

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 12 June 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

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

Apologies: John Putt

In attendance: Selina Jobson (Parish Clerk)

Members of the Public: Seven

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

None.

22. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 as a true record.

23. **Review of Actions**

The old public waste bin in the Memorial Hall field, which had been replaced, had been removed as requested. There had been an issue with rubbish relating to the pizza van which B&NES had cleared. Cllr Tibbles would raise this matter at the next Hall Meeting and liaising with the pizza company was suggested.

B&NES were waiting to hear back from SSE about cables that were running through the branches of the Willow tree overhanging the path to the Galleries, before they could consider action here.

Issues with roadworks and diversion routes had, in the main, been resolved. Cllr Carpenter would liaise with B&NES about appropriate alternative routes for diversions in and around Freshford.

Cllr
Carpenter

24. **Open Forum**

A resident raised concerns about proposals for waiting restrictions in Freshford. Cllr Carpenter confirmed that details were being reviewed by B&NES and it was hoped that revised proposals would be ready for the next Parish Council meeting.

A number of residents raised points relating to the uncertain future of the No. 94 bus service:

- that a number of people and groups had taken up the issue of the future of the No. 94 bus with the Mayor at the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) (Dan Norris), the local MP (Jacob Rees-Mogg), the Leader of B&NES (Kevin Guy) and the local Ward Councillors (Matt McCabe and Fiona Gourley).

- nationally, it had been clarified that money awarded to local authorities (in this case WECA) could be used to support existing as well as new transport services.

- there was a WECA committee meeting on Friday 16 June. Questions and statements about the bus service could be submitted ahead of the meeting and councillors were asked if they would attend the meeting.

- the potential withdrawal of the No. 94 service was felt to have a significant negative impact on the community, including those without access to transport and school children.
- A resident questioned the amount of levy that was needed to run the service and suggested this could be found through a Freedom of Information request.
- A resident had contacted the Secretary of State for Transport (Mark Harper). She felt that the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) system did not work, highlighting that poor internet connection in the village presented problems with scanning QR codes and the inaccuracy of the routes suggested by the system.
- A representative from Link, which provides transport to those without access to their own transport, stated that the loss of the No.94 bus would likely put additional strain on an already well used voluntary service.

A resident had reported concerns to B&NES with the suitability of a diversion route around local roadworks that included Rosemary Lane, pointing out that this was not suitable for large vehicles. They felt that B&NES had not understood the problem.

A resident questioned whether the bin on the wall by the Old Surgery, removed some time ago, would be replaced. When asked previously, B&NES had said that this would constitute a new bin and therefore evidence of a problem with rubbish would need to be provided before B&NES would consider installing a new bin.

A resident spoke to explain proposals for a trial to manage the Cemetery grounds in a more environmentally friendly manner. Noting recent improvements in the management of the cemetery, she stated that a small team of volunteers were willing to provide some more care. They understood that the area needed to be managed sensitively. Recent counts of biodiversity had indicated that areas of the Cemetery were ecologically diverse.

25. **Highways - No. 94 Bus Service**

The Parish Council had made strong representations to the local MP (Jacob Rees-Mogg) and to the West of England Metro Mayor at WECA (Dan Norris) about the potential loss of the No. 94 bus service. The Chair read out an email sent to the Metro Mayor setting out concerns, including the isolation of those who relied on the service. Conversations had also been held with the B&NES Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Transport /Deputy Council Leader (Sarah Warren).

A statement would be submitted for consideration at the WECA committee meeting on 16 June; councillors would confirm if they were available to attend the meeting.

There was a lack of clarity over the date at which the service was currently proposed to end.

The Parish Council would continue to raise this matter with all relevant parties.

26. **Natural Environment**

It was proposed that some relatively minor changes to the environmental management of the Cemetery, including to the grass cutting regime, be trialled for the next two months. A small volunteer group would undertake the proposed work. Any negative feedback on the changes would be taken into account.

The Cemetery Advisory Group should be kept informed of any changes and consulted over the maintenance of older graves and additional bulb planting.

