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## FREATHERNE WITH SAUL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Fretherne with Saul Parish Council Extra Meeting held at Saul Memorial Hall at 7:30pm on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Present: Cllr Lever (Chairman), Cllr B Findlater (Vice Chairman), Cllr Bierer, Cllr Jeffries, Cllr Cobb, Cllr van der Hooff, Clerk K Brown

In attendance: nil

Register of General Public attending meeting: two

### Agenda

010223 To receive apologies for absence - nil

020223 Declarations of Interest on the Agenda - none

030323 To discuss plans for the future management and maintenance of the disused section of the Parish Council owned Stroudwater Canal at Upper Framilode

- What is the end plan for the canal?  
**Declaration: The intent is to get the disused section of the Stroudwater Canal at Framilode to a maintainable state, having a stretch of clear water from Moor Street Bridge to a suitable point behind Canal Row, with areas of habitat suitable for the wildlife there. Wherever possible the work will be grant funded.**  
The Aim is to work to the plan outlined in the 2007 report with the creation of a fish refuge in the open pool.
- **Where should the open water be, the depth of that water** – maintain the open area in front of the Ship to a depth of 500mm to provide a fish refuge.
- **Should parts of the canal be considered as wetlands** – it should be considered as wetland, the exact extent of the area to be determined. If identified as wetland, more likely to get funding.  
Proposed, seconded with all in favour
- **Should reed bed islands be created and how would they be maintained** – yes, to provide safety for wildlife. Created from soil/silt.  
Proposed, seconded with all in favour
- **Disposal of spoil from the work on the canal** – work dictated by possible presence of water voles. Keep the disposal as local as possible.  
Proposed, seconded with all in favour
- **Condition of the dam under the Moor St Bridge** – the dam is breached and water from the Ship side is flowing back through to the lower side of the dam. Need to look into how to repair and cost to repair, cost to be included in the funding request. Also look into viability of shoring up the dam as opposed to annual pumping. Sandbags filled with silt are a temporary solution, can the volunteer group do this as a temporary repair?
- **Strengthening the bank where the cows have been drinking** – similar work to shoring up the dam, sandbags filled with silt from the canal used to strengthen the banks which have been damaged by cattle when drinking.
- **Concerns have been raised by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust about the possible presence of Water Vole at the canal. Surveys have been done by Acer Ecology and previously 35percent. Are further surveys needed? If so, by which company?** Further surveys to be carried out in April/May and a further survey carried out in September. Cllr Cobb to contact M Dean asking if he would carry out the survey and at what cost and look into possible funding for the survey to be investigated.  
Proposed, seconded with all in favour

**Action:** Cllr Cobb to contact M Dean and research funding.

Signed / Date

29-03-23



- **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are monitoring for Water Vole activity** – update by Cllr Beirer and Cllr Cobb. Zoom conversation with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust expert has resulted in further comment and information from a Water Vole expert as mentioned in previous agenda point. A proposed walk along the canal with GWT experts and Councillors has been proposed for later in March.

040323

**How to manage the work around maintaining the canal**

- **A maintenance programme** – dictated by survey results and time of year
- **An established volunteer group** – a dedicated group is already in place
- **Funding application – grants** – to be investigated by Cllr Cobb
- **Further surveys on the canal and its wildlife** – approved in previous agenda item, surveys would be useful to identify what is actually in the canal as well as the possibility of water voles

**Action:** Cllr Cobb to investigate funding

050323

**Responsibilities**

- **Insurance** – Clerk to check existing policy covers work on the canal
- **Risk assessment – PC and Canal group** – Cllr Cobb and two members of the volunteer group to carry out Risk Assessment
- **Roles and Responsibilities including record keeping – PC and canal group** – Cllr Cobb and two members of the volunteer group to carry out Risk Assessment
- **Method statement including what, when and how including who is responsible for each task** – Cllr Cobb and two members of the volunteer group to carry out Risk Assessment
- **Health & Safety – PC and Canal Group** – Cllr Cobb and two members of the volunteer group to carry out Risk Assessment

Proposed, seconded with all in favour

Discussion took place around possible noticeboard for documentation of what work is being carried out and why, emergency numbers and possibility of boards displaying what visitors can possibly see on the canal. Funding for noticeboards may be available from Severn Trent

**Action:** Clerk to check insurance cover

Cllr Cobb and two volunteer group representatives to work together on the above documentation, created documentation files (including copies of surveys and reports) for both volunteer group and Parish Council.

060323

**To discuss a permanent, economic and ecological solution to water levels in the canal**

**Each year, water is pumped under licence into the canal from the nearby River Frome. In the past, solar powered pumps have been considered. To discuss the cost of this method or to consider another solution to the issue. Establish who will do the research into whatever is agreed.**

Various points were discussed including shorter, more frequent pumping to stabilise water levels and by what method but not at a point to establish what water level to pump to; lowering silt levels, cost of silt removal, where to.

**Action:** Cllr's Bierer and Cobb to look into silt removal and pumping possibilities

070323

**To discuss and approve emergency costs should the need arise and agree a permanent solution.**

**Discussion to include the costs involved in hiring equipment and insurance cover and long term plan of action. Set a budget for the Clerk, with agreement of the Chairman, to hire the equipment at short notice should circumstances indicate that agreed low water levels are likely to be reached.**

Discussion around the equipment needed to lift water from one water way and pump to the canal. What pollutants are in the water being introduced to the canal? Research is needed as to how much water needs to be moved, from where, by what means? Proposed that the budget available to the Clerk, with Chairman's approval should be £1500, the budgeted figure. Cllrs Bierer and Lever with Volunteer Group Chairman are adjudicator on water level.

Proposed, seconded with all in favour

**Action:** Cllrs Cobb and Bierer to research pump equipment and capabilities

080123

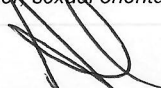
**Date of next Parish Council meeting is 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Meeting closed at 21:25**

Signed:

*Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in exercising any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.*

Signed / Date

 29/03/23