

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Apologies: Jennifer Clamp, John Putt

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

Members of the Public: Two

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

None.

100. **Minutes of Meeting**

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

101. **Open Forum**

A resident spoke to make the following points:

- That a Dark Skies policy had not been provided for approval;
- That National Highways had published information about their plans to improve pedestrian and cycling safety on the A36. He questioned whether there would be further consultation before plans were implemented. Cllr Adler confirmed that National Highways would make further details available, which would be reviewed by the Parish Council;
- He had witnessed two incidents when the 94 bus had been obstructed by drivers who had parked and blocked the road by the bridge near to the Inn at Freshford.
- That he considered poor parking on New Road at school drop-off & pick-up times to be getting worse. A car had blocked a driveway and parking on opposite sides of the road had meant that only small vehicles were able to pass, preventing the bus from getting through.
- He remained opposed to the proposal to turn off street lights but supportive of changing sodium lamps to LEDs.

102. **Request for Funding**

The Chair of the Freshford Village Memorial Hall (FVMH) Committee outlined long-standing issues with drainage in the Hall's car park. The continual repair and patching of areas was not a long-term solution. A scheme of works had been produced in 2016 to address the drainage issues and the resurfacing of the car park; a recent quote of £175,000 to undertake these works had been received. Members of the FVMH Committee and the Galleries were looking to use volunteers to reduce costs to £120,000. It was proposed that works should be undertaken in the summer, either in 2024 or 2025. Costs of previous car park works had been split four ways between FVMH, the Galleries, FLISCA and the Parish Council. It was therefore suggested that each of these organisations needed to raise around £30,000. Fundraising had not started and external funding would be needed to reach this target. The Parish Council were supportive of the need to raise funds but stated that the agreement to split car park repair costs was an informal one and that the Parish Council could only directly raise money by raising the local precept.

Cllr Adler reported that the cost of car parks repairs and drainage had been included in the initial programme of works to refurbish the Hall and the Community Right to Build Order had been approved on that basis.

It was agreed that representatives of all relevant organisations should meet to start planning this project and associated fundraising.

103. **Co-option of Councillor**

The Chair reported that Cllr Richard Tibbles had stood down from the Parish Council. Councillors noted thanks for his hard work as a councillor, particularly on the street lights project and with the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Home Energy Group (FLHEG).

The Clerk had attended councillor recruitment training and would circulate course information.

Clerk

104. **Planning Applications**

23/04147/FUL & 23/04148/LBA, 1 Old House, The Hille, BA2 7WG: Internal alterations and refurbishment of main house, external stonework repairs to main house and replacement garage within service yard.

The property was situated in the middle of the Conservation Area.

Resolved: To comment that the Conservation Officer reviews the detail of the application to ensure that the proposals are in line with the Conservation Area planning controls.

105. **Tree Applications**

23/04237/TCA, The Old Parsonage, Church Hill, BA2 7TX: T1-Ginkgo, reduce height to previous reduction points approx by 3m, reduce side by 1m.

Resolved: No comment.

23/04579/TCA Ivythorpe, Church Hill, BA2 7TX: Horse Chestnut - remove secondary lateral limbs on canopy to 2 meters above neighbouring chimney stack, approx 15 metres. Mulberry -prune canopy by up to 1 metre in height, retaining width of tree. Apple - remove main secondary stem and reduce remaining limbs by max 1 metre.

Resolved: No comment.

106. **Highways and Transport**

106.1 Number 94 bus service

Ward Cllr Gourley reported that she had been told that the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) would not agree any future funding of the 94 bus service until there had been a public consultation about bus services; there was no date set for this consultation. Wiltshire Council would continue to fully fund the service until 1 April 2024, but the funding situation after that point was uncertain.

Cllr Gourley reported that WECA Officers had strongly recommended that the affected parish councils of Freshford and Monkton Coombe submit an expression of interest to WECA's WESTlocal fund for community-run transport schemes. The contract could be run with Libra Travel as it was currently, with Wiltshire Council taking the lead. An expression of interest would have to be submitted by the parish councils by 3 January 2024.

Councillors were concerned that:

- according to general information about the WESTlocal fund, it was intended for new services, not to support existing services;
- WESTlocal funding would be available until 2025, after this it was felt there could be an ongoing financial commitment on the parish councils;
- the future of the 94 bus was being used as a political issue and, as a non-political organisation, the Parish Council did not want to be involved in any way that could be used for political purposes.
- if the Parish Council did not apply for the WESTlocal funds then it might miss out on a potential source of funding to support the future of the bus service.

