

## NEW FRANKLEY IN BIRMINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council held at St. Christopher's Church Centre, Holly Hill, New Street, Frankley on 16 October 2000 at 1932 hours.

Present Councillor Sidney Grey ( In the Chair)

Councillors Linda Banks, David Burton, Sheila Burton, Eric Carter, Paul Kane, Reverend Derek Lewis, Kathleen Lewis, Joanna Walker and Geoffrey Williams.

Also in attendance Ms Carol Woodall (Neighbourhood Housing Manager)

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology was received on behalf of Councillor Karan Bolton.

### MINUTES

64 **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 18 September 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed and signed.

### CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairperson's announcements.

### QUESTIONS

#### (A) Cross City Line Extension

65 Councillor Kane referred to the recent letter from Richard Burden MP and others which had been previously circulated to members concerning the proposed extension of the Cross City line to Frankley, and asked whether, in the light of that letter, it was appropriate to re-open the question of the Council's support for the scheme.

The Chairperson replied that there was a need for open debate on the issue. He had offered Mr. Burden the opportunity to put a letter or article in the Frankley Neighbourhood News and to attend this meeting. He believed that the best course of action was to arrange a meeting of all interested parties and he would speak to Richard Burden about this. He was concerned to know who the groups opposing the railway extension were. Until there was a full response to the proposal the issue could not go forward and it was difficult to make progress.

(B) Office Accommodation

66 Councillor Carter asked about progress in obtaining an office for the Council.

The Chairperson replied that he had tried to contact Mr Alan Gunter to discuss possible office accommodation for the Council but that he had not been available. However, he hoped to make progress in the near future.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL,  
HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

The following Minutes of the Planning, Environmental, Highways and Public Transport Committee were submitted –

(see interleaved document No. 1)

67 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Environmental, Highways and Public Transport Committee held on 2 October 2000, be noted.

ACCOUNTS

The following draft payment list was submitted –

(see interleaved document No. 2)

68 RESOLVED: That the payments, as set out in the document now submitted, be approved.

APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

It was pointed out that the signatories of the Council's bank account could be appointed as internal auditors but that it was preferable if they were not. Following some discussion as to the

number of auditors to appoint and upon receipt of nominations, it was -

- 69 RESOLVED: That the Council appoint two internal auditors and that for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2001, Councillors Paul Kane and Joanne Walker be appointed as internal auditors.

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were no planning applications to consider.

### GROUNDS MAINTENANCE / PARKS SERVICES CONTRACT

The following report of the Leisure and Culture Department of the City Council was submitted for information -

(see interleaved document no. 3)

A lengthy discussion followed, during which the following points were made by members -

- (i) Overgrown trees were affecting street lighting, especially on footpaths, as the trees blocked the light of lamps.
- (ii) Trees on footpaths or in residents' gardens were not being properly maintained. A programme of dealing with them was needed.
- (iii) There was difficulty in getting action when garden hedges became overgrown and obstructed footpaths and rear entries.
- (iv) There was a problem with rubbish being dumped on some footpaths, especially the path from New Street to Frogmill.

Ms Woodall explained that trees in gardens were the responsibility of occupiers. However, the Housing Department would ask Leisure and Culture to deal with trees where tenants were elderly or infirm, but due to financial considerations they would only deal with dead or dangerous trees, not overgrown trees which were blocking light. Tenants could obtain permission to carry out work to trees in their gardens from the Department

but at their own risk and cost. The Housing Department could ask tenants to deal with overgrown hedges, but had no power over owner-occupiers.

Referring to the cleaning of footpaths, Ms Woodall said that the Environmental Services Department considered that was the Housing Department's responsibility. Nevertheless, the Environmental Services Depart did undertake some cleaning on behalf of the Housing Department, but that work was normally carried out on Saturdays and the assessment as to what work would be done was made by Estate Assistants in her department. She felt that responsibility for footpaths generally was the biggest problem on the estate, and the Parish Council could make a real difference in that area

Members referred to specific problems regarding

- (i) a large oak tree adjacent to 51 Romany Road which was overhanging the roof of the property;
- (ii) a large tree at 43 Mitton Avenue which was blocking the light to the property;
- (iii) a large tree adjacent to 49/51 Shapinsay Drive which was blocking light to the properties; and
- (iv) a bush by 18 Garden Close.

