

MEETING OF
FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 10th January 2017 in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Chairman), Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman), Steve Trice (ST), Mike Kirby (MK), Joanne Brooks (JB) and Amanda Hodgkins (AH)

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

1. Apologies:- Apologies were received from Councillor Kevin Ochel (KO) and also Councillor Katherine Grimston (KG) (Vice Chairman) for lateness

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

ST declared an interest in Item 5 (as a member of the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee and as the Councillor liaising with Operation Playground)

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 6th of December 2016 were approved with corrections.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

5. OPERATION PLAYGROUND UPDATE

The VHPFC has transferred the money raised into the PC bank account and a cheque is now required by ST in the sum of £4,168 to be sent off to claim the grant monies from Opes. This is duly signed, proposed MKB, seconded MK, carried unanimously.

Phillip Rushforth (PR) (VHPFC) has pointed out that the drawing provided by Wicksteed Playscapes is not to scale and therefore provides insufficient information for contractors on the ground to correctly place the equipment in order to avoid both the right of way and the overhead cables. ST has requested that such a drawing be obtained but it has not arrived yet. The VHPFC meeting confirmed that the footpath line must be confirmed before proceeding and also considered the need for extra gates. These will be decided on when the proper location of the equipment is confirmed.

ST raises the point of the other play area; the group are considering replacing equipment there with new equipment suitable for older children. There is a cost issue involved with this plan however as ongoing maintenance, insurance and inspection costs could rise. This would need to be considered before proceeding.

SC has checked with HMRC and they confirm that the PC must pay the invoice from Wicksteed before they can claim back the VAT. ST is to check with Wicksteed whether the invoice can be paid in instalments.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- 6.01 **List of assets (the pond)** SC has received a larger scale map of the pond area which seems to show that the PC is only responsible for the verge surrounding part of the pond rather than for a section of the pond itself. MKB is to risk assess this area. SC is to write to the Tompkins and request a copy of the map which they received with the letter from the PC which they furnished earlier. MKB points out that SC should explain that the PC needs to determine specific ownership of the land/area of responsibility for Health and Safety Risk Assessment reasons, as part of their responsibility in respect of all PC owned village assets. c/f
- 6.02 **Christmas Lights** The lights were switched off on twelfth night by MKB at which point they were all working. They are to be checked in the summer and replaced if necessary. This is to be an agenda item in June.
- 6.03 **Letter from Little Tingewick resident about Mere Lane** SC is to inform the resident that no more information is held.
- 6.04 **Parish Path Map** MK presents his invoice in the sum of £50, to be paid as decided at the December meeting.
- 6.05 **Cross Tree Turf and Drainage Problems** SC has re-entered the drain beside the post box on fix-my-street. c/f
- 6.06 **Internal and External Audit – Signatory Forms** One of the councillors is still to hand in their forms. This will be dealt with by next month; SC is to check with HSBC that all is in order. c/f
- 6.07 **Bottle Bank** PR is still to pursue this matter. c/f
- 6.08 **Stable Close Bund** AH points out that her husband Peter is not happy with how this matter has been left. Nobody has actually spoken to him in person and he is concerned that the wrong trees have been examined. JB and PR, in an advisory capacity, are to visit Peter and take photographs of the site and the trees involved. These are to be forwarded to the person responsible for TPO's at CDC who is an expert in the field. c/f
- 6.09 **A421 Verge to roundabout** SC is to again chase this up with Bucks CC. c/f

- 6.10 **Mixbury to Finmere footpath** SC has still not heard from the Fianders regarding the state of this path, they may have been away for the holidays. SC is to chase this matter up again. MKB has found the signs and these should soon be placed. c/f
- 6.11 **Paving slabs in Chinalls Close** John Donaldson (JD), grass cutting contractor, has carried out most of the work. A couple of slabs have broken on being moved and it is possible that some replacements will be needed to provide a neat finish. PR has provided the details of the volunteers to SC and she has registered the volunteer group with the insurance company. Confirmation of their registration is awaited before they can assume duties. c/f
- 6.12 **Computer repair invoice** This has been paid.
- 6.13 **ICO registration renewal** This was carried over from the December meeting. A cheque is required in the sum of £35. Proposed MKB, seconded ST, carried unanimously.
- 6.14 **Old Banbury Road path condition** JB has examined the area and confirms that her machinery is unable to access the path. A working party will be required as this is too large a job for the Spring Clean. The end of February would be a good time, before too much new growth takes hold. This is to be an agenda item in February.
- 6.15 **Village Hall Exterior Lights** SC paid the sum of £351.60 to VHPFC, half of the total sum. This was carried out under urgent business.
- 6.16 **Application for land opposite Red Lion, Little Tingewick** This has still not been decided, more submissions have gone in from the village and CDC itself.
- 6.17 **Letter and invoice from Beryl Smith** A cheque is required in the sum of £14.85 as agreed at the December meeting and is duly signed. SC has written to thank Mrs Smith for her years of hard work. MKB is to write a public thank you in the next newsletter and also make an appeal for a replacement volunteer. c/f
- 6.18 **NALC Carer's Allowances** SC circulated the link.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

