

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Elli Bate, Julian Carpenter, Jean Hawker, Tom Maddicott, Tania Pascoe, Ben Walters

Apologies: Nick Stevens, Annabel Batchelor-Wylam

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk), Ward Cllr Neil Butters

Members of the Public: Six

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

None.

106. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2021 as a true record.

107. **Review of Actions**

It was reported that:

- The Freshford Village Memorial Hall Committee were looking for a suitable location for the Freshford station sign within the Hall. Cllr Butters reported on investigations into the colour of the new replacement sign.
- A meeting on the feasibility on EV charging points in the village would be looked into in the New Year.

108. **Open Forum**

A resident spoke about planning application 21/04590/FUL Homewood Park Hotel. He considered the application to be potentially harmful to the Green Belt and the AONB and highlighted issues with noise and light pollution and additional traffic. He felt the proposals were contrary to activities to reduce climate change. The resident had questioned the Planning Office about some of the pre-application advice the Hotel received, including the way in which the size of the extensions had been calculated. The proposed change of use of buildings that were previously store rooms and barns was also questioned. Possible planning breaches in relation to previous planning applications were noted. Whilst he had been advised that the application was being revised and that amended plans would be submitted, he felt it was vital that the Parish Council responded to the current planning application.

109. **Planning Applications**

- 21/04590/FUL Homewood Park Hotel, Homewood, Hinton Charterhouse, BA2 7TB: Erection of rear, side and front extension to existing spa, 6no new guest suites, new meeting / events space, admin office and ancillary accommodation following demolition of existing stables, garage and other outbuildings. Provision of additional on-site car parking, soft landscaping and associated external works, drainage and services provision.

It was noted that approximately 50 objections had been submitted in response to this application. Hinton Charterhouse Parish Council had objected to the application. Ward Councillors McCabe & Butters had called the application into committee, should the Planning Officer be minded to approve it.

A number of concerns were raised with the application, including:

- Volume – The proposed extensions would further extend the property beyond the one third of the ‘original’ volume guidance for what is more likely to be considered acceptable in the Green Belt. The extensions were therefore considered disproportionate and harmful to the Green Belt. The validity of the volume calculation was questioned, as it appeared to be calculated on the volume of the current buildings, rather than the original volume. The Planning Officer had indicated that they would look into this.
- Harm to the Green Belt – It was felt that the proposed changes would not maintain the openness of the Green Belt and were not in keeping with the existing building, especially given the prominent position of the Hotel within the valley. The proposals were felt to be potentially harmful to the AONB and local ecology due to inappropriate design, the high visibility from the surrounding area and light pollution.
- Loss of amenity to Freshford residents – In terms of visual impact, light pollution, noise and privacy. Given the position of the Hotel within the valley, light and noise pollution from the Hotel already impacted residents across Freshford and the wider area. It was felt that these proposals would significantly worsen these impacts.
- Highways safety – It was felt that the expansion of the Hotel would put added pressure on the A36 turning on to Abbey Lane, although the Highways Office had not raised any concerns.
- Climate and Ecological/Nature Emergencies – It was noted that Freshford Parish Council and B&NES had declared Climate and Ecological/Nature Emergencies and that the UK government was making commitments to protect the natural environment. There was no recognition within this application of the environmental impact of these proposals and there appeared to have been no consideration given to measures to reduce the impact on the local or wider environment with regard to achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

The architect had advised the Parish Council that they were aware of the concerns expressed by residents and they were exploring opportunities to address these. It was noted that the Parish Council could only consider formal submissions to B&NES.

Resolved: To Object to the planning application for the reasons outlined above.

- 21/04790/FUL Homewood Park Hotel, Homewood, Hinton Charterhouse, BA2 7TB: Erection of a kitchen extension, cold store, and new staff facilities.

It was felt that the proposals would not be visible from outside the grounds of the Hotel and would have minimal impact on nearby residents.

Councillors requested that the development and future use of the property should take account of achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

Resolved: To Comment only.

110. Tree Applications

- 21/05350/FUL Abbots Leigh Coach House, Rosemary Lane, Freshford, BA2 7UD: T1 Variegated maple - Crown thin by approx 40% to allow more light into garden; T2 Strawberry tree - Crown thin; T3 Whitebeam - crown reduction by 1m.

Resolved: Support

111. **Planning Decisions**

21/04021/FUL Sharpstone Cottage Sharpstone Lane, Freshford: Two storey extension to rear with glazed lean-to. Reinstatement of previously existing porch structure. Internal works to first floor layout. Alterations to existing garage facade. Refurbishment of existing windows. *Permitted.*

112. **Chairman's Report**

There were no updates to report.

