**Minutes of the meeting of Fringford Parish Council,   
held on Monday 20th February 2023 at 7.45pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Ginny Hope, David McCullagh, Hayley Ryder, Les Harris, Robert Gue, Ros MacKenzie.

**Also present:** R. Damerell (Clerk) and 18 members of the public

1. **Apologies for absence**

* Apologies were received for Cllr Davids-Austin

1. **Requests for Dispensations and Declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality**

* Cllr Hope declared an interest in Planning application: 23/00193/F & 23/00194/LB - Fox Cottage, Main Street, Fringford, OX27 8DP. Cllr McCullagh to chair the planning section of this meeting.

1. **Public participation**

* The comments from the public were recorded under HS2 Grant Applications

1. **Updates from County & District Councillors –**

* Cllr Hope updated the Council that on 6 February 2023 Cherwell DC approved a new housing land supply statement, which demonstrates that the district has a 5.4 year housing supply for 2022 – 2027, up from the 3.5 years reported last year. This puts the District planning committee in a stronger position to be able to refuse speculative planning proposals that don’t meet the district’s needs. The Parish Council noted that it would be useful to refer to this in the future.

1. **To approve the Minutes** **of the last Parish Council Meeting**.

* The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

1. **Finance**
2. **To receive the monthly bank reconciliation.**

* The Bank reconciliation was reviewed and approved by the Council.

