

## FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman) (MKB), Katherine Grimston (Vice-Chairman) (KG), Barbara Cunningham (BC), Kevin Ochel (KO), Dr Adrian Wood (AW) and County Councillor Michael Gibbard (MG)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk) (SC) and Ian Macpherson (Treasurer) (IM)

1. Apologies:- No apologies were received

#### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> November were circulated and approved.

#### 3. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This was postponed as Cllr Fulljames was unable to be present.

#### 4. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND FINMERE HOUSE UPDATE

**Scrutiny Committee** Cllr Michael Gibbard (MG) came to report on progress with the scrutiny committee and Finmere House. A written report was submitted to the committee in September reviewing the action points set out in their report and the response to them. The EA had been tasked to carry out a health check. This is actually the responsibility of the HPA, who delegated to the Oxfordshire PCT. In all 11 local GP surgeries were surveyed, there were no reports of hydrogen sulphide related illness. This matter has now gone as far as is reasonably practicable. A more formal monitoring regime has been adopted. There is now a greater strength to the monitoring presence on the ground. Officers have visited the site on announced visits 5 times and unannounced spot checks have happened 3 times this year. This has established a precedent for good practice county wide. The data loggers for the centre of the village promised by the EA have not arrived.

MKB points out that there has been a smell, on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November, and Monday 30<sup>th</sup> as well as today. Other councillors concur. BC points out that the windy weather of the weekend may have blown a flare out. MG confirms that OCC will not give up on this. The recent applications submitted by PA have been refused, they may appeal. The February permission to reshape was given subject to conditions. The last of these, covering surface water, has now been given and work can proceed on the contouring of the mound. The February permission granted permission for the smallest of the proposed restoration shapes. PA may appeal for permission for a larger shape.

MKB points out how much the level of communication and cooperation with OCC has improved. Early warning of the applications arrival, an invite for early consultations and being kept in the loop by helpful staff has been very encouraging. BC points out that the new applications went in only days after the last quarry liaison meeting. MG will report again to

the scrutiny committee on these matters and asks that when work starts at the quarry, or indeed if it does not start, the PC should keep him informed.

**Finnere House** Whenever MG or others have visited Finnere House the builders have been present, doing just enough to satisfy regulations and keep OCC from proceeding against the owner. Rose Todd, OCC Senior Conservation Officer, is now proceeding on a different tack. She is in the process of compiling a list of all at risk buildings in the district, hopefully to be completed by mid 2010. This can then be presented en masse and 'urgent works notices' can be issued, compelling owners to make the properties wind and weather tight. The next step would be compulsory purchase, a difficult decision as there is a risk to tax payers money. IM points out that the risk is minimal as the money can be recouped by sale of the property to interested parties. MG reports that Rose Todd looked at the property today, there was no sign of life, the shutters were closed and there had been no change to the exterior. It is possible that the work carried out by the landlord on the music room window constitutes work on a listed building without consent, as IM points out the owner will simply apply for retrospective permission. If the work is not done or is of bad quality then OCC can enforce compulsory purchase. MKB asks what the council would normally do with the building. MG explains that the council may not have the money to purchase the building but if they do then the PC could make representation at that stage. The owner can of course always delay matters by appealing. BC points out that neighbours of the property have had a problem with rats recently, would this make a difference? MKB says he will check with Rose Todd about this problem, all Rose can do is ask the neighbours if they have a problem. MG is happy to return and speak about these matters at a PC meeting at any time on request. MKB thanks MG for his time and effort on Finnere's behalf.

