

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 22 May 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Elli Bate, Julian Carpenter, Jessie Forbes, John Putt, Richard Tibbles

Apologies: None

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: Three

Tribute to Nick Stevens, previous Chair and Parish Councillor

Cllr Adler paid tribute to Nick Stevens who had sadly passed away at the beginning of the month. Nick had been a councillor for 14 years before standing down in 2022. He had chaired the council for a number of years. Nick had been a driver of change, involved in many significant projects for the benefit of the community. He had a central role in the purchase of The Tynning and in the drawing up of the Neighbourhood Plan, which had led to a significant increase in funds to the community. Nick was remembered for his considered approach to matters, his honesty in stating his views and his commitment to the community. He had also been involved in the Friends of Freshford and the Village Hall Committee.

1. **Election of Chair**

Resolved: to elect Cllr Adler as Chair.

2. **Election of Vice-Chair**

Resolved: to elect Cllr Carpenter as Vice-Chair.

3. **Welcome to the New Council**

All councillors were welcomed to the new council. All councillors had signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and had been provided with a Register of Interests form to complete.

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

None.

5. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023 as a true record.

6. **Review of Actions**

A new bin had been installed by B&NES in the play area behind the Memorial Hall at the request of the Parish Council.

Following concerns raised by a resident at a previous meeting that funding for the No. 94 bus was in jeopardy, councillors had contacted relevant Ward and Unitary Councillors (Cllrs Matt McCabe & Johnny Kidney) for further information. The service was currently funded by Wiltshire Council and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), with WECA receiving funds from the local authorities and central government for the provision of transport services. From July 2023, it appeared that no funding had been allocated by WECA for the No. 94 bus service and funding from Wiltshire Council would not be sufficient to run the service as it operated currently. There was some frustration that discussion amongst the relevant authorities appeared

to focus on apportioning blame for the situation, rather than addressing the problem. A number of other rural bus services were also facing cuts.

Councillors noted the importance of the 94 bus service to the community and discussed various actions the Parish Council could take. It was agreed that:

- The Parish Council would contact the local MP and the West of England Metro Mayor raising concerns about the possible withdrawal of funding for the No. 94 bus service, highlighting the importance of this rural bus service and asking that funding is made available as a matter of urgency to support the continuation of this service. Chair / Clerk
- Residents would be emailed about the situation, providing contact details for the local MP and the West of England Metro Mayor. Chair / Clerk
- Other parish councils impacted by the potential loss or changes to the No. 94 bus service would be contacted. Clerk

7. **Open Forum**

Residents attending the meeting had already submitted their comments about planning applications to the Parish Council.

8. **Planning Applications**

23/01434/FUL Forsters House, Church Hill, BA2 7TX: Provision of new internal staircase to loft, new maintenance access door from loft to flat roof, protective glazed balustrade to prevent falls from flat roof, change a window into a doorway.

Councillors noted a number of concerns raised by residents.

Resolved: to object on the basis of loss of amenity (particularly privacy), impact on a Listed Building in a Conservation Area and the impact of lighting in a rural area.

23/01648/FUL Wayside, Park Corner, BA2 7UP: Over-cladding front and rear elevations in natural cobblestone and one side elevation in render.

Resolved: to support the application, but to request that B&NES look into the detail of the proposed cladding. It's was also recommended that the opportunity should be taken to externally insulate the outside of the house.

23/01651/FUL Haywards Water Tower Pipehouse: Proposed upgrade to the existing Rooftop installation. Proposed removal and replacement of existing 3No. antennas with proposed of 3no. Antennas. Proposed installation of 1No. GPS module. Existing equipment Cabin to be refreshed internally and associated ancillary works.

Resolved: to support the application on the assumption that the proposal was for a 4G mast. If the proposed mast was 5G then concerns were raised about the possible environmental impact.

23/01675/FUL The Surgery, Dark Lane, BA2 7TT: Alterations of the existing building (Proposing new door and window openings, internal staircases from ground floor to first floor and from first floor to the loft) and loft conversion.

The plans were difficult to understand and appeared to be contradictory at points. It was not clear what the loft space referred to. The Surgery was a prominent building in the village and in the Conservation Area.

Resolved: to object on the grounds of insufficient and unclear information provided in the application. Given the building's prominent position within the Conservation Area the Conservation Officer was asked to consider the proposal very carefully. Windows should be retained as timber rather than changed to uPVC.

The following applications in Hinton Charterhouse Parish were considered as potentially impacting Freshford Parish:

23/01619/FUL Buildings South of The Stables, Pipehouse: Conversion and alteration of agricultural buildings to 5 No. dwellings, demolition of barn and erection of single storey garage, and landscaping, drainage and access works.

Concerns were raised about the proposed entrance to the site, just a few metres away from the A36.

Resolved: to comment to raise concerns that the access to the site was very close to the junction with the A36.

23/01180/HEDGE Freshford Football Ground, Abbey Lane, Hinton Charterhouse: Removal of two sections of hedgerow on the boundary of Freshford Football Ground adjacent to Abbey Lane.

