

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 3rd of June 2014 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Katherine Grimston (KG) (Acting Chair), Kevin Ochel (KO), Amanda Hodgkins (AH) and Stephen Trice (ST)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO) and one member of the public

1. Apologies:-Apologies were received from Councillors Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB), Chairman and Mike Kirby (MK)

2. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Chairman Mike Kerford-Byrnes (having indicated in a letter his willingness to continue)
Proposed: Kevin Ochel
Seconded: Amanda Hodgkins
Carried unanimously

Vice Chair Katherine Grimston (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Kevin Ochel
Seconded: Amanda Hodgkins
Carried unanimously

RFO Sharron Chalcraft (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Katherine Grimston
Seconded: Kevin Ochel
Carried unanimously

Parish Clerk Sharron Chalcraft (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Katherine Grimston
Seconded: Kevin Ochel
Carried unanimously

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 6th of May 2014 and the Extraordinary meeting of 11th of April 2014 were approved with corrections.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This was postponed as the County Councillor was unable to attend.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.01 **APM** The notices and agendas have been sent out.

- 5.02 **Obtaining a defibrillator** SC has had the form returned by Dick Tracy and it has been sent off to the British Heart Foundation for approval. Mrs Veneeta Rayner, Headmistress of Fimmere C of E School has confirmed that the school is happy to have the defibrillator sited on its outside wall. The BHF have confirmed that the funding application is being processed and should not take long.
- 5.03 **Village Notice Boards** c/f
- 5.04 **Moss on pavements** SC has emailed Cliff Monger, OCC Highways, but has not had a reply yet. The title of this section should really change to 'road repairs' as the moss is now no longer a problem. c/f
- 5.05 **VAS Signs** c/f
- 5.06 **List of assets (the pond)** SC has entered the pond on the assets register. It is not known whether MKB has had chance to talk to Mr Tompkins yet. c/f
- 5.07 **Stiles** Nothing heard. SC is to chase up any progress. c/f
- 5.08 **Public Space in Chinalls Close** The letter of engagement has been returned and Malcolm Saunders has copied SC into his email exchanges with Charles Wimborne of Somerlee Homes. So far Somerlee have not replied. c/f
- 5.09 **Playing Field Tree Surgery** ST confirms that Phillip Rushforth (PR), Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee, was carrying out work at the field last weekend. PR has emailed to say that the last of the playing field pruning would be carried out by the end of last weekend.
- 5.10 **Christmas light tree** It is believed that this is still to be pruned. SC is to email PR and check. c/f
- 5.11 **Printer** SC has still not had chance to look at printers again. The cheque which was written to PC World for the printer which had its price changed needs to be destroyed as it cannot be used. This is to be done. Proposed KO, seconded KG, carried unanimously. c/f
- 5.12 **Blocked gullies** SC has emailed again and still received no reply but she has informed County Councillor Catherine Fulljames (CF) of the lack of progress in this matter. c/f
- 5.13 **Fimmere House wall** The fallen wall is still partly blocking the road and councillors have had near misses when trying to negotiate the road at this spot. It is felt that the matter will certainly be raised at next week's APM. SC is to contact Cliff Monger and find out what the legal situation is with regard to insisting that the insurance company clear the area immediately and carry out emergency repairs if necessary. c/f
- 5.14 **Traffic speed in Mere Road** SC has contacted Croughton PC with a request for information. KO points out that the road in Croughton which was given the limit is a B road whereas Mere Rd is unclassified. This may have an effect and CF has said previously that she does not think that it will be easy to duplicate Croughton's success. KO also points out the high cost of the procedure, which makes success even more unlikely. c/f
- 5.15 **Cherwell Boundary Review** This has still to be seen by some councillors. c/f

- 5.16 **Trespassers** There has been no newsletter since this matter was raised. It will be featured in the next one. c/f
- 5.17 **Bins in Mere Rd** SC has again contacted Brendan Bodger, CDC Cleansing Services Manager, but has had no reply, CF has been informed of progress. SC is to chase this up. c/f
- 5.18 **ORCC** The membership subscription has been sent off.
- 5.19 **Ink** SC has been reimbursed for her expenditure on ink.
- 5.20 **Standing Orders** SC has prepared these and they have been circulated to councillors and sent to Paul Nash, website administrator, for posting on the web.
- 5.21 **Insurance** MKB and SC have completed and submitted all relevant documents to Aon and the payment has been made. The internal auditor checked the cover and is satisfied. The actual schedule is still to arrive.
- 5.22 **HS2 Petition** MKB circulated this for approval and MP Sir Tony Baldry presented it on behalf of the PC.
- 5.23 **Great War Centenary Bookmark Information** KG took this to the school and they were very interested and would like to receive any such offers that are sent to the PC.
- 5.24 **HS2 realigned access requirements letter** No further information has arrived yet. c/f
- 5.25 **Health and Safety of the play area** SC has emailed PR and the Grimwades, Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee, and they have confirmed that the bark has been ordered and should have been laid by last weekend. ST, who is a member of the VH & PF committee, confirms that this was done. The committee is also to look at the surrounding timber which contains the bark. It is possible that this is too high and needs to be lowered, although the inspection report has never raised this in the past. A swing needs to be mended and the hinges on the gate tightened. The member of the public present volunteers his help with these issues as he is a regular user of the play area. KG has had it reported to her that the climbing frame is broken. The committee are to check this out. The inspection is scheduled for later this month/early July and the report can be discussed, possibly at the July meeting. c/f
- 5.26 **Protecting Community Assets** MKB has this information and this will need to be discussed at the next meeting under Matters Arising. c/f
- 5.27 **Verge at Stable Close** SC has raised this issue with Cliff Monger and informed CF. c/f
- 5.28 **Playing field problems** There has been no repeat of the barbecuing incident though the Jones's, responsible for maintaining the playing field grass and the cricket square, have reported a problem. Youngsters have been playing in studded boots on the square and the artificial wicket and causing damage. They have refused to refrain when asked politely and have been less than polite in response. The Jones's give considerable time and effort to this village amenity and deserve to be respected. The artificial pitch cost a considerable sum and is listed by CDC as a village asset under

