

## FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

### **DRAFT: Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council held remotely at 7pm on Monday 12 October 2020**

---

**Parish Councillors Present:** John Adler (Chairman), Jean Hawker (Vice Chairman), Annabel Batchelor-Wylam, Julian Carpenter, Tania Pascoe, Nick Stevens, Martin Walker, Ben Walters

**Apologies:** Tom Maddicott

**In attendance:** Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk), Ward Cllr Neil Butters and Cllr Matt McCabe

**Members of the Public:** Nine

---

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

Cllrs Stevens and Walker declared that they were Trustees of Freshford Village Memorial Hall. Cllr Adler declared that he was a Covenant holder of the Tynning.

99. **Minutes of Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020 were signed as a true record.

100. **Review of Actions**

An update on actions arising from previous meetings were reviewed. It was noted that:

- BANES were responsible for a section of the footpath that started opposite The Galleries and would be contacted about concerns raised by a resident.
- Cllr Carpenter had spoken to a Limpley Stoke Parish Councillor about Limpley Stoke's proposals to Highways England to reduce the speed limit on a section of the A36.
- Cllr Walker was liaising with SSE about the type of lights in Freshford street lamps and possibilities for moving to LED bulbs. A meeting with SSE to review the lights in Freshford had been arranged.
- The reporting of 'near miss' accidents was still to be looked into.
- A meeting with BANES Highways about Dark Lane was still to be arranged.
- The location for two memorial trees was being clarified, and might require some cutting back of vegetation.

Cllr Walker

Cllr Car-  
penter

Cllr Stevens

Cllr Hawker

101. **Open Forum**

A resident spoke to outline proposals from the Friends of Freshford to enhance plant and wildlife to improve biodiversity on the Tynning. She reported that:

- The proposals were intended to enhance wildflowers, trees and habitats;
- Friends of Freshford were keen to start with some elements of the proposals now, particularly the planting of wildflowers & native bulbs because of seasonal planting times;
- Friends of Freshford had taken advice from someone who had undertaken similar projects;
- Friends of Freshford had set aside an initial budget for the works and were prepared to fundraise for future costs if required.

A resident spoke to report concerns about the impact of horses being rode across the Tynning on the ground surface. Indentations from hooves in the ground were felt to be causing a trip hazard, with two such incidents already witnessed. It was suggested that this problem could get worse in winter when the ground was softer.

A resident spoke to raise a number matters:

That issues with traffic in Dark Lane had been raised in April 2019 and councillors were encouraged to address issues as quickly as possible. It was reported that a lorry had got stuck in the lane in the previous week and had brought down a branch.

That any matting installed on the Tynning to improve access to the school in light of social distancing measures must be temporary. A proposal to widen the pavement by the entrance currently being used should not interfere with the position of the post box.

That poor parking around the Tynning, attributed to parents taking their children to school, was reducing the visibility and narrowing the road, and it was reported that such parking had caused an obstruction resulting in a bus having to wait until a vehicle moved.

That in relation to the Freshford Mill planning application (20/02020/VAR) a response from BANES Highways had proposed that a condition of planning consent should be that the developer provides a financial contribution of £5,000 towards a traffic survey and formal consultation process.

102. **Natural Environment**

Councillors agreed to take this agenda item next.

Councillors had received a proposal from the Friends of Freshford outlining a number of projects that could be undertaken on and around the Tynning with the intention of enhancing wildlife habitat and supporting insects in the heart of the village. This was proposed as part of a wider response to the climate and ecological emergency. The proposal highlighted 10 possible projects across the area of the Tynning, including the planting of native bulbs & wildflowers; the planting of trees and hedgerows and the creation of a community orchard.

