

FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 24TH APRIL 2015 AT 7.30PM IN FREELAND HALL, FREELAND, OXFORDSHIRE

PRESENT:

Chairman:	Peter Newell
Vice-Chairman:	Robert Crocker
District Councillors:	Colin Dingwall
County Councillor:	Louise Chapman
Parish Councillors:	Mary Ann Canning, Bill Phillips, Tim Webster, Janet Dalton, Matthew Ruddle, Jane Linnell
Neighbourhood Police:	Not present
Clerk/RFO:	Lisa Smith

Terry Daniel from Daniel Family Homes was also present, and Dick Tracy, Paramedic from South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS). Plus 100 electors of the Parish.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He then advised that as Dick Tracy was on call and could potentially be called away at any moment, he was bringing this item forward as the first item on the Agenda.

8. CPR/DEFIBRILLATOR AWARENESS – DICK TRACEY, PARAMEDIC, SOUTH CENTRAL AMBULANCE SERVICE (SCAS) TO GIVE A TALK ON HOW TO USE THE DEFIBRILLATOR

Dick Tracey from the Ambulance Service began his talk by providing residents with information about the difference between a heart attack and cardiac arrest. If a person had a heart attack, it was likely they would have chest pains but still be breathing or awake; however if a person was in cardiac arrest they would be unconscious and not breathing. The defibrillator was only to be used if someone was in cardiac arrest.

If a person had collapsed, there was a 4 point plan to follow in the first instance:

1. Danger – check for any immediate danger before helping the person;
2. Response – check for any response from the patient by shouting or shaking their shoulder – if no response then 999 needed to be dialled, if the person responded they were not in cardiac arrest;
3. Airway – check the airway to ensure it is clear – empty the mouth of any obstructions/vomit etc but do not tilt the head;
4. Breathing – carry out a 10 second check to see if the person is breathing by checking for chest movement and counting how many breaths the person takes. He would expect to see about 2 breaths, if this was the case then the person could be placed in the recovery position, if it was 1 or less, the person was in cardiac arrest and CPR needed to be administered.

He went on to explain that if only one person was present with the patient then the most important thing to do was to give CPR until the ambulance arrived as this kept the brain oxygenated. If more than one person was present then one could go and retrieve the defibrillator whilst the other gave CPR to the patient.

He then gave a demonstration of how to use the defibrillator. Once 999 was dialled the Ambulance Service would give an access code for the lock on the yellow external defibrillator box and would stay on the phone to help with using the equipment if required. Once switched on the pads needed to be placed on the naked skin of the patient as shown on the equipment and the defibrillator would have an orange flashing button which should be pressed to deliver the shock. There was no way of giving a shock to a patient whose heart was already beating as the defibrillator would recognise a heart-beat and not charge up. If the heart didn't start then further shocks could be delivered. Each defibrillator could deliver up to around 200 shocks. The defibrillator pads should be left on the patient until the ambulance arrived as they would continue to monitor the patient's heart.

Dick reassured the residents that the defibrillators really were very easy to use and the equipment could also talk them through each step. If one of the defibrillators had been used then Dick would come out and check it and ensure it was ok to be used again and replacement pads would be needed.

Dick concluded his talk by stating that there was good evidence to suggest that survival rates from cardiac arrest had increased from 4-5% where there was no public access to a defibrillator to 20% where a defibrillator had been installed in the community. 70,000 -100,000 people died from cardiac arrest each year, and where no treatment is given their chances of survival dropped by 10% each minute.

Dick responded to a few questions from residents and advised that the Clerk would be arranging further CPR training in the future. The Chairman then thanked Dick for his very informative talk and Dick then left the meeting at 8.00pm.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Toby Morris, PCSO Phil Workman – both away.

2. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 10TH APRIL 2014**

The Chairman advised that the minutes had been signed off and that copies were on display at the back of the hall for electors to read during the refreshment break.