- there was no guarantee that an application to the WESTlocal fund would be successful.
- the Parish Council was being asked to make a decision, with possible long-term financial implications, without having received sufficient information ahead of the meeting and without publicising this proposal to residents.

It was agreed that an additional meeting would be held to agree whether or not to submit an expression of interest in the WESTlocal funding scheme. Residents would be encouraged to attend and to give their views. Monkton Coombe Parish Council would be contacted to confirm their position on submitting such an expression of interest.

Cllr Gourley would circulate the application form that she was drafting.

106.2 Double Yellow Lines survey

Analysis of the results and comments from the survey had been undertaken by Cllr Clamp and circulated to councillors.

Cllrs Adler and Clamp were arranging a time to meet with the owners of The Inn. Cllrs Adler and Putt would contact the owner of some nearby private land to explore any possibility of designating some land as an additional parking area.

Cllrs Adler/
Clamp

Cllrs Adler/
Putt

It was suggested that proposals for more limited yellow lines could be considered.

106.3 Freshford School meeting about parking

Cllr Carpenter reported that a response was awaited from B&NES Officers about the potential of a safe streets initiative. The School Governors were leading on this matter.

Cllr Carpenter would make sure that the School were aware of a resident's report of increasing parking problems at school start and finish times on New Road.

Cllr Carpenter was liaising with B&NES about repairs to potholes on the road at the top of The Tynning.

106.4 Other Highways updates

Phased road closures along Lower Limpley Stoke to undertake gas main works would start on 2 January and would continue until April 2024.

107. **Street Lighting**

107.1 Approve contractor for upgrading of 11 street lights to LEDs

Councillors received costs from two contractors for changing 11 specified street lights from sodium to LED lamps for financial and environmental benefit. Both contractors had been asked about the possibility of fitting motion sensors; responses suggested these would be expensive, have logistical implementation issues and would not lead to any cost savings because the streetlights were on an unmetered supply.

Resolved: to accept the quote of £6247.17 from Enerveo to change 11 specified sodium street lights to LEDs, subject to details of the quote being circulated to all councillors.

107.2 Repairs to street lights

A number of street lights had been repaired by Enerveo. Enerveo had reported electricity supply problems with four street lamps (located on The Hill, Church Hill and the High Street) and these had been reported to SSEN to address.

108. **Natural Environment**

108.1 Dark Skies

A Dark Skies policy would be brought to a future a meeting.

108.2 Fence at the Cemetery

A contractor had provided an outline quote to remove those sections of fence that were unstable and the works would now be undertaken.

109. **Energy Project**

An update on the potential solar energy scheme had been circulated. Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE) were progressing with the Feasibility Study. BWCE had

accepted a formal offer from SSE confirming that an 800kw connection to the grid was possible. The project would be one of the largest community schemes in the UK.

110. Communications

Cllr Forbes was now set up on the MailChimp system and would help with community messaging.

Cllr Adler was continuing to explore options and costs for moving to standard email addresses and would report back to a future meeting.

Cllr Adler

111. Finance

111.1 A draft budget was considered and it was agreed that figures would be finalised at the January meeting, alongside consideration of the precept.

111.2 Noted the approved National Association of Local Council pay scales, effective from 1 April 2023.

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

- £694.96 Selina Jobson for administration
- £770.00 Freshford Village Memorial Hall for hire and donation
- £380.00 Alan Duck for grass cutting
- £15.00 Zonkey for domain name renewal
- £40.00 ALCA essential councillor training
- £30.00 ALCA councillor recruitment training
- £908.47 Enerveo for street light repairs
- £60.00 DMPayroll for payroll services

111.4 **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)
- £217.01 SSE for electricity supply (Direct Debit)
- £378.00 HL Mills for Tynning long grass cut (Payment)
- £360.00 Cemetery fees (Receipts)
- £60.00 Newsletter advertisements (Receipts)

111.5 Noted that Cllr Carpenter had been added to the bank mandate.

112. External Meetings

The Avon Local Council Association was currently setting up a Chairs' Network to support the Chairs from all member local councils.

Cllr Bate was working with a Winsley Parish councillor to set up a meeting of other local parish councils about the natural environment. Freshford Parish Council would contribute to the costs of hiring a meeting room.

113. Exchange of Information

Limpley Stoke Parish Council had contacted the Parish Council about reviewing the joint Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan and a meeting would be arranged.

The Chair reported on the death of local resident Stuart Campbell, a long-serving previous councillor and Chair of the Parish Council.

114. Date of Next Meeting

Date TBC - additional meeting to consider a WESTlocal submission (see Minute 106.1).
Monday 15 January, 7pm, Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Meeting ended 9.10pm.