In discussion various views were expressed and points raised:

- That it was exciting to see proposals responding to the climate and ecological emergency being put forward by the community;
- That as the Parish Council had declared a Climate Emergency this proposal could be seen as an opportunity to take action in line with this declaration;
- There were a number of separate projects within the proposals, some of which would be quicker and easier to undertake than others;
- The Parish Council had purchased the Tynning for the village community and therefore it was important to consult the community on the proposals, including particular groups such as Freshford Primary School and the Royal British Legion;
- It was suggested that children should be involved in projects, given the importance of the environment and ecology to their future;
- Consideration would need to be given to the laws surrounding the use of the Tynning, the role of the Tynning as an open area enclosed by trees and hedges and stipulations set out in the Conservation Area;
- Although not specified in the proposal document, the Friends of Freshford confirmed that they had set aside funds for these proposals and would investigate other funding avenues if required; they were thanked for their generous offer;
- That, given the location of the Tynning in the centre of the village, undertaking such projects here would make a visible statement about the importance of ecological projects;
- Some councillors expressed concern with the planting of trees, particularly large trees, in the Tynning which it was suggested would change the nature of the space and disrupt the view across this village, although it was also suggested that there were a number of Ash trees currently on and around the Tynning and it was likely these would need replacing due to Ash die-back;
- It was suggested that planting wildflowers around the War Memorial might mean that at times this area would look untidy and it was questioned whether this was appropriate;
- That the outcomes of a survey about the Tynning, undertaken in 2014, could be taken into account when considering these proposals, although it was suggested that the response rate had been low and it was acknowledged that views may have changed since this survey was held, particularly in light of growing concern about climate and ecological emergencies;

- Cllr Adler had circulated the proposal to the Tynning covenant holders and had received a number of responses, including requests to maintain the open nature of the area and a suggestion that the stream that once ran along the bottom of the Tynning could be reinstated;
- The Clerk had contacted the local coordinator for the Royal British Legion who had expressed concerns with the proposal to create a wildflower area around the memorial, noting that the flowers would be past their best in November and preferring the area to be maintained in a tidy way;
- That the Parish Council had previously considered replacing bollards along the edge of the Tynning with trees and stone boulders to deter parking and this idea could be reconsidered;
- That the proposals provided a general level of information, but more details were required about the costs of implementation & maintenance, and what planting activities and maintenance activities would be required;
- That it might be useful to seek additional expert advice on the projects;
- That BANES had agreed to provide technical support for a remotely held consultation meeting with residents if that was felt desirable; it was also noted that the Parish Council had in place systems for distributing hard copy information to all residents, as it had done previously with the Bulletin;
- It was suggested that Beeswax, a company owning a significant amount of land in Freshford, could be approached about working together on projects such as tree planting, where it might be possible to undertake planting activity on a larger scale.

In conclusion councillors noted:

- There was broad agreement in the principle of undertaking projects in the village to enhance wildlife and support insects, in line with the Parish Council's Climate Emergency declaration.
- There was a need for consultation with the community of some of the more significant projects within the proposals and ways of undertaking this consultation, in light of current Covid-19 restrictions, would be looked into.
- There was a need for more detail about the proposals, including the costs, planting activities and maintenance activities, and the creation of a longer term plan for the Tynning.
- There were concerns about the planting of large trees that might impact the nature of the open space and the views across the Tynning, and any potential legal constraints would need to be looked into.
- There were concerns about the planting of wildflowers around the War Memorial, given the special significance of this area.
- A meeting of some councillors at the Tynning to review the proposals and to gain further understanding of the details of the proposals would be held in the next few days.
- Councillors agreed to the planting of native bulbs on parts of the Tynning, with details to be confirmed with councillors.

### 103. **Planning Applications**

20/03390/FUL Under Galleries, Freshford Lane, BA2 7TY: Erection of a two storey extension and car port to follow demolition of existing garage, store and conservatory.

