

**Fritwell Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting, held virtually**  
**on Monday 15th June 2020 at 7.00pm**

**1) Apologies:**

Cllr Fatemian (Oxfordshire County Council)  
Cllr Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Cherwell District Council)  
Rachael Clark (resident)

**Present:** Cllrs Polly Foster, Gill Simmonds, Sheila Ultsch, Jonathan Boyce,  
Lauren Fletcher (Clerk)  
Residents: Graham Osteridge, Helen Metcalfe, Gail Barnhill

**2) Election of the Chair and Vice-chair for 2019/20**

The Clerk acted as Chair for this part of the meeting.

Election for Chair: Cllr Boyce nominated Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Simmonds. Cllr Foster accepted the role and was duly elected to continue as Chair for 2020-2021.

Cllr. Foster resumed as Chair of the meeting.

II. Election for Vice-Chair: Cllr Boyce proposed Cllr Ultsch continue as vice-chair. Cllr Simmonds seconded. Cllr Ultsch accepted and was duly elected as Vice-Chair for 2020-2021.

**3) Minutes of the AGM held on 13th May 2019**

These were read and agreed as a correct record of the meeting. Proposed to accept by Cllr Simmonds, seconded by Cllr Ultsch. Agreed by all. Minutes to be signed by Cllr Foster at a later date when covid-19 safe arrangements can be made. **Action: Chair and Clerk.**

**4) Matters Arising from those Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 2019 meeting.

**5) Chairman's Report for 2019/20 (Councillor Foster)**

*Looking back over the last year, May 2019 seems a lifetime ago.*

*I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude and thanks to my fellow councillors for their continuing support and contributions as we've tried to address current and on-going needs and meet new challenges. And to the work of the two Parish Clerks who have helped to keep us on track during this time.*

*A round-up of some of our work this year includes the new tree, a species of silver birch planted in the cemetery, and work has been carried out to improve the hedges.*

*Some marginal planting has been trialled in our newly restored pond to try to create a more attractive and protective environment for residents to view and wildlife to thrive. Newts have been seen and a small duck house, funded by local residents, has been installed to help the new brood currently being raised there.*

*Planning applications and issues continue to be a major part of our work, trying to maintain an acceptable balance between protection of our small rural village, provision for our needs now and in the future, and the pressures from government and local councils for massively increased housing numbers and employment opportunities across Oxfordshire.*

*The Cala Homes development off Fewcott Road, strongly contested by some residents, finally received outline permission in December with the reduced number of 28 new homes and other*

improvements. If work progresses on this site there should be further opportunities to revise detailed planning and significant developer contributions made to the Village Hall, Playing Fields, road calming and other mitigation for the village.

The 7 homes on the George and Dragon site are now going on sale, but the 8 homes at the Covert Farm site next to the Playing Fields still need changes for the road to comply with legal standards and fulfil the covenant on the land.

In November Lagan Homes came to the village to discuss speculative plans for the land they own at the back of East Street, accessed from the bottom of Forge Place. Residents raised many concerns and to date we have received no further communication.

Infill planning applications in other parts of the village have produced some issues with permissions granted for two new homes at the edge of the village along North Street giving concerns about retaining views and the rural approach to the village and safety concerns for through-traffic and residents in this area. Other issues concerning tree works, extensions and home improvements have generally been less controversial.

The Appeal by the owners of the King's Head against the enforcement notice to cease using the public house as a single dwelling was dismissed. More recently, an application to open a guest house was turned down by the District Council, but there is little sign of the pub preparing to open.

Recently we have been trying to assess and comment on the impacts of the next stage of planning at Heyford Park. Our submission to the plans raised concerns about increased traffic; lack of local bus services to enable residents from local villages to access the amenities; impacts of noise and light pollution from the "Creative City"; safeguarding our rural environment and footpaths near the perimeter; and the potential effects on our village primary school. We also support the continuing campaign by the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum for health facilities including a GP surgery at Heyford Park.

The Comet Bus continued and a new privately owned Lynx bus started to provide a weekly service to Banbury and Bicester. These are currently suspended but are expected back when demand returns and it is considered safe to do so.

Traffic is an ongoing issue in the village. Speedwatch has been active when circumstances have allowed and the Parish Council has sought professional advice from an OCC consultant for practical ideas for future implementation when opportunities and funding can be found. Unfortunately the expected report has been delayed but we hope to be in a position to discuss this with residents soon.

Some road improvements were achieved with potholes and resurfacing in May's Close, along North Street and at the crossroads, but the road surface in Forge Place remains a problem and we are not yet confident that the issues of sewerage and flooding in this area have been fully addressed.

Early in 2020 we started to watch reports of the coronavirus spreading across the world and in late March we entered "lockdown" and life changed for us all.