Despite the description in the application, the hedge was felt to be substantial and of longstanding. It was suggested that if a fence was required it could be put inside the existing hedge.

Resolved: to object to the removal of the hedge on ecological grounds and suggest that if a fence was required it should be placed inside the hedge.

9. **Tree Applications and Planning Decisions**

A tree application had just been received and would be circulated.

10. **Review of Standing Orders**

Resolved: to re-approve the current versions of the Standing Orders, Financial Standing Orders and Code of Conduct without amendment.

11. **Co-option of Councillors**

Following the election, the Parish Council had six councillors with three vacant positions. The vacant positions would be advertised across the parish.

Residents would also be encouraged to be involved in Working Groups to support the work of the Parish Council.

12. **Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting had been held on 19 April. Residents had made comments about the temporary matting on The Tying and proposals to switch off a number of street lights in the village. Both matters were continuing to be looked at by the Parish Council.

Consideration would be given as to how to encourage more people to attend future Annual Parish Meetings.

13. **Update on Community Renewable Energy Project**

Councillors considered a Cooperation Agreement put forward by Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) to the three parish councils involved (Freshford, Limpley Stoke & Hinton Charterhouse). The agreement set out the working relationship between the parish councils and BWCE; it was not a long term contract. BWCE would re-invest cash surplus from the project into a Community Fund, once loan repayments, interest to BWCE members and BWCE costs had been covered. The parishes involved would be able to apply to the Community Fund which supported projects relating to carbon reduction and fuel poverty.

Resolved: to approve the Cooperation Agreement with BWCE.

Cllr Adler was setting up a meeting with the other parish councils involved to consider community engagement.

14. **Matting on The Tynning**
 Advice was being sought from ecologists, matting companies and B&NES about the potential long-term impact of temporary matting on The Tynning and information would be reported at a future meeting.
15. **Natural Environment**
 A resident had raised concerns about the extent of mowing in the Cemetery and whether this could be reduced. A summary of the mowing schedule for the Cemetery and The Tynning would be produced. Cllr Bate
 Previous councillors who had been involved with the Cemetery would be asked if they were willing to carry on as part of the Cemetery Working Group.
 A Dark Skies policy would be brought to a future meeting for consideration. Cllr Bate
 B&NES would be contacted for an update on the situation regarding the Willow tree leaning over the path to the Galleries / Village Hall. Clerk
 Councillors were asked to let the Clerk know of any overgrown areas or issues that could be addressed during the fortnightly visits by the Village Steward.
16. **Highways**
 A Highways report was received and it was noted that:
- Maximum width signage had been re-instated at the top of Ashes Lane;
 - Seventeen potholes had been repaired on Pipehouse Lane;
 - Cllr Carpenter would continue to keep informed of updates from National Highways about any potential North-South route to the South coast.
- Proposals for two sets of yellow lines, one by Park Corner and one along The Hill, had been received from B&NES. These would be brought to the next Parish Council meeting for further consideration. Any parking restriction proposals supported by the Parish Council would need to be put to formal consultation by B&NES. The number of schemes put forward by B&NES for formal consultation was limited by funding available.
- It was reported that two sets of local roadworks were taking place on the same dates, and that both listed Dark Lane as part of an alternative route, despite its unsuitability for additional traffic. These matters would be taken up with B&NES. Clerk
17. **Street Lighting**
 Cllr Tibbles reported that he was liaising with Volker and Enervo about trialling the switching off of 25 street lights in the village. It was proposed that the trial period should be for approximately six months during the darkest part of the year (October to March).
 Since the community consultation about the street lighting proposals, the proposed status of nine lights had been changed, with an overall increase in the number of lights to be switched off from 22 to 25.
 Once finalised, details of the trial would be shared with the community. A community consultation would be undertaken once the trial had been completed.
 An initial quote for renewal of the current energy supply contract, which ended on 31 July 2023, indicated that prices would increase by almost 50% compared to current costs.
18. **Finance**
 18.1 Two quotes for insurance had been received to date; a further quote was awaited.

Resolved: that, should a further quote be received, councillors would approve a quote by email circulation by 26 May 2023. Otherwise the Council would approve the quote provided by BHIB.

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

- £500.92 Selina Jobson for administration
- £90 Apeiron as a contribution to FVMH car park works
- £56.10 SLCC for contribution to the Clerk's annual subscription
- £25 Clerk's expenses

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

- £93.00 HMRC Shipley for tax (Payment)
- £994.39 PWLB for The Tynning (Direct Debit)
- £400 MP Snelgrove for Village Steward contract (Payment)
- £540 Zonkey Solutions for Annual web hosting (Payment)
- £81.85 The Galleries for APM refreshments (Payment)
- £355 James Lock for grass maintenance (Standing Order)
- £110.29 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £400 Cemetery fees (Receipt)

19. **Clerk's Report**

Deborah White was leaving the Avon Local Councils Association.

20. **Dates of June Meeting**

Monday 12 June, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9pm.