It was noted that the property was inside Green Belt and an AONB and on the boundary of the Conservation Area. It was felt to have a prominent position when viewed from the Tynning. The Planning Working Group suggested that, considering the designs submitted, the proposals appeared to lack architectural merit. The provision of more detailed plans would be helpful. It was felt that the application did not demonstrate how the plans conformed to the Villages Design Statement, which sought to apply a consistent approach throughout the Neighbourhood Plan Area to preserve and/or improve the physical qualities of the built environment by promoting sustainability, good quality architectural and landscape design.

A concern was raised about the inclusion of a significant amount of glass in the extension and its impact on light pollution, which impacts local ecology such as bats.

It was suggested that the size of the extension was disproportionate to the property as it appeared to be significantly larger than the BANES Supplementary Planning Document on Green Belt guidance of around one third additional volume being more likely to be acceptable. Although in the Design and Access Statement the additional volume was calculated as 36%, the accuracy of this calculation was questioned and it was suggested it was higher. Councillors felt that it was not clear how this figure had been calculated and whether it took previous extensions to the property into account.

Councillors considered whether the Parish Council should object to this planning application or submit a commentary in response to the application.

Councillors agreed by majority vote to object to the planning application for the reasons outlined above.

104. **Tree Applications**

20/03270/TCA Temple Court, The Hill, BA2 7WG: Poplar – reduce to ground level; Bay – 2m reduction on height, 1m on sides.

Councillors supported this application, on the condition that if the Poplar was being cut to ground level to prevent its regrowth, a new tree should be planted as a replacement.

105. **Decision Notifications**

Councillors noted the following planning decisions:

20/01629/FUL Unregistered Pipehouse Barn, Pipehouse, Freshford: Conversion of barn into a three bedroom holiday let. Application Permitted.

20/02469/LBA & 20/02468/FUL 1 The Old House, The Hill, BA2 7WG: Repairs to a section of Grade 2 listed stone boundary wall. Remove & replant hedgerow. Consent & Application Permitted.

106. **Planning Consultations**

Councillors considered responding to the Government's White Paper 'Planning for the Future', noting that the consultation ended on 29 October 2020. The National Association for Local Councils (NALC) had asked for local councils to submit responses to them by 15 October 2020.

Cllrs Adler and Walters had begun drafting a response to the consultation, which had been circulated to councillors. Whilst the Paper included statements about the involvement of local communities in planning systems and the position of Neighbourhood Plans, it was suggested that it was difficult to see how these ideas were supported in the proposed processes outlined. There was concern that the proposed changes to the planning system could strengthen the influence of developers and might weaken the position of local communities and undermine the intentions set out in Neighbourhood Plans.

Whilst the comments of Freshford Parish Council would be one of many responses to the consultation, it was felt that plans in the White Paper could potentially impact Freshford and therefore it was important to submit a response.

It was agreed that Cllrs Adler and Walters would prepare a draft response for submission to NALC and circulation to councillors, and would then submit a final response to the Government's consultation.

Cllrs Adler  
& Walters

107. **Chairman's Report**

The Chair reported that:

- NALC had confirmed an increase in the pay scales for clerks from 1 April 2020 and that, in line with the Clerk's contract, this increase would be applied, backdated to 1 April.
- The phone box near St. Peter's Church was no longer in use and BT had disconnected the phone some time ago. The empty phone box, which was not a traditional red phone box, was not seen as having aesthetic value or being of potential use. It was agreed that the PC should propose that BT remove the phone box.

- The Planning Work Group was looking for another member of the local community to make up the required numbers. The Terms of Reference for the Planning Working Group stated that it should be reviewed annually and comments from councillors on its operations were requested ahead of a review at the next meeting. The process for this review was questioned and the Chair confirmed that councillors who felt there were shortfalls with the Planning Working Group should submit written comments to the Clerk which would be looked into.

108. **Correspondence Received**

A resident had suggested installing two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in the village and Cllr Pascoe was liaising with the resident about this idea. Bath and West Community Energy, a not-for-profit company, were looking at possibilities for installing EV charging points locally and were being contacted. It was reported that Freshford Primary School had considered installing an EV point in their car park and it might be useful to contact them about this.

