

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 09 May 2022, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Annabel Batchelor-Wylam, Elli Bate, Julian Carpenter, Jean Hawker, Tom Maddicott, John Putt, Richard Tibbles, Ben Walters

Apologies: None

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: Three

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

Cllr Hawker declared an interest in planning application 22/01530/FUL Stoke Hill Mine and would not vote on this item.

Cllr Adler declared an interest in planning application 22/01530/FUL Stoke Hill Mine and would leave the room for this item.

8. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 22 as a true record.

9. **Review of Actions**

Councillors noted an update on actions arising from the last meeting.

It was noted that hoggin for the relocated bus stop outside the Galleries would be installed this week. A new bench was on order.

10. **Open Forum**

The coordinator of the Freshford Community Speedwatch (CSW) group spoke. CSW operated at four points in the village, in positions where drivers had the required 60m visibility. Information about speeding vehicles was passed to the police who issued letters to drivers. Police spoke to drivers who were significantly above the speed limit. The CSW Coordinator felt that radar speed units, which flashed up a driver's speed, would be more effective in reducing speeding than the current speed limit roundels and painted markers on the road. Limpley Stoke Parish Council had bought data monitoring equipment and radar units and felt these had been effective in reducing speeding in Limpley Stoke. The Chair of Limpley Stoke Parish Council was willing to lend equipment to collate data on vehicles' speed at various points in Freshford. This would identify where radar units might be most effective. CSW would be willing to undertake this monitoring and asked for permission and support from the Parish Council for this proposal.

A second resident spoke to suggest that Freshford Mill residents should be included in any discussion about traffic issues and solutions relating to Rosemary Lane.

11. **Highways and Transport – Speed Indicator Device Proposal**

Councillors considered the request from Freshford Community Speedwatch to borrow speed monitoring equipment from Limpley Stoke Parish Council for use in Freshford. Freshford CSW were willing to oversee the installation and use of such equipment. Obtaining data on vehicle speeds at points throughout Freshford was seen as a useful first step in identifying locations where speed indicator devices might be helpful in reducing speeding.

Resolved: to support the Freshford Community Speedwatch Group in liaising with Limpley Stoke Parish Council to borrow speed monitoring units and install these as a temporary measure at various points in Freshford.

Cllr Carpenter to liaise with Freshford Community Speedwatch and Limpley Stoke Parish Council.

Cllr
Carpenter

12. **Open Forum**

Cllr Adler handed over the Chairing of the meeting to Cllr Carpenter.

A resident spoke about planning application 22/01530/FUL Stoke Hill Mine, Midford Lane, BA2 7GP and made the following points:

- Concern about the impact of additional lighting from the development on nearby roosting Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats. It was stated that additional light pollution from other recent developments had already led to a reduction in bat activity. The proposed houses had large windows and the development was felt to have an excessive amount of exterior lights. This was seen as gradual erosion of 'Dark Skies' and in breach of planning rules.
- That the proposed groundworks that would affect the roots of trees on the boundary with the proposed development.
- Noise from previous adjacent development had been very impactful; this development would lead to further noise and disruption.

A second resident spoke about planning application 22/01530/FUL and made the following points:

- That the development did not meet the definition of infill in the Placemaking plan as it was only bordered on one side by houses (buildings on one other side were mine buildings) and there was no frontage to the site.
- The openness of the Green Belt would be significantly impacted. The houses, which included large balconies, would be in full view of walkers. This impact on the Green Belt did not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The increase in the size of the office building would be far in excess of the 'one third of original volume' guidance, despite the statement made in the planning application, as the current building had already been extended. Two sheds had been included in the calculation of volume but the existence of one shed was not clear and the other shed was not within the curtilage of the plot.
- The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England was concerned about the general increase in lighting in the Limpley Stoke Valley and the significant impact this was having on wildlife. Lightspill from the mine was already an issue, with the resident reporting that lighting had been increased without necessary planning permission. Trees had been removed from the site, increasing light spillage.
- It was not clear where parking for workers would be reallocated. There was an indication that an area at the back of the site would be used, but tree planting here was part of a previous planning condition and could not be removed.
- The position of a proposed hedge to act as screening from the site was questioned since the proposed location would be across the driveway to their property.
- The removal of a storage building to provide three visitor parking spaces was a concern. It's removal would increase visibility between the site and the resident's property which currently acted as a buffer against noise and dirt from the site. The building was also used by nesting birds.
- Proposed planting of native scrub mix was seen to be insufficient to act as effective screening and would take time to grow.

- There was no mention in the application of the management of materials and storage.
- The resident felt that there were a number of errors in the application.

13. **Planning Applications**

Cllr Adler left the room.

22/01530/FUL Stoke Hill Mine, Midford Lane, Limpley Stoke, BA2 7GP: Conversion and extension of office to form a single dwelling. Erection of two new build dwellings and associated works.

Councillors considered a report from the Planning Advisory Group and comments made by residents on this planning application.