James Lock had provided a quote for raking up mown grass. The group would consider how frequently raking was needed.

In discussion it was suggested that a longer trial would be useful to allow time to see the benefits of the changes.

Resolved: that a volunteer group undertake a trial of small changes to the environmental management of the Cemetery until October 2023.

27. **Planning Applications and Decisions**

None.

28. **Tree Applications**

23/01823/TCA Abbotsleigh , Sharpstone Lane, BA2 7UA: Conifer Leylandii (T1); Yew/Ash (T4); Ash trees (T3, T5, T6 to 13) - Remove all. Beech (T2) - 20% crown thin. Beech (T14) - crown lift to a finished height of 20 feet. Lime (T15) - Re-pollard to previous points.

Resolved: to request that all trees being removed should be replaced and to request that as much possible of the Ash trees should be left for environmental benefit.

29. **Co-option of Councillors**

There were three vacant positions and these would be advertised across the parish. The Clerk and Cllr Forbes would look at additional advertising. One person had expressed an interest in the role and this would be followed up.

Clerk/ Cllr Forbes
Cllr Adler

30. **Highways and Transport**

Park Corner would be closed for up to five weeks whilst roof works were undertaken. The diversion was through Sharpstone and Rosemary Lane and it was felt this would not be viable and vehicles larger than a small van would struggle to use this diversion. Cllr Carpenter would contact B&NES to advise that the only workable diversion was via Church Lane.

A community email about road closures would be sent out and the School would be contacted.

Cllr Adler

31. **Street Lighting**

Cllr Tibbles was obtaining revised quotes for the street lighting project.

A resident's concern that the street light consultation would not be undertaken until after a trial of some lights being turned off had been undertaken was reported.

A web page about the street lighting project had been drafted as a basis for ongoing communication about the project.

The Clerk would seek a quote from SSE for a renewal of the unmetered electricity supply contract and would bring this to the next meeting.

Clerk

32. **Matting on The Tynning**

Cllr Tibbles had spoken to an environmental company about assessing the longer term environmental impact of the matting on The Tynning. They might be able to look into this if a company name and matting type could be provided.

33. **Finance**

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

33.1 Councillors received the completed Internal Auditors report for the Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR) and noted that no issues had been raised.

33.2 **Resolved:** to approve all statements relating to the preparations of the Accounting Statement in Section One of the AGAR.

33.3 **Resolved:** to approve the figures provided in the Accounting Statements in Section Two of the AGAR.

33.4 **Resolved:** to approve the declaration that there were no conflicts of interest with the external audit company.

The period of the Exercise of Public Rights would take place from 19 June to 28 July 2023.

33.5 Details of three insurance quotes had been circulated to councillors who had considered the quotes and the level of cover provided.

Resolved: councillors had approved a 3-year long-term insurance agreement with BHIB.

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

- £500.92 Selina Jobson for administration
- £240 Alan Duck for grass cutting
- £100 Chloe Alexander for the internal audit.
- £659.98 B&NES for the installation of a new waste bin
- £400 Matt Snelgrove for Village Steward contract

Resolved: that Matt Snelgrove would in future be paid by Standing Order for this regular maintenance contract.

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

- £580.56 BHIB for annual insurance (Payment)
- £355 James Lock for grass maintenance (Standing Order)
- £110.29 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £15 Rupert Kirby for newsletter (Receipt)

34. **Clerk's Report**

Avonpark Retirement Village had held a consultation meeting about proposed redevelopment of the site. There was going to be an increase in the building height and size. It was suggested that this should be raised with the Cotswold AONB.

A representative from Truespeed would give a short talk to the next Parish Council meeting about planned works in the village that would start in August / September.

The old Freshford station sign would be rehoused outside the Galleries.

35. **Roles and Responsibilities**

These would be considered at an informal meeting.

36. **External Meeting**

Bathavon Forum were considering the implications of the fact that no rural parishes in the Bathavon Forum area had had enough candidates to stand as councillors to require elections to be held. Support for parish councils would be considered.

There was a new Chair of ALCA.

37. **Dates of July Meeting**

Monday 10 July, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9pm.