

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 12 December 2022, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

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

Apologies: Annabel Batchelor-Wylam

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

Members of the Public: None

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

None.

95. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved: To exercise the Parish Council's right to exclude the public and press from a closed meeting due to the confidential nature to be discussed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 in relation to the item about a Complaint (minute 112).

96. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 22 as a true record.

97. **Review of Actions**

The only action not covered elsewhere on the agenda related to requests for additional dog bins. It was likely that the Parish Council would have to pay for the installation and emptying of any additional bins. Costs and logistics would be investigated with B&NES.

Cllr
Carpenter

98. **Open Forum**

No members of the public were present.

99. **Planning Applications**

None.

100. **Tree Applications**

None.

101. **Planning decisions**

22/0752/FUL 4 Westview Orchard, BA2 7TT: Proposed demolition of existing single storey extension with replacement single storey extension & garage conversion.
Permitted.

22/03691/FUL Dunkirk Mill, Freshford: Erection of oak frame garage (Retrospective).
Permitted.

102. **Finance**

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

- £492.69 Selina Jobson for administration
- £350 James Lock for grass cutting
- £150 Alan Duck for grass cutting
- £60 Diane Malley for payroll services
- £20 RBL for wreath

102.2 **Resolved:** to approve the bank reconciliation, noting the following payments and receipts –

- £110.29 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £15 Zonkey Solutions for domain name renewal
- £120 Ashes tablet (Receipt)

103. **Highways and Transport**

Councillors reviewed three quotes for a speed radar camera. Solar powered cameras were more expensive than battery powered, but would be easier to use as they would not require charging as frequently.

Resolved: to purchase a solar powered mobile speed radar camera from Elan City.

Cllr Carpenter was liaising with B&NES Highways Inspector about possible locations for the speed radar camera. B&NES had agreed to replace the Freshford bus stop sign post with a taller post to make it suitable for mounting a camera. Other locations would be considered but needed to meet certain requirements. Community Speedwatch volunteers would be asked for location ideas.

Cllr
Carpenter

B&NES would be asked if training was required for volunteers moving speed radar cameras. Cllr Carpenter volunteered to be involved with moving the camera, and another volunteer would be needed.

104. **Community Renewable Energy Project**

Councillors received an update report from Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) on scoping plans for a ground mounted solar PV project for Freshford and Limpley Stoke. A potential site had been identified, a community consultation undertaken and funding opportunities investigated. A high level assessment of the grid capacity indicated that a 1MW site might be feasible, with the possibility of increased capacity after upgrades due in 2027-28.

Councillors considered whether the project should be community owned or continued through BWCE. It was considered to be a significant, complex and long-term project which would be difficult to run successfully as a community project.

BWCE is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society. Any surplus funds raised through this energy project would go towards other renewable energy schemes and community projects. BWCE had confirmed that it should be possible to ring fence a specific sum each year for allocation to projects in Freshford and Limpley Stoke, subject to confirmation by their trustees.

Cllr Adler had given a presentation to Limpley Stoke Parish Council who had asked that Freshford Parish Council consider obtaining quotes from commercial companies. Councillors considered this but felt that BWCE were well established in delivering community energy projects with a good reputation and provided wider community benefits through their community fund.

Resolved: To agree that the project to generate renewable energy through a ground mounted solar PV scheme should be continued through BWCE and that BWCE would be asked to progress to the feasibility stage.

105. **Street Lighting**

Cllr Tibbles had continued to try to obtain quotes from several companies to change street lamps with LED lamps or to switch off some street lamps, but only Volker Highways had provided a quote to date. Volker Highways were the B&NES contractor for street light maintenance and had responded quickly and clearly to the quote request. The quote was subject to a number of caveats and costs would have increased since the provision of the quote some time ago.

Resolved: to use Volker Highways as the contractor for the street lamps project to upgrade some lamps to LEDs and switch off some lamps.

Councillors considered a first draft of a residents' survey about street lamp options and agreed that it would be finalised by email. Councillors supported the upgrading of lamps to LEDs and the switching off of some lamps as a cost saving measure in line with the Parish Council's Climate and Nature emergency declarations. This proposal would be put to residents for their feedback, which would be taken into account when finalising the project details.

106. **Natural Environment**

Feedback from the B&NES Footpaths Officer on the process for diverting a footpath indicated it would be a potentially time consuming, difficult and expensive process. This option was therefore not deemed a suitable way of trying to avoid felling trees with Ash dieback.

The Parish Council's insurer had provided some general advice about responsibilities relating to trees and woodland, and further advice was awaited. Although the risk of injury from trees was considered to be very small, advice from the survey by professional tree surgeons was that the trees with Ash dieback should either be felled or made safe through partial felling. If partial felling was undertaken then future inspections would be required to assess the trees and more works may be needed at a later point and at an additional cost.

Resolved: to request that Bawdens undertake partial felling, where appropriate, of Ash trees suffering from Ash dieback along the footpath on the Tynning.

107. **The Cemetery**

An indicative quote had been received to replace the fence in the Cemetery, where some posts were loose, either with another wooden fence or with an estate metal fence.

This project would be considered alongside other demands on the Parish Council's finances and as part of longer term plans for the Cemetery, and a proposal would be brought to a future meeting.

Cemetery
Adv Group

108. **Budget 2023/24**

Councillors considered figures for the 2023/24 budget. A budget of £5000 to legitimise the access through the hedge at the bottom of The Tynning by the school was included. Whilst councillors were unlikely to have capacity to investigate this project in the next year, it was suggested that there might be people in the community, especially those connected to the School, who might take on this project.

Taking into account points raised in discussion, a revised budget would be presented at the January 2023 Parish Council meeting and would be considered alongside the setting of the precept.

A refund of fees paid to the Valley Parish Alliance was awaited.

109. **Clerk's Report**

B&NES were holding an election briefing via Zoom for councillors and clerks at 6pm on 25 January 2023 and details would be circulated.

Access had been gained to a Memorial Hall cupboard in which Parish Council records were stored. These would need to be reviewed to see if all documents were still needed.

110. **External Meetings**

Cllr Tibbles attended the Freshford Village Memorial Hall Committee, reporting that the Hall works had been completed relatively on time and on budget. Some issues with the heating were still being resolved.

Cllr Adler attended a Parish Liaison Meeting focusing on Climate Emergency Actions. The meeting had used a new workshop format.

111. **Resignation**

Cllr Maddicott resigned from the council with immediate effect. Cllr Adler thanked him for all his work over his eight years as a councillor. The Clerk would confirm processes for recruiting a new councillor, given that the local elections were less than 6 months away.

112. **Complaint**

As agreed, the meeting was closed for this item.

Councillors considered a complaint from a resident about the handling of discussion of his planning application at a Parish Council meeting. The Vice-Chair had written in response to the points raised by the resident. All councillors considered the correspondence between the resident and the Parish Council relating to this matter.

Resolved: the Vice-Chair's response had covered all relevant points in relation to the complaint and councillors had nothing else to add on this matter.

113. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 9 January, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9.10pm