The quarterly report was presented.

It was reported that there was £6,171.65 in the Treasurer Account and £5,302.78 in the Business Money Manager Account.

In addition to the transactions in October and November detailed at previous meetings the following transactions had taken place in December.

The following had been paid in:

£4,168 from the VHPFC for the playground improvement grant application

The following had been paid out:

£63.00 to Howard Computing (running costs – computer maintenance)

£287.50 to SC (general admin – for Clerk and RFO duties and internet costs)

MK presents his invoice for the footpath map framing as detailed in section 6.04 above.

8. S19/S137

No requests had been received.

9. URGENT BUSINESS

The sum of £351.60 was paid to the VHPFC, one half of the cost of the exterior lights as agreed at the December meeting.

10. FINMERE LANDFILL SITE UPDATE

Other than the planning application to be considered in Section 17 below there is no change at all. No quarry liaison meeting has yet been agreed upon.

11. PLAYING FIELD PROGRESS AND CONDITION

MKB has been phoned by John Cunningham, villager, regarding the state of the playing field after the bonfire event in November. The site of the fire has been raked over but the resulting ash, wood and metal debris, including nails and other sharp objects, has not been removed. PR confirms that he has written to the school on behalf of VHPFC and the committee has decided to put more conditions on any agreement for the event next year. MKB has phoned the school and they confirmed that they had been hoping to carry out the work on the 9th but due to wet weather conditions have postponed until Thursday 12th. FOFSA, Friends of Finmere School Association, had asked for ‘no nails’ waste to be donated but some had obviously ignored this request.

On the matter of the spinney acquisition MKB has not yet written to Mixbury Trust, ST points out that some time has passed since the site meeting and this matter needs to be treated with urgency as other offers may be forthcoming. ST offers his help if it is needed. MKB agrees to write to Mixbury Trust and may well take up ST’s offer. It may be best to list the spinney as a separate item under Matters Arising from now on.

MK has walked the field this month and reports it to be in a satisfactory condition.

12. NEW RESIDENTS NOTIFICATIONS

There are new residents in Stable Close, opposite MK. SC is to resend the welcome pack to him so that he can deliver one.

13. ROAD REPAIRS

Valley Road is now being kerbed on one side to a double depth in order to protect the Finmere House wall. JB is to meet with Nick Watson, the OCC Highways representative in charge, to discuss the future as this will make it extremely difficult for larger and farm vehicles to use the road. It is possible that parking restrictions will be introduced, though this can be expensive and presents the problem of enforcement in the future. The PC feels that the residents of that part of Valley Road may need to find alternative parking places.

The large puddle on the Water Stratford Road near Bacons Bridge has been sorted out although there is still a large pothole remaining on the road side edge. SC is to inform CF that some work has been carried out. There is a large pothole opposite the grit bin on the Water Stratford Rd at the end of the old railway line.

14. PARISH PRECEPT REVIEW

It has been confirmed that town and parish councils will not have their precept capped next year. The government is keeping a close eye on any increases and it is possible that a cap will come in the near future.

There has been no announcement on the withdrawal of the remaining grass cutting grant so it is safe to say that the PC will receive the payment next year.

As was discussed at the December meeting the PC is currently holding a reserve of less than one year's precept, which is not in line with best practice. There are likely to be considerable legal costs next year, with the possible purchase of the spinney and also the constitution of the new charities to administer the village hall and playing field. In addition the PC laptop is showing its age and a replacement may well be necessary this year. Christmas lights may also need to be purchased and there is likely to be a slight rise in overall administration and running costs due to inflation. Grass cutting costs can also be affected by the weather, resulting in a longer growing season with extra cuts, and the cost of each cut is considerable. It is also possible that new areas will need to be added to the schedule if the new play area proves difficult to cut by volunteers using the cricket club mower.

