

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 13th September 2021 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Julian Carpenter, Annabel Batchelor-Wylam, Elli Bates, Jean Hawker, Tom Maddicott, Tania Pascoe, Ben Walters

Apologies: Nick Stevens

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: Seven

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

Cllr Adler declared an interest in Planning Application 21/03824/FUL Building to the North of Laughing Snakes, Midford Lane.

54. **Co-option of Councillor**

Two applications had been received for the parish councillor vacancy. Applicants were given the opportunity to introduce themselves. Councillors undertook a vote by show of hands.

Resolved: to co-opt Elli Bate as a parish councillor.

Elli Bate signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the meeting as a councillor.

55. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 as a true record.

56. **Review of Actions**

The Clerk reported on actions arising from previous meetings and it was noted that:

- B&NES had been contacted about the possible replacement and relocation of the bin outside the front of the Galleries. B&NES would look into any request if further details were provided.
- Cllr Walters had been in contact with the local football club about the possibility of using the club's location as a central delivery hub point for the village. Cllr Pascoe had looked into other examples of central delivery hubs, although no schemes in villages had yet been identified.

57. **Open Forum**

A resident raised concerns about the proposed relocation and works to create a bus stop outside the Galleries. The quote for the works stated that the area of hardstanding would be 3.8m x 4m; this was felt to be unnecessarily large and would reduce the wild flower area. Further concerns were raised about the proposed kerb stones. The need for disabled access was questioned as it was reported that the bus could not accommodate disabled access. The resident questioned whether the bus stop needed to be relocated, given the small number of people using the bus and that the bus picked up people at any point along the route, in addition to specified stops.

A letter was read out from a resident raising concerns about the potential impact of the proposed new bus stop on the wild flower area outside the Galleries, suggesting that a minor alteration to the kerb would be sufficient.

A third resident spoke to question the need for the proposed new bus stop, noting the length of time the project had taken to be progressed and asking what support

the Parish Council had from residents for the project. He questioned the time and money that was being spent on this project.

58. **Highways and Transport - Village Hub Bus Stop Update**

It was agreed to take this agenda item at this point in the meeting, given the interest from members of the public in this matter.

Cllr Carpenter reported that he was meeting officers from B&NES on 17 September to discuss the proposed relocation of the bus stop. Contractors had proposed a date for the works but this had been deferred until all matters had been clarified and resolved.

Councillors fully supported maintaining a wildflower area next to the proposed bus stop. Councillors had identified the mismatch between the quote for works and the actual grass area. The area of hardstanding would be kept to a minimum and the area would be clarified with the contractors. Parish Councillors had challenged B&NES over their preferred use of tarmac surfacing and it had been agreed that hoggin would be used. It was felt that hardstanding was required to prevent the area becoming slippery and possibly muddy in the winter. Noting that the current bench was situated on a base of paving stones, consideration would be given as to whether the new bench needed to be on a base and what type of base material would be required if so. The bin would be relocated and a dropped kerb was included to improve access for all.

A decision was being made as to whether to install wooden bollards in the wildflower area to protect the area from vehicles mounting the kerb. The B&NES Highways Officer had recommended the inclusion of bollards with reflectors for road safety reasons; noting that this land was owned by B&NES it was felt that their recommendations should be followed. A resident suggested that this matter could be resolved if the PC took on the ownership of the land from B&NES.

Resolved: to undertake the following actions:

- To clarify the exact size of the hoggin area with the contractors, keeping any disturbance of the wildflower area to a minimum.
- To discuss the details of relocating the bus stop with B&NES.
- To review whether to use bollards or stones in the wildflower area to prevent vehicles from driving over this land.
- To ask B&NES whether the Parish Council can take on ownership of this land.
- To relocate the bin slightly further away from the bus stop area.
- To communicate the current situation with the proposed bus stop and wildflower area with residents of Freshford.

Cllr
Carpenter

59. **Planning Applications**

- 21/03824/FUL Building to North of Laughing Snakes, Midford, Freshford.
Cllr Adler left the room and Cllr Carpenter took over the Chairing of the meeting.
The property proposed for redevelopment was a derelict brick building located outside the northern settlement boundary. If permitted, it was suggested that the building might lead to pressure for further infill building. Questions were raised about the calculation of additional volume and the large size of the proposed parking area. It was thought that potential light pollution from the property would have a detrimental impact on a nearby major bat roost; the roost had not been identified in the planning application. The proposed building was small and not large enough to be a dwelling, but it was noted that there could be future applications to extend the property.