Our community has shown enormous resilience during this period, pulling together to support each other and protect the most vulnerable. For those allowed to leave their homes for exercise, walking and cycling became essential pastimes to keep fit and our footpaths and rural roads have been well-used. I think we've all felt lucky to be living here in Fritwell – and the birds have sung so loudly this year!

As the lockdown is easing and work places, shops and some schools are reopening, there is hesitation and fear for our future health and well-being and many are worried about their jobs and future prospects. It is too early to know what the "new normal" will be like but let's hope we can use this opportunity and our recent experiences of the value of localism, to work towards a cleaner, greener, more sustainable world that cares for its residents and is fit for the future.

*I feel fortunate to be living in our community here and proud to play my part on Fritwell Parish Council.*

*We'd like to thank our local county and district councillors for their continuing support and make a special mention of our village shop that has continued to keep us provided with local supplies, and a cheerful, friendly welcome.*

*Most of all, the Parish Council would like to give huge thanks to you, the many residents who generously give their time as volunteers, helping in so many ways to look after our village, supporting and helping each other, and being good neighbours.*

*Very sincere thanks to you all.*

*Polly Foster*

## **6) Financial Report 2019/20 and other matters (RFO)**

- i. **Financial Risk Assessment.** Proposed Cllr Boyce, seconded Cllr Ultsch, agreed.
- ii. **Certificate of Exemption from External Audit 2019/20** (AGAR Page 3). Proposed Cllr Foster, seconded Cllr Boyce, agreed.
- iii. **Internal Audit** (AGAR Page 4). Proposed Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Ultsch, agreed.
- iv. **Annual Governance Statement** (AGAR Page 5) Proposed Cllr Ultsch, seconded Cllr Boyce, agreed.
- v. **Accounting Statement** (AGAR Page 6)
  - **End of Year Accounts.** Proposed Cllr Boyce, seconded Cllr Ultsch, agreed.
  - **List of Assets.** Remains largely the same as last year, with the exception of some de-icing equipment which has been sold. Proposed Cllr Boyce, seconded Cllr Ultsch, agreed.
  - **Bank Reconciliation**
    - **Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights** (Accounts 2019/20) 1<sup>st</sup> July – 11<sup>th</sup> August – 30 working days. Proposed Cllr Foster, seconded Cllr Boyce, agreed.
- vi. **Confirmation of Insurance Cover;** noted.
- vii. **Review of subscriptions** – OALC and MCNP Forum. Agreed that these payments be passed, proposed Cllr Foster, seconded Cllr Simmonds, agreed.

## **7) Financial Regulations**

The financial regulations were reviewed and approved: Proposed Cllr Foster, seconded Cllr Boyce.

## **8) Standing Orders**

Standing Orders were reviewed and a minor addendum was added:

*Addendum*

*to Fritwell Parish Council Standing Orders (15<sup>th</sup> June 2020)*

*Addition to Section 3. **MEETINGS GENERALLY***

- y. *A meeting may be held virtually (using an internet application or telephone conference) where there are clear concerns relevant to ensuring protection of public health and safety. ( F C S )*

Proposed Cllr Foster, seconded Cllr Simmonds and agreed.

## **9) Cemetery Regulations**

Cemetery regulations were reviewed and minor changes made for clarity about sizes and design. Proposed Cllr Ultsch, seconded Cllr Boyce and agreed.

**Action: Parish Council to investigate if plot numbers are required on headstones**

## 10) GDPR policy

It was proposed that the following actions should be taken to ensure the council operates within GDPR guidelines.

- A data audit with physical and digital evaluations
- Website review needed.

**Action: Cllr Boyce to manage and circulate further information to councillors after meeting.**

## 11) Councillor internal arrangements for the year 2020/2021

- i. Finance/Audit/ Banking: Cllrs Simmonds and Boyce
- ii. Planning: All
- iii. Cemetery: Cllrs Simmonds, Boyce and Ultsch
- iv. Ground Maintenance: Cllr Foster
- v. Roads and Traffic: Cllr Boyce
- vi. Rural Footpaths and PWs: Cllr Foster
- vii. Public/community transport: Cllr Foster
- viii. GDPR: Cllr Boyce
- ix. Representatives to other bodies –
  1. MCNP Forum: Cllrs Foster and Ultsch
  2. Village Hall: **Action: Discuss with VH committee.** Cllr. Boyce willing to attend as observer only.
  3. Playing Fields: No current arrangement for formal involvement.

Councillors expressed their willingness to work closely with other village organisations and to attend some meetings but are not able to commit to be working members. With only 4 councillors, the workload is already heavy.

## 12) Any Other Business.

Graham Osteridge offered his services to the council. **Action: Council to review and contact Mr Osteridge after the meeting.**

## 13) Dates for future meetings

It was agreed that **Monday July 13th at 7.00** will be the next ordinary meeting but due to the ongoing covid-19 situation, this would be held virtually using Zoom.