Resolved: to object to planning application 22/01530/FUL Stoke Hill Mine, Midford Lane, Bath, BA2 7GP on the following grounds:

- That the proposal does not meet the Core Strategy definition of infill and does not preserve the openness of the Greenbelt. It therefore does not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- That the proposal does not respond to the local need identified in the Neighbourhood Plan for 1 and 2 bedroom homes or offer a sufficiently flexible range of housing accommodation. It therefore does not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- There would be a detrimental impact on important legally protected Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bat roosts. The site is only 50m from the entrance of Stoke Hill Mine which is known to support important protected roosts for greater and lesser horseshoe bats. The Ecological appraisal provided as part of the application recommends that further surveys are conducted to evaluate the impact of the proposal on these bats. Whilst the applicant states that a 'sensitive lighting scheme will be developed', the size of the proposal, number of outside lights and inclusion of large windows makes it inevitable that the development would impact negatively on the bats.
- Although not enough information on the original mine buildings has been provided to calculate accurately, it is the Parish Council's belief that the proposed homes far exceed the 30% 'one third of original volume' threshold.

The Parish Council agreed to also make the following comments:

- It's understood that the existing parking area next to the office building is also used by workers in the stone yard. If so, no provision has been made for the relocation of these parking spaces.
- The access for the new dwellings would be shared with the adjacent stone yard which the PC believes is used regularly by large lorries. Given that the proposal is for family homes this is a safety concern particularly for any children that may inhabit the proposed dwellings.

Cllr Adler returned to the meeting and resumed the role of Chair.

14. **Tree Applications**

None.

15. **Planning Decisions**

22/0933/FUL Clachan, Freshford Lane, BA2 7UR: Two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension. *Permitted.*

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

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

- £586.89 Selina Jobson for administration
- £350 James Lock for grass cutting
- £29.43 Elli Bate for expenses for the transport meeting

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

- £300 Ian Croker for street cleaning (SO)
- £117.61 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £994.39 Public Works Loan Board

16.3 Insurance Renewal: noted that the Parish Council were entering the final year of a three-year insurance agreement.

17. **Highways and Transport – Community Transport & Highways Meeting**

The Community Transport and Highways Meeting had been well attended by residents and had been an interactive and useful meeting. Cllr Carpenter was thanked for his work with this.

A summary of problems and solutions suggested by residents at the meeting was considered. A plan of actions would be drawn up, based on the points made. It was suggested that there should be a focus on some 'quick win' actions that could be completed in a relatively short time scale. A mix of solutions would be necessary to improve transport and highways issues across Freshford.

School Governors at Freshford Primary School were preparing a survey about journeys to and from school as a starting point for addressing issues. The next version of the survey would be circulated to Cllr Carpenter.

Resolved: To establish a Working Party to review the recommendations from the Community Highways and Transport meeting in detail. Membership to include Cllrs Carpenter, Hawker and Putt; three members of the community would be asked to join the group.

18. **Natural Environment**

18.1 Quotes for tree works on Parish Council land

Following the tree works survey produced by Bawden Tree Care, quotes for tree works had been sought from four companies; two had supplied quotes. Quotes to undertake all the tree works identified in the trees survey were between £9000 to £11000. A small number of trees had been identified as in a 'critical' or 'dangerous' state and the Parish Council would focus on undertaking these works as quickly as possible, seeking advice on any actions required in the meantime.

Resolved: to appoint Bawden Tree Care to undertake the tree works identified as 'critical' or 'dangerous' in the report.

There was a need for clear communication with the community on the tree works being undertaken and the reason for these works.

Bawden Tree Care to be asked for additional explanation of why some works were needed and for guidance on how to minimise the environmental impact of all tree works.

All tree works were within the Conservation Area and would require an application to be made to B&NES.

18.2 Replacement for Ian Croker

Ian Croker, who undertook Street Cleaning in Freshford, was retiring at the end of July. A description of what the role involved would be put together. B&NES would be contacted to see if they could undertake these works.

Cllr Hawker

19. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting would take place at 7pm on Wednesday 18 May. Representatives from local groups would be asked to provide a short update on their activities.

20. Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Two residents had suggested that the Freshford Jubilee picnic should be held on Thursday 2 June, rather than Sunday 4 June, to avoid clashing with other village events. The residents had volunteered to organise a picnic on this date.

Councillors agreed that the Jubilee picnic be moved to 2 June. This would be communicated to residents. B&NES would be asked if the approved closure of the road across the top of the Tynning could be moved to 2 June.

Cllr Batchelor-Wylam was thanked for the work she'd undertaken in preparing for the picnic.

21. Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Councillors received a Memorandum of Understanding for renewal from Freshford Village Memorial Hall. The MoU would cover the next four years. The annual contribution from the Parish Council to the Memorial Hall would increase to £2310/year.

Resolved: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding and to agree to the increase in the Parish Council's annual contribution to the Memorial Hall.

22. Communications

Cllr Putt would update councillors via email about developments with a potential parish newsletter.

23. External Meetings

Nothing to report.

24. Correspondence Received

Nothing to report.

25. Exchange of Information

Nothing to report.

26. Date of next meetings

Wednesday 18 May Annual Parish Meeting, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Monday 13 June, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9.35pm