1. **To consider invoices for payment.**
   * + All invoices were reviewed, approved, and signed by the Parish Council.
2. **Parish Matters**
   1. **HS2 Grant Applications for improvements to the Village Green.**
      * Cllr Hope updated that the landowner had sent her apologies for this meeting but has agreed to a meeting with Cllr Hope and Cllr McCullagh next week with regards to villagers and councillors concerns’ about the road safety issues and deteriorating state of the historic village green at the centre of the village. This mainly relates to the HS2 Road Safety Grant for £98,000 to increase carparking spaces, create two passing spaces, improve the verges and put wooden bollards around the Green to prevent parking and the verges being churned up. Cllr Hope updated those present with a history of the projects to the present date.
      * It was helpfully clarified by the previous chair of the Parish Council that the landowner had agreed to sign an extension to the playground lease to enable for the passing space and the carparking spaces to be created. The current playground lease is between the landowner and the Parish Council so this should be straightforward. They also clarified that the landowner previously agreed to the installation of the two passing spaces across the middle of The Green.
      * Q. A resident asked - Has the landowner a legal obligation to maintain their land such as the Spinney and The Green?
      * A. There is a responsibility for landowners to ensure their land is maintained and particularly those areas that are publicly accessible. In the case of The Green, it is at the centre of the village, at the convergence of several roads, frequently used by pedestrians and road users, near pedestrians using the primary school, pre-school and the children’s play area, as well as being close to the village hall that is well used.
      * Q. A resident expressed their agreement for the Council not taking on the lease for ‘The Spinney’, and agreed the owner has a responsibility to manage their land.
      * A. Following the fallen tree in 2021 on to the pumping station, the Parish Council researched into the responsibilities the Council holds regarding trees. The Council has no authority to carry out any work in ‘The Spinney’. Following discussion with the landowner and land agent, it was advised that work would be undertaken in Autumn 2022.
      * Q. A resident asked - Is there a time limit to use the granted funding or will the money be reallocated by HS2?
      * A. The funding is held by Oxfordshire County Council and the contract for the work is between Oxfordshire County Council Highways and their approved contractor.
      * Q. A resident asked - has there been any contact with the local media about the lack of action relating to The Green and the problems it’s now causing for villagers?
      * A. There has been no contact with the local media. The Parish Council has sought advice on what to do should no agreement be given to proceed with the works, which is the escalate the matter to Cherwell District Council.
      * Q. Would it be reasonable as a villager to write directly to the landowner, to express concerns about the lack of action to make any of the necessary improvements and that potentially anyone walking on The Green is at risk of an injury?
      * A. Any resident is free to contact the landowner to express their thoughts and are also free to contact their local MP.
      * Q. Has the landowner been in receipt of photographs or witnessed the situation on the Village Green especially around school drop off / pick up times?
      * A. The landowner is aware of the issue and has been informed as such, but whether they have seen this for themselves is unknown.
      * Q. A resident suggested that people could vote with their feet by not using the landowners’ services. Has the Parish Council considered contacting the press? Should CDC be attending the meeting to mediate.
      * A. When the Parish Council has had the meeting with the landowner on the 28 February, we will see what outcomes have been achieved. If no resolution can be reached, then this will be escalated up to Cherwell District Council.
      * Q. If escalated how long does the process take?
      * A. We cannot answer this never having been through the process previously.
      * Q. Would you approach HS2 to see if the grant can be rolled into the next financial year?
      * A. The funds are currently with Oxfordshire County Council and so should be rolled over.
      * Q. Could these be reallocated by Oxfordshire County Council?
      * A. No, it is ring-fenced.
      * Q. Do you want residents to contact the landowner prior to the meeting on the 28th February or after this?
      * A. The Parish Council supported a small number of residents to send polite clear letters to the landowner to express their concerns about the situation on the Village Green and potential road and pedestrian safety risks.
      * Q. Would the Parish Council consider approaching the school to contact the landowner in support of the improvement works on the Village Green?
      * A. We will certainly contact them for their support.
      * Q. Are the Council looking to have agreement from the landowner in writing following the meeting on the 28 February?
      * A. It was agreed previously for an extension of the original lease the Parish Council holds for the play area The Council has previously agreed to pay the legal fees for the Parish Council and the landowner.
      * Q. Has anyone on the Parish Council researched into the ownership of the Village Green. Is it Common Land?
      * A. Cllr Harris stated that he had researched this in the past and has had sight of a map of the area of land owned by the landowner. It was confirmed the Village Green is owned by the landowner.
   2. **20 is Plenty Proposal in Fringford**
      * Cllr Ryder has sent off the responses from residents to Oxfordshire County Council as part of the application process.
      * It was also suggested purchasing some unofficial 20 is plenty signs. Cllr Hope to contact Chesterton Parish Council for further information.
   3. **Memorial Bench**
      * Cllr Hope has responded to the donators of the Memorial bench to explain the delay in placing this on the Village green as part of the HS2 project. If this does not go ahead, then the Council will decide a new location.
   4. **Kings Coronation**
      * It was agreed for Cllr Gue to check with the Village Hall Committee if they are planning any events to commemorate the Coronation. If so, it would make sense for the Parish Council to link and collaborate with these events. The Council also agreed to ask the pub if they would also like to link with the events.
   5. **Newcomers Afternoon**
      * The date for the event is scheduled for 26 March (2-4pm). The Village Hall Committee have expressed interest in helping with the event. Cllr McCullagh suggested using the pop-up pub as a template, making it a more informal event, whilst also including circular tables which can be used by organisations in the Parish should anyone wish to find out more about these. The Council resolved to send out a flyer on or around 6th March and to puta note in the Village Voice.
   6. **Acorn Biodigester**

* **No update to report.**
  1. **Village Hall update**
* The Village Hall Committee is looking to organise a live jazz evening. More information and possible dates to follow.
* 50% of the profits from Pop-up pub to be donated to the Parish Council Community Action Fund. The Parish Council expressed its thanks to the Village Hall Committee for this generous donation This equated to £625

1. **Planning**

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| Reference | Location | Proposal | FPC Decision / Comments |
| 23/00193/F  23/00194/LB | Fox Cottage, Main Street, Fringford, OX27 8DP | Replace the existing oak panel front door with door of the same in appearance | No objection |
| [23/00358/F](https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/23/00358/F) | Maple House 22 Crosslands Fringford Bicester OX27 8DF | Single storey rear extension and internal alterations | No objection |

1. **Correspondence Received / AOB**
2. The Queen’s Memorial – Cllr Mackenzie to contact the resident for their thoughts about including a permanent memorial as part of the stone wall repair project.
3. Grass Cutting at the Church: The Parish Council resolved to agree to pay for 50% of the grass cutting costs in the Churchyard.
4. **Items for next Agenda:**

* All items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by 10th March 2023.

1. **Date of next meeting:**

* The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 20th March 2023 at 7.45pm.