

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 17 April 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

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

Apologies: Elli Bate, John Putt

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

Members of the Public: Five

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

None.

171. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 as a true record.

172. **Review of Actions**

Cllr Batchelor-Wylam and the Clerk had started to review the space available in the Cemetery.

173. **Open Forum**

A resident thanked outgoing councillors for their work, particularly Cllr Hawker for her long service on the council. He also thanked Cllr Adler as the Chair, highlighting his work during the pandemic.

The resident made a number of comments about street lighting, including:

- He felt the most important criteria in deciding which lights to switch off was the level of footfall by each light.
- Concerns that switching off lights on the station approach might discourage train use or increase the number of people driving to the station.
- That electricity prices were falling so increases in costs of electricity supply should be less than predicted.
- That since the consultation some additional lights were now proposed to be switched off and residents should be consulted on these changes.

A resident spoke against removing the temporary matting on The Tying because of the expense and the disruption to the path involved. She felt that the matting helped create useable paths and that removing the matting on environmental grounds would only move the waste plastic elsewhere. She asked for the matter to be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting.

174. **Planning Applications**

None.

175. **Tree Applications**

None.

176. **Planning decisions**

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

177. **Update on Local Elections, 4 May 2023**

Six people had put themselves forward for the role of parish councillor and therefore the election would be uncontested (as the full council is made up of nine councillors). Recruitment of three more councillors would begin in May.

178. **Assets**

Councillors considered a request from the Memorial Hall Committee for the purchase of an additional dog waste bin by the playing field behind the Memorial Hall. B&NES had provided a quote of £550 for installing a new general waste bin. Emptying of the bin would be undertaken by B&NES within the standard refuse collection schedule.

Resolved: to purchase an additional general waste bin from B&NES.

Cllr
Carpenter

179. **Street Lighting**

Councillors considered proposals to switch off 25 of the 38 street lamps managed by the Parish Council. The proposal was in line with the Parish Council's declaration of Climate and Nature emergencies. Proposals took into account feedback from the community consultation. Criteria had been used to identify which lights should be switched off.

It was reported that Volker and SSE had confirmed that a 12-month trial of switching off 25 lights was possible. The cost of switching off these lights had been quoted as approximately £800.

It was agreed that this final proposal should be put to the community for feedback.

The Clerk would check whether this type of consultation could be undertaken in the pre-election period.

Clerk

180. **Matting on The Tying**

The temporary matting on The Tying had been in place longer than expected because of ongoing social distancing requirements at the time. Most of the matting was now embedded in the grass and it would not be possible for volunteers to remove it by hand. Once the matting was removed the paths would need re-seeding. Three quotes had been sought to remove the matting and make good the paths.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Whilst it was not ideal to have plastic in green spaces, the matting now served a purpose in maintaining the integrity of the paths and for this reason it was suggested that the matting should be left for the time being.
- Although there would be costs and disruption involved in removing the matting now, it could not be left in the ground indefinitely and the costs and disruption would therefore have to be borne at some point.
- Removing the matting might become more difficult and expensive the longer it was left, due to disintegration of the matting.
- It was difficult to gauge how long the matting would last before it started to disintegrate; the company who provided the matting stated that it depended on circumstances and the level of use.
- Regular checks on the condition of the matting could be undertaken, but it might still be difficult to gauge the point at which it should be removed before disintegration caused problems with its removal.
- Consideration should also be given to the condition of the matting in the passing bay at the top of The Tying.
- The paths are now well used and if the matting was removed an alternative, ecological solution should be considered.

- Professional advice could be sought, and the parks department at B&NES might be able to provide some guidance.
- That re-seeding of the paths would only be possible at particular points in the year and the timing of removal of the matting should take this into account.

Resolved: to seek a professional view on the lifespan and possible implications of the disintegration of the matting. Cllr Adler

181. Highways

The radar speed sign had been in place since the start of March. Two sets of vehicle data had been downloaded, showing high levels of compliance with the speed limit and an average speed of 18.6 mph. Most of the highest speeds were recorded late at night. The sign had been switched round to monitor traffic in the opposite direction. Another pole would need to be installed if another location was going to be used.

Cllrs Carpenter and Hawker had met an Officer from B&NES to consider two areas of possible parking restrictions in Freshford and a report was awaited. Double yellow lines had been considered around the Inn and towards Staples Hill, and single yellow lines by Park Corner. The B&NES report would be brought to a future meeting for consideration. The Parish Council could undertake informal consultation with residents; B&NES would have to put any final proposals out for formal consultation.

Cllr Carpenter was still pursuing the missing width restriction sign post at the top of Ashes Lane.

In discussion with the Church, B&NES had recommended that yellow lines be put down by the Church to assist with disabled parking.

182. Update on Community Renewable Energy Project

Councillors from Freshford, Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse had met with Bath and West Community Energy about the possible community solar panel scheme.

BWCE would liaise with the group and would put together a co-operation agreement including a milestone plan. The parish councils would have a communications role with common communications across the parishes.

183. Natural Environment

MP Snelgrove had started the Village Steward contract on 1 April 2023.

184. Annual Parish Meeting, 19 April 2023

Final details were discussed.

185. Finance

185.1 It was proposed that a Standing Order be set up to pay James Lock for grass cutting.

Resolved: to pay James Lock £355 by Standing Order on a monthly basis until 31 December 2023.

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

- £516.52 Selina Jobson for administration
- £770 Freshford Village Memorial Hall hire and donation
- £145.35 ALCA subscription
- £20 Advertising boards for coronation lunch

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

- £106.62 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £135.46 Microsoft Office annual subscription (Direct Debit)
- £60 Memorial inscription (receipt)

- £267.84 VPA fee reimbursement (receipt)
- £2708.11 B&NES CIL money 20/01629/FUL (receipt)

186. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that:

- A resident had reported concerns about the leaning Willow tree on the path by the Galleries to B&NES.
- A resident had reported concerns about a possible planning issue and had been advised to contact B&NES Planning Enforcement Team.
- The GWR Customer & Community Improvement Fund was open for bids until 25 May; bids had to have a link to the railway.

187. Thanks

Thanks were expressed to all the outgoing councillors for their time and contribution to the Parish Council and to the community.

188. Dates of Future Meetings

Wednesday 19 April, 7pm, Annual Parish meeting.
Monday 22 May (TBC), 7pm, Parish Council meeting
All meetings in Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 8.55pm