3. **ANNUAL REPORT BY PETER NEWELL, CHAIRMAN OF FREELAND PARISH COUNCIL ON PAROCHIAL MATTERS.**

The Chairman began his report with a talk about the positive events that had occurred over the past year:

Defibrillators

Two had now been installed, one by the Village Hall and the other in the phone box on the corner of Parklands. One of these was paid for via a grant of £683 from the WODC Defibrillator scheme with South Central Ambulance Service where 50% of the total cost was covered. The cost of the other unit was covered by Parish Council funds. The Football Club also had their own defibrillator that was kept in the Sports Changing Rooms. Their unit had been funded via sponsorship from the Football Association and the British Heart Foundation.

Memorial Trees

In memory of servicemen lost in WW1 & 2 the Parish Council had planted 15 *Crataegus prunifolia* trees with help from a £500 WODC grant. Robert Crocker would be talking about this in more detail later in the meeting.

New bus shelter

A new wooden bus shelter was on order that would be installed outside of the village hall. It also had space within it for notice boards, and this had been paid for by using £5,148 of S106 funds (to be used for Transport Infrastructure) received from Oxfordshire County Council.

The Parish Council had also received a request from members of the Gardening Club for a new wooden bench to be installed at the bus stop of Wroslyn Road opposite the one near the Church View turn. This would be a good opportunity for sponsors to mark the passing of a loved one; the cost of the bench would be £800 (with a special discount of £100 being offered from Oxford Memorial Benches). The Chairman thanked Graham Lay for this generous offer. Anyone who wished to sponsor the bench was asked to contact the Clerk.

Playpark development

In the past year some resurfacing work had been carried out underneath the junior slide and swings. It was hoped to develop the play park further to allow additional items of equipment to be installed. A WREN application had been submitted for a £50K grant to help fund the new equipment and the outcome of this would be known in July. The Freeland Teddy Girls had also been excellent at fundraising to help pay for the new equipment. Mary Ann would talk more about the Play Park Development Project later in the evening.

Allotments

The allotments were going well and a new Allotment Association had been set up to take over the management and running of the allotments from the Parish Council with new contracts to be signed with the Association in September. Martin Shann had kindly agreed to remain as the Parish Council representative even though he had resigned from the Council. The Chairman thanked Martin for all his very valuable work on the Council over the past 6 years.

New Councillors welcomed this year: Jane Linnell (who replaced Tony Langley who left in Feb 2014) and Matthew Ruddle (who replaced Martin Shann who left in March 2015).

There were also some areas over the year that had concerned the Council –these were as follows:

Housing planning applications in Hanborough

The Pye Homes application that had originally been for 362 homes and then subsequently reduced to 169 homes caused a great deal of unrest in Freeland and also our neighbouring village. However it was rejected by WODC Planning Department and as yet no appeal has been made. The Corpus Christi application for 68 houses on Church Road in Long Hanborough had been deferred. Colin Dingwall would talk more about this during his presentation.

Daniel Homes proposals for houses on Slatters field off A4095

The Parish Council had been made aware of many concerns residents had regarding these proposals and Terry Daniel was present at the meeting to discuss the plans in more detail later in the evening.

Wroslyn road Industrial Estate

Several breaches of planning consent had been made by various units with noisy (and big) exhaust ducts causing annoyance to residents nearby. The extract ducts by Unit 17 and Unit 2 have now been moved to the Southern wall where they appear to be causing fewer disturbances.

Cemetery site

Over the past year the water table had been monitored at the new Cemetery site. When initiated in 1995 the regulations seemed to have been interpreted in a more relaxed way plus 1996 was the driest year on record for 150 years when the assessment of a test hole was made. The Environment Agency had now refused permission to use the burial ground (by the Allotments) for burials other than cremated ashes. The Parish Council investigated all options but found that Freeland is just not suitable for burials because of the high water table. So the Council decided to make it a Garden of Remembrance with seating and trees for remembering the deceased and for scattering ashes, with individual plots for burying ashes and headstones for those who want them, and to use Church Hanborough for any burial of bodies (currently there are approx. 2 burials a year in the current Churchyard).

Shed on Playing field

A report from a Health and Safety Consultant indicated that the old shed was structurally unsafe. The Parish Council agreed to demolish it and build another one, probably a lean-to behind the newer shed.