their sports and leisure provision records. This is to be an important item in the next newsletter. c/f

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

It was reported that there was £4,646.27 in the Treasurer Account and £5,292.93 in the Business Money Manager Account.

The following had been paid out:

£50.00 to ORCC for annual subscription

£192.54 to Aon Ltd for insurance

£370.00 to John Donaldson for grass cutting

£230.82 to Sharron Chalcraft for Clerk and RFO duties, internet costs and expenses

SC claims a further refund for ink of £15.00. The huge amount of printing involved with the new regulations and the internal audit has meant a much higher use of ink than usual. This is agreed, proposed KG, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

SC presents a form for the agreement of regular payments for the financial year 2014/15 as per the financial regulations. These payments are to SC herself, salary for the Clerk/RFO position, e.on electricity, for the supply to the wall mounted streetlight provided by the PC, Cherwell District Council, for the emptying of dog bins and John Donaldson, for grass cutting. These payments can now be made automatically by SC but must be reported at the next meeting. These payments are agreed, proposed KG, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

ST presents the invoice for the bark for the playing field in the sum of £197.50. This is to be paid, proposed ST, seconded KG, carried unanimously.

7. S19/S137

No requests have been received.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business has been carried out.

9. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

No response has been received from Opes to the PC's invite to the APM. If anyone does attend on behalf of Opes they can make a report as one of the village organisations.

10. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS

This is still being chased up by MKB. c/f

11. PLAYING FIELD CONDITION

ST confirms that he has walked the field this month and found no hazards.

12. MEETING DATES FOR 2014/15

The meeting dates are discussed, MKB has already checked availability for non-standard dates with Phillip Rushforth, Village Hall bookings, and had confirmation of their availability. The meetings will take place on:

June 10th 2014 – Annual Parish Meeting – delayed a month due to elections

July 8th 2014 – moved to a week later to shorten the summer gap

September 2nd 2014 - October 7th 2014 - November 4th 2014 - December 2nd 2014

January 6th 2015 - February 3rd 2015 - March 3rd 2015 - April 7th 2015

May 5th 2015 – Annual meeting of Parish Council – date as usual as no elections

May 12th 2015 – Annual Parish Meeting – bringing the date back to its usual month

SC is to email this list to all councillors.

13. CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR CLERK/RFO

SC has extrapolated a two page ‘Written Statement of Employment Particulars’ from the documents provided. This document is read through and agreed, proposed KO, seconded ST, carried unanimously. This document needs to be signed and dated by MKB and SC and kept with PC records, with a copy held by SC herself.

14. COMPLETION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR 2013/14

The internal auditor completed the internal audit on June 2nd. He filled in Section 4 of the Annual Return and the PC passed the internal audit. A detailed report of the audit findings will be considered at the July meeting. This needs to be an agenda item.

The internal auditor did point out that the annual review of procedures, including the risk assessment, is properly to be carried out at the beginning of the financial year, not the end. This is to be an agenda item in July and in subsequent years in May.

The Annual Return Section 1, Accounting Statements, is completed, reviewed and signed by the Chairman of the Meeting, KG and SC as RFO, proposed KG, seconded KO, carried unanimously. The Annual Return Section 2, The Annual Governance Statement is read out, completed and signed by the Chairman of the Meeting, KG and SC as Clerk, proposed KG, seconded AH, carried unanimously.

SC is to return the Annual Return form along with the bank reconciliation sheet and her notes on any variations in the figures for the year, both of which were agreed at the May 6th meeting. These papers must be with BDO by June 10th.

15. SUSPENSION OF SELECTED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Following the adoption of the NALC recommended Financial Regulations at the May 6th meeting reference was made to section 15.2. It is felt that the regulations are extremely onerous for such a small PC with only very little monthly monetary expenditure and a small precept and under Section 15.2 it is possible for the PC to suspend any sections of the regulations they think fit provided that all councillors are notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, reasons for the suspension are recorded and an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of the council.