## 5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 **Moss on Roadway** This has still not been removed.
- 5.2 **Freedom of Information** c/f
- 5.3 **Mixbury Trust** Michael Clifton has contacted Mixbury Trust solicitors on our behalf but has had no reply yet. We have not yet formally instructed him. MKB has been advised that the cost, based on the purchase price expected, will be £400 + VAT approximately.
- 5.4 **Local Transport** BC has talked to villagers. People are forced to take taxis to their doctor appointments in Buckingham as there is no service during surgery hours. Sylvia Barnes, a villager, has explained that there is a way of getting to Buckingham direct by bus. The service runs from Little Tingewick via Mixbury, Brackley and Water Stratford to Buckingham. This service runs at just after 10am and returns from Buckingham at 2pm, taking 1 hr each way. There was an earlier service at 8.30am but the bus pass was not usable on this service and it has now been cut. This has highlighted a discrepancy between counties. Buckingham's bus passes work from 9am onward but Cherwell's only from 9.30am. BC is to report her findings to Barry Wood, District Councillor, and report back on his progress with the X5.
- 5.5 **Village Noticeboards** MKB thanks KG for cutting back the bushes around the Valley Road board. KO has been asking at Warren Farm about a suitable location.
- 5.6 **Playing Field Works** MKB placed the cuttings on the bonfire.

- 5.7 **Flares Information** KO has been forbidden access to the site by his friend. He has chatted with his friend about the operation and finds that it is a small generating facility. Connection to the grid is expensive in rural locations. The flare is burning continuously. Most sites only have their flares on standby but PA are burning gas to suit the site, all is working well apparently. KO's friend has a good working relationship with Helen Beever and Ben Wragg of PA. RPS, the generating company, pay for the facility and sell the electricity, paying PA a retainer for the site. Everyone is to notify MKB and BC of any smell for the next two weeks.
- 5.8 **Parish Liaison Meeting** The meeting was successful as usual. One piece of news is that the new 'caddy' system for collection of food waste is to start in Finmere on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Also Ralph Grant, OCC Highways Engineer, will provide a map of the current drain system.
- 5.9 **Letter from Tony How** SC has written to inform Tony How of the decision about the roadside posts.
- 5.10 **Phonebook** SC has still had no reply. She is to phone BT.
- 5.11 **Speed Sign** SC has been in contact with Barry Buckingham, CDC, about the sign base. After some teething troubles due to the slight lean in the sign caused by the base damage things are working and the sign is set to activate at 34mph. The base is scheduled for repair next year. MKB has received a grateful message of thanks from a villager already. As there are more signs in stock than expected the sign will be able to be set up every 8-10 weeks instead of six monthly.
- 5.12 **Unmetered Connection** AW has checked the correspondence about the unmetered connection. SC has not found the original record in the minutes of this light being paid for by the PC. BC suggests that she check between 1990 and 1994, working back through this time. SC is to check the minutes and complete and return the form.
- 5.13 **Vacancy for Parish Councillor** Paul Nash has had to refuse the offer of co-option, no other candidates have been found.
- 5.14 **Re-assignment of Website Responsibilities** AW to sort out access and training with Paul Nash, Website Coordinator, SC is to send the latest approved minutes to Paul Nash for inclusion on the site.
- 5.15 **Building work in Little Tingewick** SC has notified Roger Fiander, villager, and the other concerned villager of the outcome of investigations on the work beside Mere Lane. Tingewick PC have agreed to notify Finmere PC of any further relevant applications.
- 5.16 **Restoration of Village Clock** TOE has informed the PCC that this is not in their remit and they cannot help with funding. IM suggests Oxfordshire Historical Churches Fund. Pete Lepper, Church Warden, is already investigating this as one of several possibilities.
- 5.17 **Christmas Carol Service** Fred Tew and Beryl Smith are happy to turn the lights on at this event.

- 5.18 **Christmas Newsletter** This is to be distributed.
- 5.19 **Ethical Framework Customer Survey** SC checked the questions and was able to answer without reference to the PC. This has been returned.
- 5.20 **Chinalls Close Excavation** MKB has passed all information on. Both eon and CDC came and checked the work and were satisfied.
- 5.21 **Squirrels Drive** MKB has checked this and the work seems satisfactory.
- 5.22 **Sewage** MKB was unable to notice a smell when he checked Mere Lane. BC and KG have both noticed a smell and MKB is to check again and write to the EA about this last occurrence as the problem of smell has been mentioned by more than one villager.
- 5.23 **Verge Clearance** BC has been unable to contact the person responsible for organising work parties but she will persevere with this matter.