Mobile phone coverage

The Clerk had repeatedly written to mobile phone operators with no joy to request a mast be erected in the village to improve mobile phone coverage. Most recently she wrote to David Cameron who responded positively and had passed on our request for a better signal to the relevant body that deals with this - which turned out to be Vodafone who so far have responded only with a scheme to help their customers. The Council are trying to pursue this to ensure a better reception can be obtained for all users, not just Vodafone.

Parking by the school

Instead of plastic cones being put out each day the Parish Council thought that double yellow lines might be a better option in the long term and so a request was made to the Highways Department to paint double yellow lines near the school. But the Council were advised that the costs would be £5,000 for legal fees plus £1,200 for painting work. The Council will persist in trying to resolve this.

The Chairman concluded his report by passing on a number of thanks to various people/groups – these were as follows:

The Internal Auditor, Peter Gill for his considerable help in auditing the accounts. Peter had now retired after 7 years of service and was being replaced by Brian Wildblood;

Nigel Green for keeping the lawns and hedges around the Village Hall, the Cemetery site and the Green so well mown and clipped;
Kenny Wylie for editing the very helpful Village Grapevine;
Members of the Gardening Club run by Jill and Ray Evans for the wonderful display of daffodils throughout the Village and for their help in weeding the front garden of the Hall - and as part of that group: John and Margaret Hewitt for keeping the Pump on the Green well stocked with lovely flowers;
To the District Councillors (Colin Dingwall and Toby Morris) for all their help during the year and the County Councillor (Louise Chapman) for her assistance with various matters.

He also passed on his thanks to all of the Parish Councillors for their individual efforts. In particular he thanked the Vice-Chairman, Robert Crocker for his constant help on many matters throughout the year.

He also thanked the Clerk, Lisa Smith who had been the mainstay of the Council, actioning all the proposals and recording the outcome in the minutes with unflinching flair and good humour.

He also thanked everyone present for all their individual efforts throughout the year and for being so helpful and understanding over the Council's minor triumphs and disasters!

4. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR – LOUISE CHAPMAN

Louise Chapman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, gave a brief report. Louise had been involved with local government for over 20 years. She commented on how fantastic it was to see so many residents in attendance at the APM, which was unusual for such a small village. Even the larger towns like Witney did not usually get that many residents in attendance, and she commended the great community spirit that was very apparent in Freeland.

The Bullfinch investigation into child sexual exploitation, (where 7 men from Oxfordshire had been convicted and sentenced to various time periods in prison ranging from 7-20 years) had cost a huge amount of money and a lot of funding had been invested into these services

Following the announcement of further reductions in government spending, some difficult decisions had had to be made. The County Council still had to make some major savings and it was doing this in a variety of ways, especially in the administration areas, like sharing services, pay freezes and outsourcing. They had unfortunately been forced to increase the Council Tax by 1.99% as lots of government grants had been slashed. However, Children's Services and services for the elderly had been protected from further cuts.

Louise responded to questions regarding potholes and resurfacing a section of Wroslyn Road, the condition of the grass verge on the corner of Wroslyn Road and the A4095, the mobile library service staffing, the A40 plans to alleviate traffic congestion and the unsuitability of Pigeon House Lane for HGVs and whether any signage can be installed. After responding to questions, Louise was thanked for attending the meeting and then left at 8.40pm.

5. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – COLIN DINGWALL

Colin Dingwall gave a report regarding progress made during the past year by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). He firstly commended the Parish Council by advising the residents that they were fortunate to have such a progressive and imaginative Parish Council working for them. He was also pleased to support the provision of the defibrillators, and the 15 memorial trees, both of which had received grants from WODC.

The District of West Oxfordshire was a thriving community and WODC had had a very successful year. Despite austerity measures the District Council was in a very strong position and was spending within its means. It had made a small surplus in the 2014/15 budget and would do so again in 2015/16 without any cuts to services, grants or any overall job losses, and whilst still managing to provide free car parking in many of the towns including Witney.

Council tax had been frozen for the past 5 years and WODC were still the second lowest charging shire in the country. Through a 2020 vision programme they were embarking on further shared services with several other councils to save a further £2million.

