

# FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup> JULY 2018 AT 7.30 P.M. IN FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL

### Present

Mr. Paul Rowley (Chairman)    Mr. Bob Milne  
Mrs. Judy Tipping                Mr. Richard Thomas  
Mr. Roger Home                  Mrs. Marilyn Rolfe  
Mr. John Hodges                 Mrs. Judith Hall – Clerk

Eight members of the public including District Councillors Marlene Lewis and David Anthony.

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm. The meeting was adjourned for OPEN FORUM noted at the end of these minutes. The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

### 18/88/PC Apologies for absence

Mr. Clive Robinson and Mr. Bill Baker.

### 18/89/PC To accept the Chairman's declaration of acceptance of office

The Chairman followed by the Clerk signed Paul Rowley's declaration of acceptance of office in front of those present.

### 18/90/PC To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018

The minutes were **approved** and signed by the Chairman.

### 18/91/PC Matters Arising (not covered on the agenda and for information only)

91.1 The Chairman stated that he would like to take action regarding the playground around the edge of the sports club and the guide hut.

91.2 The Chairman noted that the conduct of Mr. Robinson had been referred to the Monitoring Officer and sort councillors views on whether they wished to continue pursuing this matter. The councillors present all felt that it was appropriate to continue.

91.3 Mr. Milne stated that he would like to discuss the Local Area Forum and would raise this as any other business.

### 18/92/PC To co-opt new councillor/s

92.1 The Chairman confirmed that the required notice advising electors of their rights to claim a by-election was issued and that South Bucks District Council ("SBDC") had received no such requests. As a result, the Parish Council would now look to fill the vacancies by co-option.

92.2 A general discussion regarding co-option then took place during which it was agreed that the Parish Council would be seeking people with appropriate skills to add value and those who would enable good representation throughout the Parish.

92.3 The Chairman stated that he believed there were at least three vacancies.

92.4 Mrs. Tipping commented that parishioners may have been put off from volunteering because of the last Parish Council meeting and the various comments on social media.

### 18/93/PC To ratify the employment of the new Clerk

93.1 The Chairman explained that 40 applications had been received for the role. He believed the excellent

response rate was as a result of advertising the position as full time and offering a reasonable market rate salary. The applicants were then shortlisted to four, all of whom were interviewed by the appointed panel. Following the interviews, two candidates were discounted and the panel used a scoring system to decide between the remaining two applicants.

93.2 Mrs. Tipping and Mrs. Rolfe expressed concern that they had not been invited to the meeting at which the interview process was agreed and merely received news of the outcome after it had all happened. They felt this was incorrect as all councillors should have been informed and as a result the process was not transparent. Subsequently Mrs. Rolfe acknowledged that she had received notice of the meeting but had not dealt with it at the time due to ill health and Mrs. Tipping advised that she had been on holiday during the period.

93.3 **It was agreed** to approve the appointment of Mrs. Judith Hall to the post of Clerk with effect from 23 July 2018.

#### **18/94/PC To consider the next steps regarding Kingsway Green**

94.1 The Chairman expressed his wish to see the Kingsway Green working group back up and running again with the help of parishioners. He was also keen for the group to have clear terms of reference and a link back to the Parish Council as funders.

94.2 The Clerk read through the names of those individuals who had expressed an interest in membership of the working group: Mrs. Rolfe, Mr. Baker, Mr. Whiting, Mrs. Prior and Mr. Clapp.

94.3 **It was agreed** that the Clerk would take steps to organise the first meeting of the working group.

#### **18/95/PC To agree increasing Christmas lighting provision**

95.1 The Chairman explained that he had attended a presentation by the chosen supplier to discuss improving the Christmas lighting between Farnham Common and Farnham Royal over a three year period.

95.2 He further explained that the plan for year one was for ten extra lights in Farnham Common from the junction with Forge Drive southbound to just past the Old Beaconsfield Green junction and seven new lights in Farnham Royal from just before the junction with Church Road northbound to just before the junction with Home Meadow. The cost in year one for a purchase option would be c.£16,200 and then an annual cost of c.£7,000 in year two for installation, inspection, maintenance and storage of all new and existing lights.

95.3 The Chairman advised that he was seeking agreement to proceed with year one of the three year plan but that before moving to implement years two and three, a review would be conducted to see whether it was felt that further lights were needed.

95.4 A general discussion regarding the provision of additional lights then took place during which the design, cost and fact that the proposal was to purchase rather than lease the lights were discussed. Mr. Hodges stated that by buying the lights, all of the risk rested with the Parish Council rather than the operator whereas the opposite would be true if the lights were leased.

95.5 **It was agreed** that the Parish Council would proceed with year one of the plan and purchase 17 new lights for fitting as discussed but that before moving to implement years two and three, a review would be conducted to see whether it was felt that further lights were needed.