Cllr  
Pascoe

109. **Finance and Personnel**

89.1 The following payments were approved:

- £300 James Lock for grass cutting (part of The Tynning and cemetery)
- £406.24 Selina Jobson for administration
- £700 Freshford Village Memorial Hall donation
- £33.40 HMRC tax contribution

89.2 The bank reconciliation was approved & the following payments and receipt were noted:

- £300 Ian Croker for street cleaning (SO)
- £37.93 Water2Business for water to the cemetery (DD)
- £15,873 BANES precept payment (receipt)

110. **Access to Freshford Church School**

Freshford Church School was currently using the Tynning as an additional access route to enable social distancing when children were arriving or leaving the School. Councillors considered proposals aimed at ensuring that these arrangements were appropriate in terms of road safety and accessibility in winter weather. The increased usage of this part of the Tynning was likely to cause the paths to become muddy in winter.

Laying temporary matting along the most walked paths was proposed to ensure paths remained accessible in winter. To improve road safety it was proposed that the a small section of pavement by the current Tynning entrance should be extended, a few feet of hedgerow removed and a small rail installed to prevent children from running into the road. A slight widening of the existing entrance was proposed to make the entrance more accessible and to improve visibility. Two companies had been approached to provide suggestions and quotes for matting along the paths. One company had given an initial estimate of works of around £2000.

In discussion the following points were noted:

- Any matting would be temporary and would be removed when no longer required;
- Professional companies were being contacted to ensure that appropriate matting was used, e.g. the matting itself did not become slippery in wet weather;
- Matting was proposed to cover two paths and whether all of this matting was necessary was queried;
- If it was not possible to lay matting on some of the steeper slopes an alternative solution, such as temporary steps, might be required;
- If the steeper slopes became unusable in wet weather then children and parents might have to walk the longer way round to access the paths;
- It was reported that the hedgerow around the Tynning was protected by regulations and that planning permission would be required to remove any of the hedgerow;
- The School expected to contribute to some of the costs but would need to get agreement from the Multi Academy Trust;

- BANES had been contacted about the possibility of funding some costs, but as BANES were dealing with many Covid-19 related funding requests it was not clear that they would be able to contribute to costs.

It was suggested that the School should consider alternatives to the current queueing system on the Tynning during the winter months. Opening up the old School gate entrance was proposed as a way of creating two entrances. It was reported that the Headteacher did not support this idea, due to the potential dangers of children crossing the road here. Queueing was also considered problematic at this point on a narrow pavement alongside a road that was likely to be busy at queueing times. It was suggested there were flashing school warning lights near to this gate but it was clarified that these were set further from the gate and therefore were not likely to impact on the safety of this proposal. It was suggested that a formal crossing point or a lollipop person would be required to make this proposal safe.

It was noted that any works would ideally be undertaken as soon as possible before the condition of the grass paths got worse. Councillors were asked if they would consider giving 'in principle' agreement to these proposals so that they could be progressed ahead of the next Parish Council meeting if possible. An alternative would be to hold an additional Parish Council meeting to consider detailed proposals and costings before the next scheduled meeting in November.

Councils agreed by majority vote to hold an additional meeting, if required, to enable consideration of detailed costs and plans for proposals to assist the School in ensuring that social distancing systems could operate safely.

111. **Deferral of Items**

The Chair concluded the meeting, with the following items deferred to a future meeting where necessary:

- Freshford Village Memorial Hall Update
- Investigations into installing more LED lights in street lamps
- Update on progress with establishing a new contract for maintenance of street lights
- Update on progress with redevelopment of the website
- Notification of a successful funding request from the Wards Councillors Empowerment Fund towards a traffic count in Rosemary Lane.

112. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 9 November 2020, 7.00pm.

Meeting ended 9.30pm.