

Freckleton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting to discuss the new Dog area, held on Monday 16th February 2009

Present: Councillor Mrs. S Delany, (Chair)

Councillors T Threlfall, L Rigby, C Robb, St J Greenhough, Linda Burn, Mrs. L Willis and Mrs. M Whitehead.

1) To accept Apologies for absence

Councillors T Fiddler and Mrs. M Dowling (other meetings) and Mrs. M Foster (holiday)

It was resolved that the reasons for absence should be accepted.

2) To record declaration of interest from members in any item to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

3) To consider what action to take regarding the fencing around the new dog area.

The issues raised at the public meeting, regarding the unsuitability of the fence, were noted. In addition, it was noted that the “responsible” dog owners were also unhappy with the structure of the fence.

In light of the above comments, it was resolved (by Councillors Linda Burn, Mrs. L Willis, Mrs. M Whitehead, C Robb, St J Greenhough and P Quinn agreeing to a special resolution under section 18.a of the Standing Orders) to withdraw the resolution to fence off the area to the south of the car park, approved by item 7 of the minutes of the meeting held on 07/10/08.

A lengthy discussion followed on how best to meet the suggestions put forward by the residents of Bush lane and the dog owners’ representatives.

It was pointed out that the Defra guidelines, on the introduction of Dog orders (under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005), states that the Parish Council needs to balance the needs of both dog owners and others. This means in practice, the dog owners need access to land where they can exercise their dogs and equally other people expect a right to enjoy land without interference from dogs (by implication this means that some land from which dogs are either banned or restricted). It does not state that the land provided for exercising dogs should be fenced. In the past, the dog owners have used the northern part of the playing fields for exercising their dogs without any fencing next to the road.

It was stated that the responsibility for ensuring a dog is under control lies with the dog owner and it is not the Council’s responsibility to ensure the dog is in a secure area. If the dog owner cannot keep the dog under control it should not be let off the lead.

The following resolutions were considered:-

It was proposed that the dog Order should be implemented as previously agreed, with effect from 01/03/09, or as soon as FBC’s legal department has given its approval. This was unanimously accepted.

It was proposed that a laurel hedge should be erected in front of the existing fencing, along the road side. This motion was rejected.

It was proposed that all the fencing and gates should be removed. This was accepted by 5 votes for and 1 against.

It was proposed that the Council should employ a part time Enforcement Officer, if, after a trial period, the Dog warden and the PCSOs are unsuccessful in enforcing the new Order. This was approved by 5 votes for and none against.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed...Mrs. S Delany, Chairman.....

Date.....02/03/09.....