrians. The Clerk would order some.

Councillors passed on their thanks to Robert and Mary Ann for all the work they had done with the new shed.

Action: Robert to put back rails on gate, Clerk to order warning signs as above.

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

Robert had spoken to a local plumber to see if they were able to sign off the pipework before the connection to Thames Water was arranged, but unfortunately, they were not registered with Thames Water so were unable to assist. Robert had some work to do to rake out the roots by the zip wire, so once this was done, he would 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 speak to local plumber re pipework.

10.1.5 Play equipment replacement for wooden climber – to receive an update from working group.

Mary Ann had produced a proposed plan of the toddler area which included various items of new equipment following feedback from parents. Mary Ann and the Clerk had then met with a play equipment designer and manufacturer with the proposed plan which was also shown to the Councillors who were positive about the initial ideas. A bespoke design together with a quote would be produced by the designer for consideration, which would probably be received around June time. Following feedback from parents, a sand pit had been included in the plan which could be covered to stop leaves and rubbish getting into it. Further comparable quotes would need to be sought, so a specification would be required which Mary Ann would arrange.

Action: Mary Ann to arrange specification for obtaining further quotes.

10.1.6 Weed Spraying of field – to consider whether weed spraying work is required this year.

A query was raised as to whether the playing field required weed spraying this year. As the ground was so dry and hard, it was decided to review again next month once there had hopefully been some rainfall.

Action: Clerk to carry forward to next agenda.

10.2 Village Highway Matters – to receive any reports: none.

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 few of the group members had carried out a walk along Wroslyn Road this month, starting at the Green and walking through the village with a large-scale map to look at different ideas for traffic calming. Lots of ideas and suggestions were put forward and these had been annotated on the large-scale map which had been emailed around just before the meeting. The map was also shown at the meeting and Mary Ann and the Clerk talked through the different suggestions put forward. Some of these ideas included a new path from the A4095 down to the new doctor's surgery, and a new gravel path from the Garden of Remembrance down to the Green, building out the pavement by Pigeon House Lane entrance to make it narrower, having narrower village gateways to deter traffic coming through the village and clearer signage and improving the brightness of the VAS signs. There was a lot to take in so it was agreed to circulate the last minutes of the Traffic Calming Working Group to the Councillors and this was something that the new Council could take forward. It had also been mentioned about the white line painting around Parklands that needed repainting following the road resurfacing work, and the Clerk had chased this up. The access protection markings around Oakland Close had now been done.

Action: Clerk to email round minutes of last Traffic Calming Working Group to all councillors and new Council to take this forward.

10.2.2 Overgrown hedge in Broadmarsh Lane – to discuss feedback received from residents regarding quotes for work to either trim back or remove laurel hedge on unregistered land in Broadmarsh Lane and to discuss if any action is to be taken

Following on from last month, the Clerk wrote to all residents that lived opposite and/or adjacent to the laurel hedge to ask for their preferred option.

The possible options given were as follows:

- To reduce the laurel hedge in size and height by around 50% (cost £780)
- To cut the laurel hedge down to ground level so that it will grow again as a smaller hedge that would be easier to manage (cost £1,320)
- To cut the laurel hedge down to ground level and grind out the roots (ie remove the hedge completely) (cost £1,620)

A section was also provided for comments and feedback.

17 properties in total were contacted and the feedback and results received were as follows:

Preferred Option for laurel hedge	Number of replies
Option 1	9
Option 2	2
Option 3	0
No action at all – leave as current	1
No preference	1
No reply	2
Other	2
Total	17

Of the 9 properties who preferred the 50% option, 1 stated that they would prefer to not alter the height at all. Of the 2 properties who preferred the ground level option, 1 did not actually have a real preference and was happy to go with the majority.

2 properties either did not respond or preferred not to reply as they were renting and didn't feel it was fair for them to have a say when they didn't live there permanently.