Recycling and food waste collections had been increased and WODC were at one of the highest levels nationally and the residents were thanked for their co-operation. Work was also continuing on the £1.6million project to provide high speed broadband to otherwise uncovered areas. Solar farms such as the one at Barnard Gate were also being utilised as a way of creating income for the District.

The West Oxford Local Plan had been completed which called for a further 10,500 homes over the next 16 years up to 2031. This was 3,000 less than the SHMA figures called for and there were no new developments included for Freeland. WODC also hit their affordable housing targets which would see a 50% increase from next year. There was one major objective to accomplish and that was the provision of 14 affordable homes for the residents of Freeland where identifying a suitable site had been attempted for the past 20 years.

Overall the District was in a good position with low crime rates, good schools, excellent health and leisure facilities and free parking in many towns.

As well as being the District Councillor for Freeland and Hanborough, Colin had served 9 years as a nominated Director for Cottsway Housing and served 7 years as the Chairman of the Finance Management Overview Scrutiny (FMOS) Committee. He had also served 4 years as a member of the Audit Committee and 7 years on the Emergency Committee and attended Cabinet meetings every month. In addition to the above he had been Chief Whip for 6 years and had served 4 years on both the Wychwood Forest Board and on the North Oxon Carers board.

Colin responded to questions regarding the Farmoor toll bridge, the Long Hanborough doctor's surgery, recycling and Affordable Housing.

6. REPORT FROM PCSO PHIL WORKMAN, THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Unfortunately PCSO Workman could not be present at the meeting. However, he had sent a brief report regarding crime rates in the local area over the past year, compared with the previous year. From 1st April 2014 until 31st March 2015, there had been only 5 reported crimes in the Freeland area. This compared to the previous year was particularly low, with 25 crimes being reported from 1st April 2013 until 31st March 2014. The reason for this decrease was not known, but it was certainly reassuring to know that the reported crime figures had dropped so significantly.

BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS: 9.00pm

MEETING RECONVENED: 9.15pm

7. A PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON THE A4095 – TERRY DANIEL FROM DANIEL FAMILY HOMES TO GIVE A SHORT PRESENTATION ON HIS PLANS TO BUILD A SMALL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE A4095

Terry Daniel introduced himself to the residents and explained that he genuinely wanted to understand the strength of feeling in the village regarding the development proposals and to hopefully come up with a plan that would be supported by the village. He had spent 19 years in planning doing similar schemes in the Berkshire and Hertfordshire areas, but had now moved across to cover the Cotswolds. He mainly dealt with designing the larger luxury homes.

The two plans that he wished to present were on display at the meeting and had been made available to residents during the refreshment break.

He had received 25 responses to his initial letter that had been sent to all residents in Freeland, asking for their views on what their preferences would be for development in the field. From reviewing the information he had received he had produced two possible options for developing the site:

Option 1 – 29 houses (of which 14 would be classed as affordable housing).

Approximately 8 years ago a survey was carried out which stated that around 14 affordable homes were required in Freeland. As Planning guidance states that with a new development, 50% have to be affordable he drew up the plan for 29 houses whilst trying to maintain a big open space and ensuring it was as green as possible. He explained that the houses were well spaced out with 15 of the 29 houses overlooking a green area. With this scheme there would be money to put back into the village from S106 funds, which could fund items such as landscaping, a mini roundabout, a small play park or an alternative option. Colin explained that the only way the affordable housing could be available purely for Freeland residents was to make it a Rural Exception site, or to just build the house shells and class them as self-build homes. Terry agreed to explore this further.

Option 2 – 8 larger family homes with either 4 or 5 bedrooms, with no affordable housing element incorporated. These had been spaced out so that they followed

the line of 4 houses already in place by Lawrence and Oakfield House, with the rest of the field remaining as green open space.

He explained that the pre-application advice process had been carried out with WODC Planners and all necessary surveys had been done apart from the new survey which would be completed this month.

An opportunity for questions was then given for residents to ask Terry any queries they had about the proposals. Terry responded to questions about the design and layout of the site, concerns about traffic on the A4095, prices of the affordable houses and how to ensure the affordable houses were only made available to Freeland residents.