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £331.42 in the Treasurer Account, £6,502.69 in the Business Money Manager Account and £25,000 in the Deposit Bond.

The following had been paid out:

£29.00 to CPRE for membership renewal  
£100.00 to RBL Poppy Appeal for memorial wreath  
£167.08 to CDC for dog bin emptying  
£19.00 to Beryl Smith for war memorial flowers  
£300.00 to John Donaldson for grass cutting  
£76.03 to Sharron Chalcraft (administration and running costs)

The deposit bond is now due for renewal. Due to the possibility of action on the field sale it is felt best to put the money into a 3 month plan at 0.4% interest. Carried unanimously.

## 7. S19/137

The bulbs cost is to follow, the speed sign has been invoiced at £400.00.

MKB has met with the company involved in providing the speed data recorder. They do not wish to sell to a consortium of villages. They prefer to deal with the County Council with one contract in place. They would proceed if forced. MKB approached Steve Wood, OCC, about a possible Speed Control Partnership. MKB offered to try and set this up with the other villages for him but it cannot be done. The parishes involved would need to fund £10 million public liability insurance and training for those using the recorder. MKB is not giving up, his contacts at NAG, Neighbourhood Action Group, are to approach the local Area Commander about the possibility of the police licensing and part funding the recorders. This will not be possible before next year.

## 8. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

There has been some smell. All the conditions have now been met and signed off. Work can now start, with a 14 day warning to be given to the EA before importing waste. PA say they want to establish a waste stream before starting work. OCC have sent a newsletter to villagers, there will be another before works start. They want to tell the villagers what to expect, to avoid a rush of calls about vehicles dumping on the top of the mound! There is to be no more waste deposited in cells until the cap is done. KO has emailed details of leachate concerns to MKB. MKB is to contact the EA and ask why nothing has been heard about this.

## 9. NUMBERING OF MINUTES

After considering various ways to number minutes, including numerically on an annual basis, it is decided that in future Matters Arising should be number 4.1, 4.2 etc commencing with these minutes.

## 10. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

These are to be put up at 10am on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December. MKB, KO and AW to erect. MKB to liaise with Phillip Rushforth, villager, who holds the lights in storage.

## 11. VANDALISM IN FINMERE

There have been a number of incidents of vandalism recently in the village. The village hall was broken into, the gate post to the playing field entrance gate was broken, the salt bin at Cross Tree was tipped out and the Water Stratford Rd sign uprooted. (At this point MKB points out that if we send emails, especially at weekends, to which we require an urgent answer then we should also phone the person concerned, warning them to check their emails. During the week MKB checks his email at least twice a day but at weekends his checks can be less frequent.) The last incidents, the salt bin and sign, happened together at 3am on a Saturday. Villagers were woken by noise but did not report it. On Monday the police still did not know of the incident but they came to check that evening when MKB reported it. It was dark and had been raining so there was little evidence for them to find. The police are pursuing incidents of anti social behaviour quite seriously at the moment and would have come out at once if they had been called. A house to house was carried out but no evidence was found to link anyone to the incident. The PC need to ask the villagers for vigilance. An article is to be put in the newsletter. Bicester Rural Neighbourhood Action Group are to be thanked for their help in this matter, MKB being a member.

## 12. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Roger Fiander, Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, sends all the email messages that he receives on to the PC as agreed last year. However, since then the number of messages has grown exponentially and the relevance of their content has lessened. Different forces seem to have different policies about what to include in their messages, much does not apply. BC points out that Anita Bilbo, former coordinator, vetted the content of messages before

sending on the relevant ones. MKB points out that the sheer volume of traffic has increased, making this impracticable. BC and AW ask to be removed from the recipient list for these messages. MKB to inform Roger.