The model notes at the foot of the regulation document explained that several sections, marked with square brackets, could be deleted if they did not apply. Payments and Contracts, Stores and Equipment and Charities have therefore been notified as deleted as they do not apply.

The sections considered for suspension at the May 6th meeting have been marked by SC and circulated along with the reasons and risk assessment required. In short the PC feels that given the amount of money in their accounts, the regularity with which they meet, the thorough monthly financial reporting which is produced and the fact that they vote on all expenditure the sections referred to would be unduly onerous. One section, 2.2, regarding a quarterly and year end verification of bank reconciliations on all accounts by a councillor other than the Chairman or a cheque signatory is to be retained as AH is happy to take on this duty. All other sections marked for suspension are to be suspended forthwith, these being Sections 3.2, 4.2, 4.5, 4.8, 5.7, 6.9 (part), 6.17, 7.4, 7.6, 10.1, 10.2 and 14.2.

Proposed KO, seconded ST, carried unanimously. SC is to check how to display the financial regulations on the web, whether to mark the suspended sections in red and annotate will be sufficient, and then get the regulations onto the web, they are also to be circulated in their completed form to all councillors.

SC also points out that under the new regulations a check and health and safety assessment needs to be carried out on the full list of assets of the PC. SC has no experience in carrying out health and safety assessments. ST points out that a risk assessment for health and safety purposes is what is required. Maybe this check could be carried out at the time of the village spring clean but for this year the check and assessments will need to be made soon. KG wonders whether the PC should book a training course for all in order that this can be done properly.

Also the location of all deeds to all properties owned by the PC has to be finalised.

Compliance with Financial Regulations, covering these issues, is to be an agenda item in July.

16. REPORTS OF UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITY ON THE PLAYING FIELD

The PC has received a formal communication from the VH & PF Committee. There have been complaints of shooting activity on the field being carried out while the hall is in use. Phillip Rushforth, VH&PF Committee, has spoken with MKB also on this matter.

It had been discussed at several previous meetings of the PC that some shooting to clear the amount of rabbits on the playing field would be of benefit to public safety. MKB had spoken with a representative of the Football Club who was au fait with all the licensing, police notification and public safety requirements necessary for shooting on public land. The activity was to take place at night, using infra-red night sights, the police were to be informed of the activity in advance, licenses of those taking part were to be checked and people were to be stationed at all entrances of the field to prevent public access. There was a breakdown of communication at this point and the VH & PF committee were not informed of these arrangements. In future dates for any activity would have to be agreed in order to avoid hall users being present in the car park etc, the VH & PF committee must be fully informed of all those taking part and would prefer to liaise directly with the Football Club on this matter.

It is felt best that the issue be an agenda item in July, MKB will then be present to report on exactly what arrangements were made and also to communicate the response from the football club in order that a formal response can be made as requested. ST will inform the VH & PF committee as he is a member.

17. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

14/00332/F - Tudor House, Mere Rd – Reinstatement of 2 dormer style windows on front elevation – permission subject to conditions

14/00333/LB – Tudor House, Mere Rd – Reinstatement of 2 dormer style windows on front elevation - Loft conversion to create en-suite bedroom to consist of alteration of existing internal wall, upgrading of existing floor, insertion of 3 conservation grade roof lights and connection into the existing soil pipe in rear elevation – listed building consent subject to conditions

18. CORRESPONDENCE

Emails printed:

Village Hall Committee report of unauthorised activity (firearms) – see 16 above

School reply to defibrillator request – see 5.02 above

Phillip Rushforth general issues – see 5.04, 5.08, 5.09, 5.25, 12, and 16 above, also thanking the PC for the Banbury Rd signs

Grimwades about bark – see 5.25 above

NHS Non-emergency patient transport services consultation – placed in folder

Cherwell Parish Liaison Invitation – SC to check with MKB and book place if needed

Emails forwarded:

OALC AGM

Cherwell Parish liaison meeting invite and update

Usual reports

KG explains that she has not received these emails this month, SC is to forward all again to her.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Specific roles for Parish Councillors SC has brought in a list of duties which need to be taken up now that the council membership has changed.

ST agrees to take on grass cutting, to liaise with John Donaldson and monitor results and village satisfaction.

KG agrees to take on the grit bins, to liaise with Johnnie Brooks on the amount in stock, check the amount in the bins and organise his refilling of them when necessary.

AH agrees to look at the position of Parish Transport Representative, this has not formerly been filled, SC is to forward information about meetings, requirements etc.

AH agrees to take on Local Heritage Assets, maintaining a list of assets for possible protection.

KO agrees to consider VAS signs, MKB has been organising their repair and it may be that KO could organise their movement between bases and check on them once they are fully functional, but it may be that MKB wants to continue with this as the spares are stored on his property. This is to be considered under Matters Arising at the next meeting.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 10th of June 2014 for the APM and Tuesday 8th July 2014 for the next PC meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED

Citizens Advice Bureau Annual Report

Online playgrounds brochure

NHS Non-emergency patient transport services consultation