The greatest concern however is that, given the current economic climate, the grass cutting grant may well be withdrawn for the 2018/19 year and a cap may be introduced before next January which would make the ongoing financial position difficult. In comparison to parishes of similar size the Finmere precept is very low and it is the responsibility of the PC to make sure that they can meet all their responsibilities in the future. Although demands on the S137 section of the budget have been low this year it would be a shame not to have the full amount available in future years, projects like the defibrillator installation or grants and loans to village assets like the sports pavilion would be increasingly difficult to fund if S137 availability declines.

There is concern that these expenses may be transitory and if the PC put the precept up too high it may be excessive in future years, especially if conditions improve and grants are not withdrawn and capping is not introduced. SC points out that the PC can reduce the precept as well as increase it and if this were the case the precept could be cut for future years.

Given the probable situation for the future it is decided to raise the precept to £11,000. This will mean a cost of some £10 per annum to each household but the percentage increase will be large, some 27.9%. Proposed AH, seconded ST, carried unanimously. MKB is to explain the situation fully to villagers in a newsletter as suggested by PR at the December meeting.

ST raises the matter of the spinney purchase and how the PC will raise the purchase cost. It is proposed that a grant from local charities like the Poors Plot will provide the initial amount, CTP, which will make it possible to apply for landfill tax grant monies or Tesco community funding.

15. PARISH CLERK HOURS DIARY

The total for the quarter was 59 hours. This is some 5 hours lower than the same quarter last year, due to the way the meeting dates have fallen, but overall the annual figures are in line with last year.

16. WORKPLACE PENSION ENROLMENT

The PC has now been provided with a staging date, April 1st 2017. The declaration of compliance deadline is August 31st 2017. Stage 1 has been complied with; SC has informed the government of the contact details for the PC, namely MKB. Stage 2 has been complied with; SC has checked that no circumstances have changed. Stage 3 will happen in April; SC will work out age and salary of employees and write informing them of their rights using a government template letter (this will not be difficult as SC is the only employee). This must be done between April 1st and May 15th. Stage 4 will happen after that; the PC will confirm compliance at a PC meeting and the minute reference will be sent to the government by SC. This must happen by August 31st. To be an agenda item at the April meeting.

17. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16/02093/F – Five Gables, Fulwell Road – erection of single storey extension to replace conservatory – permission subject to conditions

16/01987/F – Finch Hattons, Fulwell Rd – demolition of existing garages and single storey side extension and erection of single and two storey side extension and single storey rear extension – permission subject to conditions

10/01516/CM – Finmere landfill – removal of conditions A1, A3, A22 and A33 – to extend life by five years, revise night-time noise limits and sensitive receptor properties, remove requirement for straw bale screening to the SE and N (latter to be replaced by a soil bund) – It is unlikely that OCC will refuse the life extension for the site, timelines are always slightly

elastic in these cases. The night time noise limits are to be set at 45 decibels rather than as a percentage of background noise. The sensitive receptors are actually to be increased. The straw baling is to be replaced by a soil bund as excavations continue. It is felt that though the PC is unlikely to object it would be best to push for a quarry liaison meeting to discuss these matters and ask for an extension on the decision. MKB is to action this.

18. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence for meeting –

New pond map – see Section 6.1

ICO reminder – see Section 6.13

Invoice for village hall exterior lights – see Section 9

Emails printed –

Challenging the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review – SC to forward link

Ombudsman for Parish Councils – SC to forward link

Local government reorganisation update – no action required

No capping confirmation – see Section 14 above

CDC adoption of planning policy statement – no action required

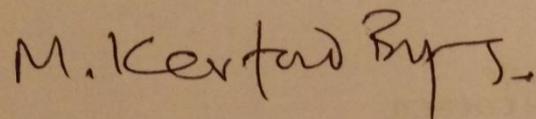
Emails forwarded –

Links for NALC lobbying for dependant carers allowance – as decided at December meeting

Usual reports

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Newsletter This is to be produced by MKB and needs to include a thank you to Beryl Smith, an appeal for a replacement volunteer and a detailed explanation of the reasoning behind the large rise in the precept.



20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 7th of February 2017.

Meeting closed at 10.20 p.m. CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED- None