

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 6 February 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

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

Apologies: None

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk), Cllr Matt McCabe

Members of the Public: Seven

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

None.

132. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 09 January 2023 as a true record.

133. **Review of Actions**

A speed indicator radar sign had been delivered and the Parish Council was waiting for B&NES to install a pole on which it could be mounted.

134. **Open Forum**

A resident spoke about the possibility of applying to DEFRA for bathing status in the local river. The resident was at an early stage of considering the process of applying and it would be a project that would require a lot of local support. She asked if the Parish Council would consider supporting such an initiative. Cllr McCabe outlined some of the issues involved with improving local river quality and reported on a phone app being launched to monitor water quality. A meeting would be set up between a councillor and the resident to discuss the idea.

A resident spoke about the Parish Council's street lighting proposals. He was against a reduction in street lighting, with concerns about safety and security. He highlighted issues for residents in The Glebe, suggesting some mobility issues and noting there were significant steps to properties. He asked whether Curo, who managed houses in the Glebe, had been contacted. He suggested the Parish Council should produce a risk assessment and risk mitigation strategy, and questioned how the turning off of some lights would be communicated to residents. He raised the state of the steps in The Glebe and asked if repairs to paths and pavements would be undertaken before any street lights were switched off.

A resident spoke about concerns with planning application 23/00123/FUL, noting they had submitted comments to B&NES. They considered the proposed building to be of a substantial size and noted that a substantial infill dwelling (Woodcote) with garage and outbuildings had already been built in the original garden of Rosemary House. Any development on the site was considered to have a significant impact on the privacy and relatively open aspect on this edge of a village, affecting the enjoyment and amenity of those living in the neighbouring property. A single storey dwelling sunk into the land was considered more appropriate.

The applicant of planning application 23/00123/FUL spoke. He reported that the proposed building had been designed to be in keeping with the surroundings, with a sympathetic design influenced by other properties in the neighbourhood. The

proposed building was predominantly single storey, with a two storey section. The building was located at the back of the plot for minimum impact and built into the landscape for the same reason. He confirmed that no swimming pool or solar panels were proposed, but a living roof was included. He stated that there were large trees and substantial hedgerows on the boundaries between neighbouring properties which would maintain privacy. He did not feel agree with the suggestion that two bungalows would be more suitable on the plot or that such a proposal would reduce the impact of building on this plot.

135. **Planning Applications**

a) 23/00123/FUL Land next to Woodcote, Church Lane, Limpley Stoke: Erection of a 4-bedroom dwelling and associated works.

The Clerk reported comments that had been submitted by a resident on this application.

The proposed development was within the village settlement boundary and met the definition of infill as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan (NHP). However, it was suggested that the proposed property was too large for the site. Given the site's topography it was proposed that a bungalow might be more appropriate and could reduce potential issues with visual amenity and privacy for neighbours. The NHP identified a need for smaller houses in the village and it was felt that this site could accommodate two such smaller properties.

Resolved: to object to the planning application on the grounds that the proposed building is too large for the site, will result in a loss of amenity for the neighbouring properties and is not a sustainable use of a plot of this size which could better accommodate two smaller properties (possibly bungalows). It therefore does not comply with the following NHP Policies:

Planning and Development Policy

c) *Villages Design Statement*

New developments: New developments must be mindful of and sensitive to the physical and environmental context of the site and its location. This includes the need for any development to be proportionate both to its site and in relation to its immediate neighbours.

Housing Policy

3.4.03 Given the existing imbalance of the housing stock and the stated housing need, the Plan contemplates that the proposed planning and development policies will bring forward modest sustainable development which is responsive to local need and sufficiently flexible to offer a range of housing accommodation.

b) 23/00110/SOLPA The Galleries, Freshford Lane, BA2 7UR: Installation of 45 solar panels to the roof of the Galleries.

The Galleries is outside of the Conservation Area. Most panels would be on the rear of the building, with limited visual impact, but some panels on the front elevation would be visible from the Conservation Area. Details on panel type and installation had not been provided and there was no indication of any measures to mitigate the visual impact. The proposal was in line with the Parish Council's declared Climate and Nature emergencies. Concerns that energy costs were impacting the future financial viability of The Galleries were reported and it was felt that generating solar energy would help secure The Galleries long-term financial viability.

Resolved: to support.

c) 22/04395/FUL Fringethorpe, BA2 7TY: Erection of oak framed garage at the front of property.

The property was on the boundary of the Conservation Area and the garage would be a significant volume to place in front of the house on the main street frontage. The application proposed removing vegetation which it was felt would reduce the visual impact of the garage.

Resolved: to comment that the Parish Council wants the shrubs in the SE corner of the plot to be retained in order to screen the building and reduce its visual impact on the Conservation Area.

136. **Tree Applications**

23/00117/TCA Land between access track and boundary in Parcel 9517, Church Hill, Freshford: Sycamore – raised crown by removing a low branch on south & east side; Ash – fell.

Resolved: to support, with a request that a tree is planted to replace the felled tree.

