

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT: Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council held remotely at 7pm on Monday 8 June 2020

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Jean Hawker (Vice Chairman), Annabel Batchelor-Wylam, Julian Carpenter, Jonelle Daniels, Tom Maddicott, Nick Stevens, Martin Walker

Apologies: Jacob Heatley-Adams

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk), Cllr Neil Butters (from 8.20pm)

Members of the Public: One

21. **Declarations of Interests and Requests for Dispensations**

None.

22. **Minutes of Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2020 were approved as a true record.

23. **Review of Actions**

The following actions arising from previous meetings were noted:

- The Libra Travel bus service would continue to run beyond June. The delay to the introduction of the Clean Air Zone in Bath had also delayed the tendering process. Cllr Carpenter would liaise with BANES over the inclusion of a Saturday bus service as part of this tender. Cllr Carpenter
- Cllr Walker would arrange a meeting with Tim Jarrett from Curo regarding the cemetery as soon as possible in the current circumstances. Cllr Walker
- Cllr Daniels had contacted Curo regarding maintenance of land they own between the cemetery and the Glebe and was awaiting a response.
- Cllr Daniels had agreed with Claire Ford from Freshford Primary School that they would discuss parking at the School once the School were less busy with implementing Coronavirus guidelines.
- Cllr Walker had asked the resident interested in funding a new commemorative bench to bring forward proposals.
- Cllr Walker had asked the resident interested in restoring the old animal pound to bring forward proposals.

The Chair reported on the Local Plan partial update (see minute 33 below).

24. **Open Forum**

No items were raised in the open forum.

25. **Planning Applications**

20/01574/FUL Freshford Mill, Rosemary Lane, BA2 7PL: Erection on a ground mounted array of 6No. solar panels.

Councillors agreed to support this application as a positive step towards improving sustainability in reducing carbon emissions of housing. This is in line with the declaration of a Climate Emergency by both FPC and BANES.

20/01627/FUL and 20/01628/LBA Peipards Farm, Access Road From Warminster Road To Peipards Farm, BA2 7UN: Internal and external alterations for the conversion & refurbishment works to an existing barn, to create a farm office, farm shop and education centre.

Councillors agreed to support this application which satisfies Policy RTE3 – Farm Diversification. It also meets the criteria defined in the Neighbourhood Plan Villages Design Statement: “The historic fabric of buildings should be preserved and repaired wherever possible.”

There is a question over whether the number of parking places is adequate, and what the arrangement may be for parking overflow facilities.

Councillors also requested the consideration of the provision of one or two Owl boxes to be installed on the land in appropriate locations to mitigate this loss of this potential habitat.

20/01629/FUL Unregistered Pipehouse Barn, Pipehouse, Freshford: Conversion of the Pipehouse Barn at Peipards Farm into a three bedroom holiday let.

As this application had been received recently the Planning Working Group had not had time to fully consider the proposal. It was reported that this appeared to be a sympathetic and sensible restoration of a derelict barn. Any potential issues with access or the height of the proposed development would be considered. Councillors agreed that the Planning Working Group would consider the application further and that the Clerk would circulate a proposed response via email to all councillors for agreement.

Planning
Working
Group /
Clerk

26. **Tree Applications**

20/01699/TCA Fairlawn, High Street, Freshford, BA2 7WF: Prunus – fell.

Councillors agreed to support the felling of the tree on the condition that it was replaced by a new tree.

27. **Decision Notifications**

20/01154/FUL Hillbreeze, Sharpstone Lane, BA2 7UA: Alterations to fire damage property to include erection of an extension with bathroom and kitchen and installation of new roof. Erection of a storage building – Refused.

19/10471/FUL 3A Church Lane, Limpley Stoke, Wiltshire, BA2 7GH: Erection of 2No. dwellings and associated landscaping and access works (amended design).

It was reported that this application would be considered by Wiltshire Planning Committee on 17 June 2020.

28. **Chairman’s Report**

The following points were noted:

- The Chairman provided a verbal update on a remote BANES Community Meeting he’d attended earlier in the day in his role as Chair of the Cam Valley Forum.
- BANES Community Hub had provided invaluable support, including food parcels, to people across BANES. The need for such support from the Hub had been less in villages where support had been provided by local initiatives, such as LiFERAFT. The role of local groups and organisations in supporting local communities would be considered.
- The work of LiFERAFT was continuing as Coronavirus restrictions and risks continued to impact residents.