113. **Finance - Payments and Bank Reconciliation**

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

- £424.73 Selina Jobson for administration
- £300 James Lock for grass cutting
- £15 John Adler for reimbursement of Remembrance Service wreath
- £700 Freshford Village Memorial Hall for hall hire and donation
- £15 Zonkey for domain name renewal
- £20 Candy Harrison for advertising boards
- £136.57 SSE Maintenance for repairs to light 37 on the Tynning
- £31.24 HMRC for tax

113.2 **Resolved:** to approve the bank reconciliation, noting the following payments -

- £300 Ian Croker for street cleaning (SO)
- £117.61 SSE for electricity supply (DD)
- £120 Melanie Everard for station gardening

113.3 **Resolved:** to approve a request from the Midsomer Norton & Radstock Dial-A-Ride service for a £30 donation for 2022/23, noting that the service should be publicised to Freshford residents.

114. **Budget 2022/23**

Councillors considered a draft budget for 2022/23. In discussion a number of points were raised, including:

- The outcome of the recently requested tree survey should provide some indicative costs for tree works over the next few years.
- That James Long Stonemasons had confirmed that a safety audit of headstones was not required for another 2-3 years;
- That funds should be allocated for general maintenance in the Cemetery;
- That additional funds should be allocated to support the development of a newsletter;
- That the annual subscriptions to external organisations should be reviewed at a future meeting.

Taking into account the points raised, a revised budget would be presented at the January 2022 Parish Council meeting and would be considered alongside the setting of the precept.

A quote for £400 for repairs to the fence in the Cemetery had just been received. It was agreed that the works were urgent because of the poor state of the fence.

Resolved: to approve the quote for £400 for fence repairs from Rupert Kirby.

115. **Highways & Transport**

Councillors considered proposals for community engagement and consultation on highways matters across the village. This would include holding a parish meeting specifically on transport issues in the village and the undertaking of a survey. It was

agreed that traffic and parking issues across the village should be considered, given that any changes in one part of the village were likely to have an impact elsewhere. Areas to be covered were likely to include:

- Through traffic using Church Hill / Dark Lane
- Traffic using Rosemary Lane
- Speed and safety issues on the road at the top of The Tynning
- Parking issues on the road by the Inn at Freshford
- 'School run' traffic
- The potential for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- The potential for a parcel delivery hub for the village

Resolved: to hold a Parish Meeting focussed on traffic matters across the village on Wednesday 16th March 2022. This date would be reviewed in light of the ongoing Covid-19 situation.

116. **The Cemetery**

116.1 Quote for the Creation of a Flower Meadow in the Top Triangle

Councillors considered a quote to create two swathes of wild flowers in the top triangle of the cemetery. As the quote was for more than £500 at least three quotes should be obtained in accordance with the Parish Council's Financial Standing Orders.

Resolved: to seek two more quotes for the creation of a flower meadow.

Cllr Bate

116.2 Quote for Revisions to Maintenance Contract in the Cemetery

A quote from the current contractor for revisions to the maintenance contract in the Cemetery was awaited and would be considered at the January meeting.

117. **Natural Environment**

Friends of Freshford Tynning Update Report

Councillors noted an update report from the Friends of Freshford on The Tynning projects, including the planting of trees along the Tynning Road. Most of the bollard trees had been planted but some planting had been delayed until the Spring because of problems with the supply of trees.

118. **Future of the Valley Parish Alliance (VPA)**

At the request of the VPA, councillors were asked for their views on the future of this organisation. The VPA was established 11 years ago as a cross-border alliance of parish councils to protect and promote all aspects of life in the communities in the Avon & Limpley Stoke valley. Much of the VPA's work had focused on opposing proposals to build an A36/A46 link road.

The Clerk reported comments from Cllr Stevens.

Cllr Carpenter, who represented the Parish Council on the VPA, reported on recent low attendance at VPA meetings and that the VPA were no longer directly consulted on traffic issues by National Highways.

It was suggested that the VPA remained a potentially useful organisation to consider projects with cross-parish impact. Whilst the Bathavon Forum also worked across parishes, the two organisations had different remits and the VPA included parishes in Wiltshire.

Resolved: To propose that the VPA continued to operate in accordance with its Constitution, holding a minimum of one formal meeting per year. The Highways Group should continue to exist. The VPA should carry out discrete and specific

projects where appropriate and possible. It was felt that no additional funding should be requested from member parish councils until needed.

119. **External Meetings**

Freshford Village Memorial Hall had met on 17 November 2021. The tendering process for Phase 1 (cladding, re-glazing, heating) of the Hall development was still underway. Once complete the Trustees would advise B&NES of the various planned development stages, the costings and the likely start date. The Phase 1 works should reduce the Hall's annual carbon emissions for heating by over 90%.

120. **Correspondence Received**

Nothing to note.

121. **Exchange of Information**

Cllr Pascoe was resigning from the parish council due to other commitments. Councillors thanked Cllr Pascoe for her hard work on the Parish Council, particularly her involvement with climate and nature emergency issues.

122. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 10 January, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Meeting ended 9.10pm