Resolved: To object on the grounds of adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt and on the potential impact on a nearby major bat roost. If the proposal was approved then it was requested that a condition be included to ensure the property could only ever be used as holiday let.

Cllr Adler returned to the room and resumed the Chairing of the meeting.

- 21/04021/FUL & 21/04022/LBA Sharpstone Cottage, Sharpstone Lane, BA2 7UA:

Item deferred to the next meeting to allow time for consideration.

- 21/03752/FUL The Willows, Pipehouse, Freshford, BA2 7UJ:

Resolved: Not to comment as this application was in Hinton Charterhouse.

- 21/02824/AR Homewood Park Hotel, Homewood, Hinton Charterhouse, BA2 7TB:

Display of 4 no. post-mounted non-illuminated direction signs, 2 no. post mounted non-illuminated entrance signs, 2 no. wall-mounted non-illuminated direction signs.

Resolved: Not to submit any comments on the revisions, in light of comments previously submitted on the original planning application.

60. **Tree Applications**

None.

61. **Decision Notifications**

21/02750/FUL The Cottage, Pipehouse Lane: Additional car parking space & waste bin storage area including moving steps. **Permit.**

21/03082/TCA The Hermitage, Sharpstone Lane: Ash tree – fell. **No objection.**

21/01404/FUL 11 Upper Mount Pleasant, BA2 7UG: First floor extension. **Permit.**

62. **Chairman's Report**

Councillors received the Chairman's report, noting that:

- At the virtual Annual Parish Meeting in April it had been proposed that a physical Parish Meeting would be held when allowed. Following discussion it was suggested that this should be held as an open forum. Timing of the meeting is dependant on the availability of the Memorial Hall
- Some residents had reported problems over the summer with public bins becoming full and overflowing. B&NES stated that some problems were caused by staff having to isolate and that the situation would be monitored. A request for an additional dog waste bin was proposed. The bin from outside the surgery had been missing for some time and had not been replaced.

63. **Finance**

Payments and Bank Reconciliation

63.1 **Resolved:** to approve the following payments -

- £424.53 Selina Jobson for administration
- £300 James Lock for grass cutting
- £157.10 SSE repair to light fitting 21
- £164.74 SSE fitting of shield to light 4
- £600 Melanie Everard for station gardening (June – August)
- £1745 Alan Duck for grass cutting, hedge cutting, grave clearance (Mar – July)
- £60 Diane Malley for payroll
- £360 PKF Littlejohn for external audit
- £700 Freshford Village Memorial Hall for bookings and donation

63.2 **Resolved:** to approve the bank reconciliation, noting the following payments and receipt -

- £300 Ian Croker for street cleaning – July (SO)
- £121.27 SSE for electricity supply – July (DD)
- £400 from a resident for Exclusive Rights to Burial (receipt)

63.3 Noted the outcome of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

64. **Highways and Transport**

64.1 Proposed consultation on traffic interventions on Dark Lane / Church Hill

Councillors considered a proposal that a consultation be undertaken on possible traffic measures to address issues with vehicles using Dark Lane and Church Hill as a through road. It was noted that:

- Cllr Carpenter has identified several possible traffic interventions that could be undertaken following meetings with B&NES Highways Engineer and Ward Cllr Butters.
- Information had been provided on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, one potential way of addressing the issues;
- There were other areas in Freshford with traffic related issues aside from Dark Lane/Church Hill, such as Tynning Lane & Rosemary Lane. Consideration should be given to the extent to which other areas should be included in the consultation;
- It might be useful to look at traffic issues across Freshford as a whole, potentially using an external company to consider solutions.
- That it was difficult to solve traffic issues in villages given the current reliance on cars and home deliveries and that messages to residents about what was possible would need to be clear.

Resolved: to hold a public meeting about possible traffic interventions on Dark Lane / Church Hill and to follow this with a questionnaire to all residents.

64.2 Updated Summary of Traffic Monitoring on Rosemary Lane

Councillors received an updated summary of traffic monitoring on Rosemary Lane. This included revised data from monitoring site 4, Dunkirk Mill, as it appeared that monitors had not worked properly at this site during the original monitoring.