#### **18/96/PC To take steps to renew the Devolved Services contract April 2019**

96.1 The Chairman stated his belief that the previous Clerk had circulated all councillors with Buckinghamshire County Council's ("BCC") email of 25 June 2018 detailing their offer to continue to contract with the Parish Council to undertake all of the services that it currently performs on BCC's behalf for a further four years with the same level of funding.

96.2 The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had two options:

96.2.1 Hand back the contract although this would result in a reduction in services.

96.2.2 Agree to a further four years on the same terms, which he was in favour of as a lot of time and effort has gone into understanding and managing the contract already and the precept had been increased to provide for the services now being performed. **It was agreed** that this offer should be accepted.

96.3 The Chairman also asked the councillors to consider whether they would like to explore the option of becoming a vanguard parish, which would take on an enhanced devolved service contract to include repairs to some roads. During a general discussion, the terms being offered and the likely difficulties that would be faced were discussed as was the Parish Council's desire to concentrate on perfecting the management of the services that had already

been devolved before taking on anymore. **It was agreed** that the Clerk would take steps to identify and contact the seven Town and Parish Councils that were taking part in the trial to better understand this new contract from BCC.

#### **18/97/PC To consider contributing to the cost of installing a sound systems/s in the village halls**

97.1 Mr. Home advised that in his capacity as Chairman of the Farnham Royal Village Hall he was reviewing the merits of purchasing a sound system for the hall but had decided that it would be difficult to manage and if the system was likely to be for the sole use of the Parish Council then the Hall would not be prepared to purchase the equipment. He therefore felt that it would be more sensible for the Parish Council to purchase a system and store it in the Parish Council office.

97.2 Mr. Home had obtained a quote for a system which would allow all councillors a microphone, the Chairman a control box and two handheld microphones for the audience. The price of this system was c.£1,800 including VAT.

97.3 Mrs. Rolfe advised that she had also obtained a quote and that this had been handed to the Clerk. She advised that the system she had been quoted for was similar to that suggested by Mr. Home albeit with one less microphone and she agreed that it should be bought by the Parish Council and stored in the Parish Council office.

97.4 During a general discussion, the portability of the system, whether it would be available to hire and whether VAT could be reclaimed were discussed.

97.5 **It was agreed** that the Parish Council would buy a portable sound system which would be stored in the Parish Council office and would not be available for hire and that Mrs. Rolfe and Mr. Home would review the systems available and put together a recommendation to be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

#### **18/98/PC To contribute to the costs of a defibrillator on an external wall at Farnham Common Sports Club ("FCSC")**

98.1 Mr. Thomas advised that the FCSC feel that it would be prudent to mount a defibrillator on an external wall in a waterproof box to ensure one is available to the general public who use the area for dog walking, general fitness and the tennis club etc. He clarified that the club does already have a defibrillator (purchased with assistance from the RFU) but this is inside to cater for the fitness room and sports club. He also clarified that the unit would be registered so residents would be able to locate it via the telephone location service.

98.2 A general discussion followed during which all councillors supported the idea in principle feeling that it was really important and the Parish Council's duty as landlord to assist. Mr. Thomas was asked to confirm the likely cost, which he advised would be c.£1,500. He also stated that he could approach the LTA and/or the RFU for additional assistance with the purchase.

98.3 The councillors then discussed what proportion of the purchase price the Parish Council would be prepared to contribute and these figures ranged from 30%, on the basis that other assistance might be available, to the Parish Council paying the full cost.

98.4 **It was agreed** that the Parish Council would pay a minimum of 50% towards the costs of the external wall mounted defibrillator on production of the relevant invoice.

98.5 Mr. Hodges expressed his displeasure that the Parish Council had £100,000 in the bank but wouldn't pay £1,500 to save a life, which he felt was pretty miserable.

#### **18/99/PC To consider suggestions for the name of the access road for Alderley Cottage site.**

99.1 Mr. Milne noted that the proposed name for this road was Simrit Gardens and that such a name had no connection with the village. He therefore proposed Alderley Gardens based on the name of the original property.

99.2 **It was agreed** that the Clerk would contact the developer with the Parish Council's suggestion of Alderley Gardens requesting that this name be used.

#### **18/100/PC To reconsider appointments to committees, working groups and outside bodies**

The Chairman proposed that this item be deferred until the next Parish Council meeting. **It was agreed** that this item be deferred until the next Parish Council meeting with the exception of the Open Spaces working group as this group was due to meet before the next Parish Council meeting. The Clerk read out the names of those listed as members: Mr. Hodges, Mr. Clapp, Mr. Milne, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Home, Mr. French, Mr. Frater and Ms. Read and no changes were recorded.

### **18/101/PC Finance**

101.1 Mr. Hodges explained that some suppliers received duplicate payments in July as it was usual practice for a sum equal to two months invoices to be paid as the Parish Council doesn't meet in August. He also noted the repayment of VAT. Payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were approved**.