137. **Planning decisions**

22/03582/FUL: Leigh Cottage, Sharpstone: Externally clad extension to existing dwelling and associated works. **Permitted.**

138. **Finance**

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

- £516.52 Selina Jobson for administration
- £2700 Elan City for radar speed

138.2 **Resolved:** to approve the bank reconciliation, noting the following payment –

- £124.77 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £132.36 HMRC
- £40 ALCA for planning training

139. **Street Lighting**

The survey on the Parish Councils proposals for street lights had received 133 responses. 94% of those responding to the survey supported the principle of moving to LED street lights. The principal of switching off some lights was supported by 69% of respondents; 54% felt the proposal to switch off 17 lights was about the right number, 28% thought this was too many lights and 18% too few. A number of people raised concerns about switching off individual lights, particularly along the road to the station; by the A36 junction; by The Tynning and by the War Memorial. It was therefore proposed that these lights be switched to LEDs rather than switched off. All responses would be looked at in further detail to evaluate the case for switching off other proposed lights.

The Parish Council would draft a statement outlining the general principles for the project and an evaluation of risks involved.

Resolved: Cllr Adler and Tibbles would review survey responses in relation to switching off individual lights and bring a final proposal to the next meeting.

Cllrs Adler
/ Tibbles

A broken street lamp in Sharpstone would be fixed.

(Note: It was identified after the meeting that this lamp might be considered for switching off and therefore repairs would not be requested until this had been decided upon).

140. **Councillor Positions**

140.1 Co-option

No expressions of interest in being co-opted to the Council had been received.

140.2 Local Elections, 4 May 2023

The Parish Council would promote the local elections, encouraging residents to stand for election as a parish councillor. Articles on the Parish Council's activities might encourage people to become involved and take on projects. Cllr McCabe was asked if B&NES could help with promoting parish council elections. Election nomination forms could be submitted from 21 March until 4 April 2023.

141. **Village Steward Contract**

The role of Village Steward had been advertised since July 2022 and one company had expressed an interest in taking on the work. Cllr Hawker and the Clerk had met with Matt Snelgrove to outline the work required. A proposed contract had been submitted, running from 1 April to 31 December 2023. It was clarified that street cleaning was the responsibility of the village and not something that B&NES would undertake.

Resolved: to hire MP Snelgrove to undertake 6 hours/fortnight of street cleaning in Freshford from 1 April to 31 December 2023 at a cost of £3600.

142. **Communications**

Councillors received an update on progress with producing a Spring edition of the Bulletin. A number of articles had been received and there had been interest in advertising. Councillors were asked to produce short articles about their council activities. The Bulletin was due to be published in March.

All cllrs

143. **Natural Environment**

Details of the next treeworks on The Tynning had been finalised with Bawden Tree Care, with Ash trees felled to a safe height wherever possible.

There were no winter activities by Friends of Freshford on the Tynning to report. Cllr Bate would liaise with FoF to produce a plan of all grass cutting on The Tynning.

Cllr Bate

The temporary matting on The Tynning would be removed. Volunteers would be organised to remove the matting, ideally in wet conditions which would make its removal easier. Consideration would be given to storing the matting for re-use, although this would depend on the state of the matting.

Cllr
Batchelor-
Wylam

The water tap in the Cemetery had broken and had been switched off by Wessex Water. A plumber was needed to fix the broken tap and councillors were asked to provide details of local plumbers.

B&NES Clean and Green Team had cleared significant leaf fall and overgrowing vegetation from the path by The Galleries. The Clean and Green Team were also going to look at clearing the gully on Rosemary Lane.

144. **Community Renewable Energy Project**

A lack of grid capacity meant that Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) were considering which approach to take to the community solar energy scheme, from a number of alternatives. Once the approach was decided upon, BWCE would organise a Project Initiation meeting for the Feasibility Study.

145. **Clerk's Report**

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday 19 April 2023.

Information from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) about bus services had been circulated. WECA were now responsible for running services across the region and had received Government funding to provide new services. A new Demand Responsive Transport service was being provided for rural areas from 1 April 2023, on a zoned basis. WECA would be asked to clarify if Freshford was in one of these designated zones. Libra provided the 94 service in Freshford service and no changes to

this route were reported. Parish councils had been asked to raise any questions about bus services at the next Parish Liaison Meeting.

146. External Meetings

Cllr Adler had attended a BANES ALCA Meeting on 1 February which had discussed items for the agenda for the next Parish Liaison Meeting, which would take place on 15 March 2023.

Cllr Tibbles and Walters, representing Freshford and Limpley Stoke Home Energy Group had met with members of Winsley Parish Council's Climate Advisory Group about setting up a similar group in Winsley.

The next Bathavon Forum meeting would take place on 8 March 2023.

147. Exchange of Information

B&NES contractors would undertake painting of some road markings, including speed roundels and white lines, in Freshford shortly. When a date was confirmed, residents would be emailed, asking them not to park on road markings ahead of line painting.

A new grit bin had been installed and B&NES had been asked again about the possibility of the Parish Council installing dog waste bins.

148. Dates of Next Meeting

Monday 13 March, 7pm Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9.20pm