The Chairman reported on a revamp of the Freshford Village website (see minute 34 below).

29. **Correspondence Received**

A resident had alerted FPC to work that they were undertaking to a ‘ruin’ in their garden which was at risk of collapse. Whilst the notification was appreciated, should there be any planning issues these would need to be considered by BANES as the planning authority.

A resident had highlighted the amount of valuable archive information held on the Freshford Village website, requesting that such information should not be lost in the revamp of the website.

The Chairman had responded to the FoIA request received from a resident in May. Having considered the request and sought advice from the Information Commissioner's Office it had been concluded that the information requested could not be provided as it involved the personal data of a third party and was therefore protected under the GDPR.

30. **Finance and Personnel**

a) The following payments were approved:

- £300 James Lock for grass cutting (part of The Tynning and cemetery)
- £296.04 Selina Jobson for administration

b) It was noted that the following payments had been authorised by Cllrs Adler and Hawker since the last meeting:

- £300 Alan Duck for November grass cutting
- £107.14 Avon Local County Association for renewal of membership
- £240.92 SSE for street lighting maintenance (Jan-March 2020)

c) The bank reconciliation for May was approved and the following payment was noted:

- £300 Ian Croker for street cleaning (SO)

d) The Clerk reported that the insurance had been renewed on a 3 year long-term agreement at a cost of £786.99 and not £825.78 as reported at the May meeting.

e) Councillors agreed to renew authorisation of the following payments by Standing Order or Direct Debit:

- Ian Croker for street cleaning – Standing Order
- Water2Business for water supply – Direct Debit
- Public Works Loan for Tynning Loan repayment – Direct Debit

It was agreed that authorisation would be renewed on annually in November.

The Clerk would seek advice from ALCA on whether regular payments made to a contractor could be construed as paying an employee.

Clerk

31. **PC Assets**

Street Lighting Maintenance Contract: Councillors noted that a 3-year contract drawn up by SSE to maintain the street lights in Freshford would cost approximately 40% more than the previous contract with them and would reduce the frequency of regular maintenance from annually to once every three years.

The Clerk reported that other local parishes were looking to negotiate a new contract with Volker Highways, the contractor for BANES. Negotiations had been delayed by the Coronavirus situation, but a contract should be drafted shortly.

Councillors agreed that, given the significant increase in costs of the SSE contract, the Council would wait until the July Parish Council meeting to decide on a street lighting maintenance contract to enable comparison of a maintenance contract with Volker Highways.

Street Lighting Supply: The Clerk reported that a bill from SSE for electricity supply to the street lights from 09/03/19 to 31/12/19 was higher than expected because FPC had been moved to a Variable Business Rate, although no prior notification of this increase could be found. SSE had been asked to review this and to consider applying a contract rate retrospectively, in light of the lack of notification of this change.

New contracts for supply were being pursued, although it was proving difficult to obtain quotes for unmetered business supply due to the impact of the Coronavirus situation. SSE had provided a quote. A quote from EDF had been received although costs were very high and it was not clear how these had been calculated. In light of FPC's declaration of a

Climate Emergency, green energy quotes would be pursued. A not-for-profit energy consultant had been approached to look into obtaining quotes on a 'no obligation' basis. Councillors agreed that a decision on a contract for the electricity supply for the street lights would be considered at the July meeting when more quotes should be available.

Use of The Tynning by pupils to access Freshford Primary School: The School had liaised with FPC over use of The Tynning to assist them in operating in line with current Coronavirus guidelines. Information had been emailed to residents and councillors reported community support for this.

32. **Highways and Transport**

A36 Severance Study: In 2018 Highways England, with input from the Valley Parishes Alliance (VPA), produced an A36 Severance Study looking at 17 possible projects to reduce the 'severance' impact of the A36 on communities spanning either side of this road. In February 2019 the VPA was asked to recommend two of these projects to Highways England, which it did based on the largest number of residents impacted. The projects put forward were crossing points by Midford Lane/Church Lane and at Pipehouse Lane.

At a remote meeting on 3 June 2020, representatives from BANES and local parish councils and two Bathavon Ward Councillors considered all the schemes again, using the same criteria, and agreed that the two projects to be proposed to Highways England would be Midford Lane/Church Lane and one of two locations in Bathampton. The Pipehouse Lane scheme was seen to be of less benefit than the Bathampton scheme on the criteria agreed. The Ward Councillors and members of the VPA attending this remote meeting agreed with the amended priority locations. Freshford Parish Councillors were now asked to support this amendment.