A show of hands was taken to gauge support for each option. Over 30 residents were in support of the 29 house scheme - after some modifications, 7 residents were in support of the 8 house scheme, and 20 residents were in support of leaving the field undeveloped.

Unfortunately a resident was taken ill at the meeting at 9.45pm and Terry's presentation had to be halted whilst the resident was looked after. The meeting then reconvened at 10.00pm.

After a few further questions, Terry agreed to reconfigure the plans for both schemes and to present them again at a future Parish Council meeting. He was also strongly urged to liaise with Colin Dingwall about the affordable housing element and how to put it forward as a Rural Exception site. Terry was commended for coming to the meeting and listening to the resident's views and for his initial approach to residents to try and find out what they would like rather than railroading a plan through without any consultation. The Chairman thanked Terry for attending and Terry would be back in touch once the plans had been amended.

8. CPR/DEFIBRILLATOR AWARENESS – DICK TRACY

This item had already been covered as it was taken first.

9. THE FUTURE OF THE METHODIST CHAPEL – JULIE HURST TO GIVE A BRIEF PRESENTATION ABOUT THE FREELAND METHODIST CHAPEL

Julie Hurst gave a brief presentation about the Freeland Methodist Chapel, starting with a short history about the building. In 1804 Freeland was a settlement of approx. 12 dwellings on the edge of Eynsham parish. Groups of Methodists from Witney and North Leigh and other villages held open air meetings. Records indicate that one of these meetings, which was held on a piece of land known as Heath Lane, across Pigeon House Lane was dispersed by a member of Eynsham Hall, with the assistance of the police. The Methodists then had a whip round, and bought the small piece of land at the top of Heath Lane and started to build a chapel. The following year they applied to the Bishop of Oxford to register it as a place of worship and were successful, with the date of completion in 1807 being visible on the plaque above the doorway.

Sadly, like many other small churches around the country, with dwindling numbers of members, the Chapel was now struggling to continue as a place of worship and to maintain the listed building.

They were awaiting their Quinquennial inspection and items that were likely to be of concern and raised in the inspection were rising damp on the South wall, possible floor rot and possible loose roof tiles. In previous years, essential repair work had cost thousands of pounds.

Julie explained that the procedure for closing a Methodist Chapel was a long and lengthy legal process. Once all of the formal ratifications had been made, the building would eventually be sold, firstly offered to the community before going on the open market. The Chapel has a no alcohol and no gambling policy, and these restrictions could still be upheld after the sale of the building. This meant that if it was to be used as a village shop (which had been previously suggested), then it would not be able to sell alcohol or lottery tickets and would not be able to open on Sundays.

The Methodists really didn't want to close and deprive the village of a useful venue and they planned to carry on as long as possible. Ultimately they needed their congregation to grow. Julie thanked everyone for their time and hoped that the village would be able to work together to keep the historic Chapel going as an asset to the village.

10. MEMORIAL TREES – A SHORT TALK ON THE PLANTING OF 15 MEMORIAL TREES IN FREELAND TO COMMEMORATE THE 15 FREELAND RESIDENTS WHO DIED DURING WW1 AND WW2

Robert Crocker gave a brief presentation on the Memorial Trees Project. 15 trees had been purchased and planted throughout Freeland to commemorate the 15 Freeland residents who died during WW1 and WW2. All residents whose homes were next to the proposed location of the trees had been asked beforehand about the planting of the trees, and a type of flowering Hawthorn had been chosen called *Crataegus prunifolia*. This species was a medium sized hawthorn tree which had white flowers in the spring to denote peace and red berries in the autumn to represent the blood that was shed.

The Parish Council were arranging to have a brass plaque attached to each tree with the name of a person commemorated on each plaque. If anyone wished to sponsor a tree the plaques would cost around £43, and there were 12 remaining – he asked for anyone wishing to do so to contact the Clerk. It was hoped that these trees would remain part of the village for many years to come.