Ms Woodall agreed to raise these problems at her monthly meeting with Leisure and Culture staff to discuss tree and grounds maintenance. In response to a question from a member concerning the above mentioned problems, she reiterated a point made earlier in the meeting, in that the tenants concerned could obtain permission from the Housing Department to undertake work on trees in their gardens but at their own risk and cost.

There was further discussion, and it was proposed by the Chairperson, seconded and -

70

**RESOLVED:** That efforts be made to arrange meetings with all City Council Departments responsible for maintenance contracts in the area, to attempt to establish which Department is responsible for what work and try to get improvements in the current maintenance position.

## TELEPHONE FACILITIES

Councillor David Burton explained that this item had arisen from the recent Councillors' training courses when Councillors' access to telephone facilities had been discussed. The suggestion had been made that members should have BT chargecards that would enable the cost of calls made using the chargecard to be charged to a specific phone number. It was further suggested that a telephone line, to be used exclusively for Council business, be installed at the Clerk's house and that the calls made using the chargecards be charged to that line. Councillor David Burton had spoken to BT and there were two options -

- (i) A business line which would cost £99 to install and £39.45 quarterly rental. It would have itemised billing and the chargecards themselves would be free. However calls made using them would be expensive, at 20p. per minute.
- (ii) A residential line with same installation cost but cheaper quarterly rental (£23.63 per quarter) and cheaper chargecard calls at 10p. per minute. However, there was a maximum limit of five chargecards on that kind of line. It would therefore only be possible for chargecards to be provided for the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Committee Chairpersons and other members needing to make frequent calls.

A member asked whether the Council could obtain a quotation from Birmingham Cable or another alternative provider. Councillor David Burton replied that to the best of his knowledge, BT were the only company who could provide the line locally and provide chargecards.

After some further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Denny, seconded, and -

- 71           RESOLVED:   That approval be given to the installation of a BT Residential telephone line at the Clerk's house exclusively for Council use and that the maximum number of chargecards be obtained for Council members' use.

## HANDOVER OF RESPONSIBILITIES

It was proposed, seconded, and -

- 72 RESOLVED: That Mr Andrew Foster assume the duties of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer in the place of Mr Roger Griffiths.

The Chairperson referred to Mr Griffiths' work since the establishment of the Council. He proposed, and it was seconded and -

RESOLVED:- That the thanks of the council be tendered to Mr. Roger Griffiths for his dedication and hard work on behalf of the Council since its establishment in May, 2000

At 2034 hours, on the proposition of the Chairperson, the meeting was adjourned in order to allow members of the public to raise local issues.

## LOCAL ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

### (A) Overhanging Tree Adjacent to 5 Wide Acres

- 73 A member of the public referred to a problem with an overhanging tree on City Council property adjacent to 5 Wide Acres.

Ms Woodall agreed to raise this problem at her next meeting with Leisure and Culture staff. The Chairperson suggested that in future the Council might consider writing to the owners of trees that were causing problems, or put an article in the Frankley Neighbourhood News.

### (B) Frankley Centre Development Plan

- 74 Mr Stephenson requested an A4 copy of the development proposals map for the Frankley centre, to put on the Council website.

It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with Mr. Stephenson in this and website developments generally.

- 75 (B) Blocked Drain – Wareham Road

A member of the public referred to a blocked drain between nos. 17 and 19 Wareham Road, by the Bugle Horn public house.

After some discussion, Councillor David Burton undertook to raise the problem with the Flood Co-ordinator to try and arrange for the drain to be unblocked.

(C) Time Capsule – St Leonard’s Church

76 Councillor Denny explained that St Leonard’s church was planting a time capsule at the church on 19 November, during morning service, to mark the Millennium. He asked if the Parish Council could provide suitable items to be placed in the capsule.

After some discussion it was agreed that a copy of the first set of Parish Council Minutes, the Notice of Result of the Elections for the Council together with a copy of the Parish Badge would be provided and that two members of the Council attend the service to place them in the capsule.

(D) Parish Boundary Signs

77 Mr. Stephenson asked whether the Council had any plans to put up road signs marking the boundaries of the parish.

The Chairperson said that he would bear this idea in mind for the future.

(E) Budget Fixing Process

78 Some questions were asked about the budget-fixing process and the Clerk explained that the Council had to inform the City Council, the Billing Authority, of its precept by early January 2000, which meant that the budget had to be agreed at the December meeting. He hoped to bring a draft budget to the November meeting of the council, which would allow time for public consultation.

The meeting ended at 2110 hours.

Signed .....

Chairperson