### 13. CORRESPONDENCE

Receipt for memorial wreath – given to IM

CDC rural housing event letter – no one able to attend

Review of subsidised bus services – taken by BC

Parish Precept letter – SC to check if this can be done by email as dates are difficult

Invoice for speed sign base – given to IM

Parish liaison meeting follow up letter – taken by MKB

CPRE membership reminder – given to IM

Emergency planning email – to be an agenda item at Parish Meeting in May

Oxfordshire woodland project request for funds - refused

Biodiversity email from OCC planning – no action

Latest local transport plan newsletter – no action

District wide list of buildings and architecture of historic significance – all to think of possible candidates – a round robin to be sent beginning with Finmere House – action for next meeting

Local transport plan 2011 – 2030 – taken by BC

Empowering Local Councils Sustainable Communities Act Amendment Bill – no action

### 14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

09/01387/F – Orchard Barn, Warren Farm – two storey rear extension –

KO declares an interest as a neighbour. The same set of original plans has been sent twice with this application, MKB is to check online. There are no objections, MKB to complete checks with neighbours and return form by 9<sup>th</sup> December.

09/01565/F – Land at Gravel Farm, Banbury Rd – convert farm buildings to two dwellings –

The work suggested is very sympathetic to the nature of the buildings. There will be no impact on any neighbours. The proposal preparation is impressive. No objections.

09/01414/LB – Wilburs Barn, Water Stratford Rd – replace windows/doors –

This is a good quality proposal, replacing the current soft wood with a new light oak hard wood. One neighbour expressed a wish that frosted glass should be used to full height in one bedroom window as is currently the case. No objections.

09/01365/F – 1 Chinalls Close – replace single storey extension, raise roof height –

Some concerns were expressed by neighbours about this proposal, however a view cannot be protected in law and there are no objections on planning grounds. Two neighbours have already made representation themselves. Sylvia Nash, neighbour, had been assured by CDC that only a bungalow would be allowed, there would be no two storey development. This proposal will put 1m on the height of the roof pitch.

09/01030/CM – 09/01031/CM – 09/01032/CM – 09/01033/CM – Premier Aggregates – continue operations without compliance – refused

0100111913411 – Land NE of Widmore Farm, Banbury Rd – portal framed barn – Prior approval not required – determined

## 15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Poors Plot article in Parish News** This article gives the impression that the PC refused funding to the Poors Plot for the Christmas dinner arbitrarily, whereas the case was clearly made that the PC were unable to help due to regulations on spending of PC money. SC is to send the relevant minutes to AW so that he can approach the editors.

**Staining in water** AW asks if any other councillors are experiencing problems with their water, his porcelain toilet bowl is being stained an orangey brown. Some villagers have apparently reported similar problems, these should be reported to Anglia Water by the householders.

**Resignation of Craig Robertson** MKB reports that due to personal commitments CR has been forced to give up his post but will be happy to help with one off projects, like the Christmas lights or the litter pick.

**Barn extension** MKB gives notice to the PC that he will be applying to extend his barn. As in the case of the barn at Widmore Farm in today's applications this will not come before the PC, it will be pre-determined. If it does come before the PC for any reason then MKB will declare an interest.

**Review of procedures** MKB points out that this item must be on the agenda for January so that the PC can determine that the procedures set up last year have been followed.

**Thames Water** MKB encountered a Thames Water operative checking for leaks recently in Finmere. Apparently Thames pay Anglia Water to provide water for the village and this supply is metered! There are bad leaks in the village pipe work and Thames are having to

pay for this leaked water. It may be that they send out repair teams in the future to stop these losses or even lay a new pipe. We can only hope.

#### 16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is provisionally set as January 5<sup>th</sup> 2010. This may have to be changed to the 12<sup>th</sup> if the precept needs to be set at this meeting. KG and BC give apologies for the 12<sup>th</sup>. A meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> would be quorate as all present can attend.

#### CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Glasdon leaflets

Rekk leaflet

CPRE Newsletter

Clerks and Councils Direct November 2009

OPFA Annual Report 2008 - 2009