

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 13 November 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

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

Apologies: None

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk), Ward Councillor Fiona Gourley

Members of the Public: Four

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

None.

86. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2023 as a true record.

87. **Open Forum**

A resident spoke to ask the following questions about street lights:

- Why were faulty street lights not being repaired?;
- Why did the Parish Council think it is acceptable to consider switching off street lights, making it less safe for people on foot in the village in the mornings and evenings?;
- Are risk assessments available for each light that it is proposed to turn off?;
- What would the Parish Council's responsibility be if there was an incident or accident in an area where a street light had been switched off?;
- How widely had the Parish Council advertised proposals to switch off street lights as some residents are unaware of these proposals?

The resident thanked the Clerk for responding to questions on this subject during the year.

A resident asked for assistance advertising defibrillator training being held on Friday 15 December in Freshford; it was confirmed that details could go out on a community email.

A resident outlined his concerns, raised at previous meetings, about the safety of proposals to turn off some street lights. He felt that footfall had not been taken into account and that turning off lights on the station access road would reduce the use of the station. He was concerned about the costs of undertaking a pilot and the overall costs of the project. He asked if LED lamps that were no longer going to be in use could be placed in other lights. He felt that converting as many lamps as possible to LED would bring benefits of lower energy use and less maintenance, and that only a small number of lights should be turned off.

88. **Co-option of Councillor**

No applications had been received for co-option, and two vacancies remained. The role had been advertised in the Freshford Newsletter and the School Newsletter. Further advertising would take place.

89. **Planning Applications**

23/03842/FUL Hardings Cottage, Sharpstone Lane, BA2 7UA: Replacement of single storey extension, changes to fenestration following removal of upper part of chimney and formation of new parapet.

Details provided in Design Statement sounded sensible and proposals were considered to be in keeping with the Conservation Area.

Resolved: No comment.

90. **Tree Applications**

a) 23/03917/TCA Church Hill Cottage , Church Hill, BA2 7TX: T2-Lawson Cypress, reduce by 2m back to old cuts, to maintain size and shape.

Resolved: No comment.

91. **Highways and Transport**

91.1 Number 94 bus service

Ward Cllr Gourley reported that the future of the 94 bus service would be discussed at a meeting between the West of England Combined Authority and B&NES on 27 November 2023. It was agreed that a community email on the situation and further encouragement to people to use the bus would be sent in early December.

Cllr Adler/
Forbes

91.2 Double Yellow Lines survey

Just over 100 people had responded to the survey with an almost even split between people who supported the principle of double yellow lines at the bottom of Staples Hill and by The Inn at Freshford, and those who did not. Although there was no clear outcome on the double yellow line proposals, a lot of useful comments and suggestions had been received through the survey.

In discussion it was noted that:

- Two main concerns that were raised by a number of respondents were about the impact of parking restrictions on people using The Inn at Freshford and the potential displacement of vehicles to other parts of the village.
- Some respondents had asked for the creation of alternative parking areas to be explored.
- A couple of respondents had requested the designation of disabled parking spaces.
- A few raised the concern that removing parking from this area could lead to an increase in traffic speed, making the road more dangerous.
- Some respondents felt that removing parking spaces would make it harder for people to visit Freshford, and although visiting the village by public transport could be encouraged, it was unlikely that this would have a significant impact on parking here.

Councillors agreed that:

- The responses from the survey would be analysed further and suggestions would be brought to a future Parish Council meeting.
- The owners of land off Crab Tree Lane would be contacted about the possibility of creating an alternative parking area.
- The Inn at Freshford would be contacted to see if they were interested in being involved in discussions.
- An update on the survey and actions would be sent out through a community email.

Cllrs Clamp/
Carpenter

Cllrs Adler/
Putt

Cllrs Clamp/
Adler

Cllr Adler

91.3 Freshford School meeting about parking

Councillors received a report from Cllr Carpenter on a Working Group established to consider School parking and traffic issues. The Group was led by the School governors and included representatives from the School, B&NES, the Parish Council and nearby residents. B&NES were considering running pilot 'School Streets' days, where streets

around a school would be closed to traffic at drop-off or pick-up times. The impact of any scheme on the village as a whole would be considered. The Working Group was focusing on positive ways of altering behaviour to reduce parking and traffic by the School. The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for January 2024.

It was agreed that Cllrs Bate and Clamp would also be invited to attend the Working Group.

Clarification of any actions required of the Parish Council would be sought.