The Midford Lane/Church Lane scheme was likely to involve the installation of a central pedestrian refuge. It was proposed that in addition to a refuge, Highways England should be asked for extra road markings, warnings signs and, if budget permits, traffic lights, although it was noted that installing traffic lights would be considerably more expensive.

In discussion it was noted that:

- Councillors considered that both Midford Lane/Church Lane and Pipehouse Lane schemes had merit because of their potential impact on reducing 'severance' of communities and road safety benefits. Councillors felt that they could not support the amended priority locations without further liaison with other parishes and the VPA;
- Concerns were raised about how safe people would feel using a central refuge at Midford Lane/Church Lane, given its location close to a bend and the speed of traffic at this point, if no other measures were put in place;
- Extending the 40mph speed limit from just by the Midford Lane/Church Lane junction to further along the A36 was seen as a way of improving road safety. This would reduce the 'severance' impact at relatively little cost. Reducing the speed limit along this stretch of road was also viewed as a way of making it easier for pedestrians to cross the road at Pipehouse Lane;
- Highways England had not provided an indicative budget for these schemes and with 2020/21 funding already allocated money would not be available until 2021/22 at the earliest;
- It was unclear as to why only two schemes could be proposed and it was suggested that more schemes should be proposed for further investigation by Highways England;
- The need to work collectively with the VPA and other local parishes in putting forward proposals was recognised;
- Cllr Butters would be attending a Highways England meeting on 2 July 2020;
- The next VPA meeting would take place on 22 July 2020.

It was agreed that:

- 1) Highways England would be asked to provide approximate estimates for four schemes (the two schemes in Freshford and two in Bathampton) to enable benefit analysis for future design and implementation.
- 2) The VPA would be asked to ensure a coordinated response to Highways England's request for agreed proposals. This is because Highways England acts through all the valley parishes via the VPA and not through individual parish councils.

Cllr
Carpenter

Cllr
Carpenter

33. **Local Plan Partial Update**

The Chairman reported that in response to BANES request for identification of possible sites for renewable energy as part of the Local Plan Update, land at Piepards Farm might be an appropriate location for solar panels and that the potential of the local mine shafts for providing ground or air source heating could be investigated. These ideas would be submitted to BANES for consideration.

Cllr Adler

34. **Communications**

Website Redevelopment: Investigations had begun into companies that could redesign the Freshford Village website. Web Accessibility Regulations, coming into force from 23 September 2020, meant that all public sector websites would have to be compliant, or working towards compliancy, by this date. A budget of £2500 had been agreed previously. Advice from people with a background in web design could be useful, although it was noted that FPC were looking to use a web design company to undertake the work. Cllrs Batchelor-Wylam and Daniels offered to provide details of some contacts they had.

It was agreed that three options should be brought to the July meeting for consideration.

Cllr Adler

35. **Built Environment**

Councillors supported an offer from a resident to fund a wrought iron bench around the Boer War oak on the Tynning. The Clerk would liaise with the resident to ask them to bring forward a detailed proposal. Complementary

Clerk

A bench on The Tynning was reported to be in a poor state of repair and Cllr Walker offered to dismantle and remove the bench, preserving the bench's plaque.

Cllr
Walker

36. **Upcoming External Meetings**

A remote meeting of the Cam Valley Forum would be held to review the ways in which Parish Councils and local organisations had supported communities during the Coronavirus situation.

37. **Exchange of Information**

There had been a recent influx of people swimming and socialising by the river in Freshford during Coronavirus lockdown measures. Some problems were reported including badly parked vehicles blocking roads and access, littering and a lack of social distancing. Concerns were raised that problems might continue over the summer. Ideas to reduce possible negative impacts of significant numbers of visitors were considered:

- Installing signs that highlighted the importance and dangers of local wildlife – examples used at Iford Manor were reported;
- Liaising with other local parishes about issues arising and possible responses;
- Speaking to the local Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator about a local policing response;
- Raising this as an agenda item for the next VPA meeting.

Cllr Daniels agreed to look into actions and Cllr Carpenter agreed to raise this as a VPA agenda item.

Cllrs
Daniels /
Carpenter

38. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 13 July 2020, 7.00pm

Meeting ended at 9.30pm.