

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Freshford Parish Council 11 September 2023, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall

Parish Councillors Present: John Adler (Chairman), Elli Bate, Jessie Forbes, Richard Tibbles, Jennifer Clamp from minute 57

Apologies: Julian Carpenter, John Putt

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

Members of the Public: Two

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

None.

55. **Minutes of Meeting**

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 as a true record.

56. **Open Forum**

Two residents spoke about concerns with the uncertain future of the No. 94 bus service. One resident suggested that more people could be encouraged to use the 94 bus, perhaps by contacting local hotels, AirBnB owners etc. to promote details of the service to visitors.

A second resident reported on the continuing lack of clarity over the future of the 94 bus service, despite contacting the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) who jointly funded the service with Wiltshire Council. It was felt that there was money available to support this cross-county service.

It was suggested that the Parish Council could promote bus use via a community email. A 'Save our Bus' group could be established to campaign for the continuation of the service, similar groups had been established in other areas where bus services had been cut or were under threat.

Ward Councillor Gourley reported on meetings with the Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Transport, B&NES' Deputy Leader with responsibility for Sustainable Travel, and bus officers. A cross-party letter had been sent to the Government's Minister for Buses and to WECA. At a meeting with WECA's Metro-Mayor, Ward Cllr Gourley had suggested that, of the bus services under threat, the No. 94 bus was more financially viable because of its cross-county funding model.

A cross-party petition was being organised for presentation to the WECA Board meeting on 6 October 2023, subject to obtaining enough signatures. This would be publicised to residents.

Unitary Cllr Kidney had stated that Wiltshire Council would continue to fully fund the 94 bus service until at least Christmas.

57. **Co-option of Councillor**

One person had applied to be co-opted to the Parish Council.

Resolved: to approve the co-option of Jennifer Clamp to the Parish Council.

Ms Clamp signed the Declaration of Office and joined the meeting.

58. **Planning Applications**

None.

59. **Tree Applications**

23/03237/TCA Sharpstone House, Sharpstone Lane, BA2 7UA: Ash (T1) - fell due to extensive die back. Yew (T2) - reduce by 2m. Bay (T3) - reduce by 1.5m. Olive (T4) - reduce by 1m. Western red cedar (T5) - reduce by 1.5m. Ash (T6) - remove 2 x low right limbs. Yew (T7) - reduce by 2m.

Resolved: no objection to the application, but the Parish Council requests that the applicant plants at least two trees to replace the tree being felled.

60. **Highways and Transport**

60.1 Number 94 bus service

Covered under Open Forum [Minute 56].

60.2 A36 Severance Study Options - Crossing Points

National Highways had met with local councils to discuss potential crossing points on the A36. Installing a crossing point at Pipehouse was not deemed viable because of the extent of carriageway realignment and additional lighting that would be required. An option to provide an uncontrolled crossing point with refuge south of Midford Lane would be developed by National Highways. The Parish Council had requested that footpath provision on Midford Lane be included in plans to discourage crossing at the bellmouth. Designs would be produced in 2024/25 and would be shared with the Parish Council.

60.3 Yellow line proposals

Councillors had considered plans for possible yellow lines drawn up by B&NES. There was general support from councillors for yellow lines by the bridge over the River Frome, where poor parking regularly created difficulties for vehicles passing through. The Parish Council would undertake an informal consultation with residents before submitting any proposals for consideration by B&NES. The possibility of creating a parking area on private land would be investigated.

The possibility of installing temporary signage to encourage people to park responsibly or not to park in some areas was considered but there were doubts about its likely effectiveness.

Councillors had decided not to pursue proposals for yellow lines by Park Corner.

60.4 School Parking

A meeting about parking issues around Freshford Primary School had been arranged with B&NES Officers, the Headteacher and a Governor at the School and would be attended by Cllrs Carpenter and Clamp.

A resident had raised concerns with the Parish Council about parking behaviours at School drop-off and pick-up times. This issue had been raised at the Highways & Transport Community meeting in April 2022. The School had since undertaken a travel survey of parents and had produced a leaflet about travelling to school and parking.

61. **Street Lighting**

61.1 Trial to turn off some street lamps

Cllr Tibbles had spoken to Enerveo today who had indicated that a quote to trial switching off the street lights in Freshford would be available soon. Figures from Volker had been clarified. A comparison would be undertaken once both quotes were available.

61.2 Electricity Supply Contract

A 3-year contract from SSE for the Parish Council's unmetered electricity supply had been agreed, following the receipt quotes from SSE and Utility Aid.

62. **Natural Environment**

Cllr Bate was awaiting a reply from the B&NES Rights of Way Officer about concerns with the state of the footpath from the Tynning to Dunkirk Mill and the need for repairs to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Information about Dark Skies would be reviewed to consider formulating a Dark Skies policy.

A review of a trial maintenance regime at the Cemetery would be undertaken in October.

63. **Communications**

Some articles had been received for the next edition of the Freshford Newsletter, a reminder had been sent out with a deadline of 17 September to enable an October publication.

Cllr Adler was in the process of sharing the responsibility for running the MailChimp system and the community website with Cllr Forbes.

64. **FLISCA Representative**

FLISCA had requested a Parish Councillor to be a representative and Trustee on FLISCA. Councillors agreed that having a councillor liaising between FLISCA and the Parish Councillor was mutually beneficial. It was felt that requiring a councillor to become a Trustee was an unnecessary obligation and could lead to a conflict of interest. Councillors could, if they wished, become a Trustee or volunteer for FLISCA as an individual. FLISCA would be contacted with this clarification of the role.

Chair/
Clerk

65. **Finance**

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

- £500.72 Selina Jobson for administration
- £40.00 ALCA for councillor training

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

- £355 James Lock for grass maintenance (Standing Order)
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- £400 Matt Snelgrove for Village Steward role (Standing Order)
- £121.27 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £110.29 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £140.00 HMRC Shipley for tax
- £60.00 DM Payroll for payroll
- £770.00 FVMH for Hall hire & donation
- £500.92 Selina Jobson for Administration
- £120.00 James Lock for raking long grass (Cemetery)
- £378.00 BDO for external audit
- £445.00 Alan Duck for Grass maintenance (May & June)
- £225.00 Alan Duck for Grass maintenance (July)
- £180.00 Mannings Cemetery fees (receipt)

65.3 Councillors noted an update on spending against the budget.

65.4 The external auditors report had been received with no matters to note. The conclusion of audit notice had been published on the community website.

65.5 The process of adding Cllr Carpenter as a second signatory to the bank mandate was ongoing.

66. **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk was attending a Society of Local Council Clerks training day on 15 September 2023.

Cllr Forbes had attended online councillor training run by the Avon Association of Local Councils. The Clerk would forward on details of training to all councillors.

Clerk

67. **External Meetings**

A report of a meeting of Freshford Village Memorial Hall was noted.

Cllr Adler had stood down as Chair of the Bathavon Area Forum.

68. **Exchange of Information**

- A streetlight in Pipehouse was operating incorrectly. No action would be taken until confirmation of whether a trial of switching off street lights was going ahead this year.
- A resident had raised concerns about sewage being released into the local river. Cllr Tibbles reported on water quality tests undertaken in the Avon and Frome rivers by volunteers for the Bristol Avon River Trust.
- Noting that work on the Mill building within the Freshford Mill development remained incomplete, it was asked whether the Parish Council could seek an update on the situation.

69. **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 9 October, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 8.40pm.