For the "Other" replies, 1 property felt it should only be reduced by say a third, rather than 50% and 1 property felt it should "at the most" only have the top branches trimmed and the stray branches in the

road cut back. 1 property did not accept having any work done on the hedge and felt it should be left as it is currently. 1 property had no preference whatsoever. Many residents raised concerns about disturbing the wildlife that lived in the hedge and wished to ensure the hedge would be cut back later in the year rather than Spring when it was nesting season.

After careful consideration and taking into account the feedback received, Council agreed to reduce the hedge height by just a third (rather than 50%) and to trim the sides that were overhanging the road and to carry out the work in later summer. An offer had been made by a resident that if the Council cut it back this time, then they would maintain it going forward, and this was agreed.

Action: Clerk to write to residents to advise of outcome.

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

Bill had the book and would cover Robert's rota. He also advised a new rota was required. The Clerk would arrange this.

Action: Clerk to arrange footpath rota.

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 at the GOR and on the GOR gates, and to update on production of brochure.

25 copies of the new brochure had now been printed and Councillors were pleased with the results. It was agreed to place a few copies with some local funeral directors – the Clerk would arrange this. Tim had completed the work on the entrance gates which looked much improved, and the Clerk would pass on thanks to Tim for carrying out this work.

Action: Clerk to pass a few GOR brochures to local funeral directors.

10.5 Freeland Hall Management Committee – to receive any reports:

There was nothing much to report. The Committee were trying to ensure that when the Hall reopened that all Hall users adhered to the Government Covid guidelines.

10.6 Amenity Area – to receive an update on planting and maintenance work to tidy up this area

The pile of rubbish had been removed and all the new plants and trees had been watered apart from the new hedging.

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

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

(b) OCC – 'Better Broadband for Oxfordshire' rollout programme completion – details had been emailed around.

(c) OALC - Virtual Meetings update – details had been emailed around. From 7th May no virtual meetings were legally permitted although OALC did understand the challenges now faced by Councils.

(d) SSEN Resilient Communities Fund 2021- to consider whether Council wish to make an application for funding for possible generator for Village Hall or other items – details had been emailed around. It was suggested the Village Hall Management Committee could apply for a generator, so the Clerk would forward the email to the VH Treasurer and Secretary.

Action: Clerk to forward email as above.

Plus additional items received since meeting papers were sent out:

(e) Royal British Legion – VE Day celebrations – Tommy Soldier available – a suggestion was made of purchasing a Tommy Soldier statue (costing around £200) to place in the village for Remembrance Day – the Clerk would email around the details to the Councillors for consideration.

Action: Clerk to email details around.

(f) Enrych charity – request for donation received – details had been emailed around. After a brief discussion, Council agreed not to make a donation.

(g) Preschool sign – request to site sign by drain cover on verge – details had been emailed around. Council agreed the sign could be placed by the drain cover, but it needed to be near the wall at the back of the verge as this was owned by the School. The front area of the verge was owned by Highways so permission would need to be sought from them.

(h) OALC funding message from OCC – details had been emailed around.

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

Branch on Pigeon House Lane - a branch was sticking out on the hedge near the top end of Pigeon House Lane that needed cutting back as it was hitting cars. Robert would get this cut.

A word of thanks – The Chairman wished to pass on his thanks and appreciation to all the Councillors and Clerk for their hard work and commitment over the past 4 years. He had appreciated all their hard work and dedication in making the village even better. Tim, Vero, Matthew, and Robert would all be leaving the Council this year and their efforts were noted.

The Chairman also did not stand in the most recent elections, having served on the Parish Council for several decades, and so this was his final full meeting. The Councillors and Clerk also passed on their heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Chairman for the many, many years of service he had given to the village and to the Council. His devotion and enduring efforts were truly admirable, and he would be greatly missed.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Council would be held (possibly remotely via Zoom) on **Monday 17th May 2021 at 7.30pm.**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.03pm.