91.4 Other Highways updates

Phased road closures along Lower Stoke would take place from 2 January 2024 to the end of May 2024, whilst Wales & West Utilities upgraded gas mains. Wales and West Utilities were holding an Information Centre at Limpley Stoke Hotel on the 6th December 2023 between 9.30am and 5.30pm. A community email with these details would be sent out.

Cllr Adler

A request for parking measures by the Church had been submitted by the Church directly to B&NES.

92. **Street Lighting**

92.1 Upgrade of 11 street lights to LEDs

Councillors received details of a proposal to change 11 street lights from sodium to LED lamps for financial and environmental benefit. Quotes had been provided by two companies but more detailed quotes were required. The difficulties and significant costs of using motion sensors with an unmetered electricity supply were outlined.

Resolved: to upgrade 11 specific street lamps to LEDs and to agree a contractor once detailed quotes had been provided.

A proposed pilot of switching off 25 street lamps would be considered for Autumn 2024, giving time to obtain additional details and to ensure that the trial would cover the longest nights.

92.2 Repairs to street lights

Eight street lights were reported as not working and two lights were on for longer than they should be. Repairs had been on hold due to discussions about the pilot to turn off 25 lights off. Two companies had now been approached for quotes, one quote had been received outlining charges per hour plus materials. Repairs would be requested to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Resolved: to request that Enerveo undertake repairs to 10 streetlights in Freshford.

93. **Natural Environment**

93.1 Fence at the Cemetery

Sections of the internal wooden fence at the Cemetery were very unstable. Whether a replacement fence was needed and, if so, ideas for a possible replacement fence were being explored.

Resolved: to engage a contractor to remove at least those sections of fence that were unstable and to then consider options in the longer term.

93.2 Dark Skies

Information had been gathered and would be drawn up into a relevant policy.

Cllrs Bate
/Carpenter

93.3 Trees on the Tynning

Following the necessary removal of some trees at the top of The Tynning last year, possible replanting of trees was being considered, including discussion with Friends of Freshford.

94. **Matting on The Tynning**

Councillors considered a report outlining the current situation with the matting on The Tynning. It had not been possible to get specific advice on the life expectancy of the matting laid, but general advice on plastic matting had been received. The matting had been installed as a temporary measure to assist Freshford School's social distancing requirements during Covid. It would degrade over time and would need replacing at

some point. Contractors had provided costs in April 2023 for removing the matting and these would need revising. If the matting was removed the path would need re-seeding and therefore the best time to undertake the work would be in Spring 2024.

Resolved: to remove the temporary matting on The Tynning in Spring 2024 and to reinstate the grass path as it was previously. Updated quotes from contractors would be sought to undertake the work and to advise on the optimum time for the matting's removal in light of the need to re-seed the path.

95. **Communications**

95.1 Autumn edition of the Freshford Newsletter

The Autumn edition of the Freshford Newsletter had been delivered to all residents, with some additional copies in The Galleries and an online copy available on the community website. Cllrs Forbes and Putt were thanked for their work on putting the Newsletter together. Advertising by local companies had covered most of the costs involved.

95.2 Standard councillors email addresses

It was recognised good practice for local councillors to use standardised email addresses and had benefits in terms of GDPR. Cllr Adler was exploring different options and costs for moving to standard email addresses and would report back to the next meeting.

Cllr Adler

96. **Finance**

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

- £500.72 Selina Jobson for administration
- £300.00 Station gardening

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

- £355.00 James Lock for grass maintenance (Standing Order)
- £400.00 Matt Snelgrove for Village Steward role (Standing Order)
- £203.03 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £140.00 HMRC tax (Payment)
- £994.39 PWLB for The Tynning (Direct Debit)
- £20.00 Royal British Legion for wreath (Payment)
- £460.50 Parish Magazines (Direct Debit)
- £100.00 Station garden grant (Receipt)
- £240.00 Newsletter advertisements (Receipts)

The 2024/25 budget would be considered at the December meeting and Councillors were asked to let the Clerk know of any budget requests.

All cllrs

It was reported that Freshford Village Memorial Hall Committee and The Galleries were looking for funding for major works to the car park and would approach the Parish Council for funds.

97. **External Meetings**

Information from the Parish Liaison Meeting held on 18 October 2023, including a Parish Information Pack and details of a B&NES grant scheme, had been circulated to councillors. Ward Cllr Gourley encouraged attendance at the Parish Liaison Meetings; the next meeting was on 28 February 2024.

98. **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 11 December, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9.05pm.