Traffic volumes at Dunkirk Mill were significantly higher than the first results and higher than expected. It was reported that nearly all Phase 1 buildings in Freshford Mill were now occupied and this might have led to an increase in traffic. It was noted that given the narrowness of the road, even a small increase in the number of vehicles using the Lane could cause a significant problem.

65. **Parish Council Assets - Replacement of Freshford Station Sign**

The condition of the previously restored, 'Freshford' station sign on the far platform had deteriorated due to exposure and possible vandalism. Expert advice suggested that restoring the sign again would be difficult and its exposed position would make regular, costly restoration a necessity. The possibility of installing a replica sign had been looked into and a company had been identified who could undertake this. A quote of approximately £1600 had been received. GWR had agreed to fund a replacement sign.

Whilst the Parish Council had previously resolved to maintain the Freshford station sign it was proposed that in light of the rapid deterioration of the sign because of its exposed position that a replica sign was installed. A suitable, indoor location would be identified for the old Freshford station sign.

Resolved: to replace the 'Freshford' sign on the far platform with a replica sign, with all costs being funded by GWR.

66. **Communications Strategy**

Work on a Parish Council communications strategy was underway and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

67. **Natural Environment**

67.1 Friends of Freshford Tynning Update Report

Councillors noted an update report from the Friends of Freshford on The Tynning projects.

67.2 Tree and Hedge Planting on the Tynning

Councillors received an updated tree and hedge planting plan for The Tynning. The distance of the new hedge from the wall would be checked with the Parish Council's contractor to ensure accessibility for cutting. Plans for the orchard trees would be checked to ensure there was sufficient room to mow round them. Friends of Freshford had volunteered to undertake maintenance of the orchard for the first two years. Plans for tree planting in the north west copse were noted. A single oak tree would be planted in the centre of the Tynning.

67.3 Tree planting plan for the bollard trees along The Tynning

Councillors received a tree planting plan for the bollard trees along the Tynning, noting that the trees, chosen for their suitability for the site, had been ordered for autumn planting. Trees would be planted in a more staggered way and in less of a line than originally proposed, in response to concerns that a single row of trees would look too uniform. Trees would be planted within 25-40cm of the road to act as bollards, and to avoid the electricity cable. It was noted that the B&NES Highways Engineer had stated that the logs, already installed along the lane on The Tynning should be a metre back from the road.

The intention was for the hump created by the logs and for the trees to replace the bollards in the longer term.

Resolved: to approve the planting of the trees as per the received plan.

The details would be communicated to residents, including the fact that the bollards would be removed once the trees and 'hump' were established.

Once the trees had been planted the area would be looked at to see if any further changes were necessary.

67.4 Professional survey of trees on Parish Council owned land.

Councillors noted plans for undertaking a professional survey of the state of the trees on Parish Council owned land, noting that an update and quotes would be brought to a future meeting.

67.5 Action on low hanging branch

Following advice from the Parish Council's insurers, the Parish Council would seek professional advice on a low hanging branch that crossed a path.

68. **The Cemetery**

Several residents had raised concerns about the current state of the cemetery, where grass had been left to grow long. The last of the long grass was being cut and cleared, and it was acknowledged that until all the long grass had been cleared parts of the cemetery looked untidy. For various reasons, not all aspects of this year's grass cutting regime had been followed. Issues that had arisen this year would be looked at and addressed for next year. The Parish Council's intention was to increase the ecological

diversity of the cemetery whilst ensuring it was maintained in a way that was appropriate to the sensitive nature of the site.

It was agreed that there needed to be additional work to remove saplings, brambles etc. and that contractors involved in the cemetery maintenance would be contacted for advice on what was required.

Cllr Pascoe reported that Friends of Freshford proposed planting spring bulbs and wild flowers in the cemetery, mainly in the top 'triangle' of land. It was agreed that a planting plan should be produced for consideration by councillors.

69. **Upcoming External Meetings**

B&NES Climate and Biodiversity Festival, various events: 13 – 26 September.

Bathavon Forum Meeting: 22 September, 6pm.

ALCA AGM: 9 October, 10.30am.

70. **Correspondence**

The Clerk reported that two residents had raised concerns with stones placed on the public highway that prevented parking. It was suggested that this was a Highways matter that should be reported to B&NES.

Correspondence had also been received about the grass cutting regime in the cemetery and the proposed new bus stop & wildflower area outside the Galleries.

71. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 11 October, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Meeting ended 9.25pm