11. PLAY PARK DEVELOPMENT – A BRIEF UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PLAN TO DEVELOP THE FREELAND PLAY PARK

Mary Ann Canning gave a brief presentation of the plans to improve the Freeland Play Park. A final plan of an improved play park was drawn up after the last APM with the help of Russell Play, and was costed at £60,000 to build (a copy of the plan would be made available on the village website at www.freelandoxon.co.uk).

In an ideal world the Parish Council would like to do the work all in one go, so a grant application had been submitted to WREN for £47,500. The Parish Council would then need to make up the remaining £12,500. An application was also recently made to Jewson's Building Better Communities fund, but they received over 2000 applicants and only 63 were shortlisted – unfortunately Freeland were not one of these!

The Freeland Teddy Girls had been amazing again this year and so far have raised £752 for the play park. The Parish Council would like to earmark a piece of equipment to represent their contribution.

The Clerk had received over 20 letters of support for the play park project from residents to submit with the grant application to WREN to show there is support for the project and the outcome of the application will be known in July.

If the WREN grant application was not successful, the Parish Council would need to do the project bit by bit and fundraise for each bit, but this would be a much slower process.

The safety surface under the old slide and swings had been repaired this year by covering the uneven rubber tiles with a form of artificial grass. This cost £1,900, which was less than half the cost of a new safety surfacing.

Mary Ann responded to a question regarding the hard-court basketball area being used as a tennis court.

12. FREELAND VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – UPDATE

Robert Crocker, Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee gave a brief report on the hall's progress over the past year.

The Hall had been redecorated with the whole hall being painted, together with the entrance ways and the curtains had also been cleaned.

Wifi was now available in the Hall and it was hoped to have it installed in the Newell Room too in the near future, and this was currently being explored.

One of the main challenges for the hall was parking, especially when there were multiple functions. The pub was doing well, the sports clubs were busy and most weekends the hall was booked, so the parking situation relied very much on good will and common sense, and he encouraged everyone to walk or cycle to the Hall wherever possible. Robert also passed on this thanks to the Gardening Club who planted the flowers around the front of the Hall and kept it looking lovely.

The Village Hall Management Committee was made up entirely of volunteers, who were a friendly and hard working group of people. Crucial roles were the Treasurer and Bookings Secretary and he expressed his thanks to Dot Sharpe and Shelagh Kardos for their hard work and dependability. He also thanked all of the Committee for doing their bit. The weekend cover had now been extended and he asked that if anyone wanted to be involved with the Hall there was always room for an extra pair of hands.

Shelagh then gave a brief overview of bookings. In 2014 there had been 966 hall bookings and the Newell Room had taken 80 bookings. 30 bookings for the

Newell Room had already been taken for this year, so usage was certainly starting to pick up. 55% of bookings were from private events in the village, and 45% of bookings were from people outside of the village. Some new Hall users had also been gained over the past year – the Soccer School, the Cake Café, the Women's Institute and the Photography Group. There were also 3 further weddings booked for the coming year. Shelagh concluded by advising that feedback received from the Hall users was extremely positive.

Dot Sharpe gave a brief overview of the finances for the Hall. A summary of the Hall's annual accounts had been made available to residents at the meeting. The curtains and oven had been cleaned, the lighting outside of the Hall had been upgraded and £11k was being held in the account for ongoing maintenance. The hall hire fees would be remaining as current for the coming year with no increases to be made. Dot concluded by passing on her thanks to Brian Wildblood for his continuous support with auditing the accounts, especially at the year end.

The Chairman then offered his thanks to Robert and the rest of the Hall Management Committee for their hard work and to everyone who had supported the Hall.

13. AUDITED ANNUAL RETURN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2014, WITH UNAUDITED RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2015

Residents were supplied with copies of the Audited Annual Return for the year to 31st March 2014 and a draft statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March 2015. These were both accepted by the meeting.

14. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOCIETIES IN FREELAND

Reports from the Christian Fellowship, Gardening Club, Freeland Pre-School, Freeland Football Club, Scouts, Beavers and Cubs, Guides, St Marys Church and the Baby and Toddler Group were all displayed for residents' information.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their time, interest and input and the meeting closed at 10.40pm.