101.2 The Chairman stated that he felt it was in the best interests of the Parish Council for the locum arrangements put in place to assist the Clerk to continue for the annual cycle until 30 June 2019 but that a formal written agreement was required. **It was agreed** that the Clerk was able to telephone the locum for assistance as and when required but that should it become necessary for the locum to attend the office, this must be authorised in advance by either the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

101.3 The Chairman wanted councillors to be clear that the proposed Chairman's allowance was a mechanism for saying thank you to people who have assisted the Parish Council rather than a sum to settle his personal expenses. These funds will be managed by the Clerk and all payments will either be approved at Parish Council meetings in advance or if urgent, by email sent to all councillors and then ratified at the next Parish Council meeting. **It was agreed** that the Chairman would have an annual allowance of £500. There had been no expenditure to ratify and no approvals were sort for future expenditure.

101.4 It **was agreed** that the bank mandate be change with Mr. Clapp being removed as a signatory and Mr. Rowley being added. The resolutions listed on the mandate were then passed. The Clerk will now forward the new mandate to the bank.

### **18/102/PC Planning**

102.1 The Chairman advised that there was one amendment to the schedule of comments on recent applications and that an amended schedule would be issued to all councillors by email. He read through the amendment and the Comments were **approved** and Planning decisions noted.

102.2 Mr. Thomas asked why the Parish Council commented on planning applications as it has no power and none of the councillors are qualified in planning. There followed a general discussion where concerns were raised regarding how effective the Parish Council was in helping residents with planning concerns and whether there was a better way of assisting such as writing as individuals rather than the Parish Council and/or producing a 'How to Guide'. Mr. Hodges suggested that engaging a planning consultant on major applications might also be of benefit. **It was agreed** that the Chairman, Mr. Thomas and the Clerk would meet to review this further.

102.3 Mrs. Rolfe and Mr. Home advised that they had briefly looked again at the planning documents regarding the development at Dippingwell, Beaconsfield Road, Farnham Common as a result of the recent decision to allow the developer's appeal. Mr. Home advised that whilst the developer had made some changes, the objections raised still remained valid. He raised particular concern regarding the ongoing maintenance of the hedge that borders the A355, Beaconsfield Road and advised that he had written to the Clerk asking her to contact the developer to ascertain what provision or covenant had been made to ensure the assignment of responsibility for maintenance of the hedge when the properties are sold. **It was agreed** that Mrs. Rolfe would draft a letter detailing the Parish Council's concerns. **It was further agreed** that the Clerk would contact the developer regarding the hedge.

102.4 The Chairman advised that the draft terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Plan steering group had not yet been received from the consultant appointed to assist but that these were due to be received by mid August 2018. The Chairman advised that the previous Clerk had emailed the people who attended the recent meeting asking for volunteers to be in the steering group and explaining a little more about the role. The Clerk advised that approximately six people had expressed an interest as a result of the email. The Chairman explained that ideally the group should have five to six members but could have ten if required however more than ten would see the group become less efficient. The eventual aim is to hold a referendum on the issue. **It was agreed** that as soon as the terms of reference were received steps would be taken to form the steering group.

### **18/103/PC Any Other Business (for information only)**

103.1 Mr. Milne reported that the LAF bids for projects in the next financial year would be:

103.1.1 Extension of footpath on Blackpond Lane subject to ascertaining the likely costs and logistics.

103.1.2 Double yellow lines on Broadway requesting raised curbs or bollards.

103.2 The Chairman advised that Cllr. Robinson had been reported to the Monitoring Officer at SBDC for bringing the Parish Council into disrepute. He believed that the Parish Council had waited the required 20 day notice period and had entered the second 20 day period during which the Officer would get an independent person to review the complaint. Having sort advice, the Chairman had been advised not to contact the Monitoring Officer as she would

be unlikely to talk to him in order to maintain impartiality. The Chairman expressed his frustration at not being able to contact her as he wanted to understand the steps she was taking.

103.3 Mrs. Rolfe asked what was being done about the overgrown hedge by the Farnham Royal bus stop. The Clerk advised that to the best of her knowledge the contractor had now cut back the hedge and that the other siding out discussed at a previous Parish Council meeting would be completed during the first two weeks of August 2018.

103.4 Mr. Home wanted to ensure that all councillors were aware that the number 74 bus service to Beaconsfield ceased on 25 June 2018. Mrs. Rolfe advised that on any service a passenger is now required to take two buses to complete the same journey. Particular concern was raised by Mrs. Rolfe for school children travelling to Beaconsfield who are now bussed to the Beaconsfield Services and must then walk to Beaconsfield along dangerous roads. She was aware that a private bus company was offering to take children in the mornings but that this would not solve the problem as not all parents can collect in the evenings. Mrs. Rolfe advised that she had spoken to BCC but had received a standard response that the decision have been made on commercial grounds. Mrs. Rolfe then made the point that the Parish Council could pay for this service.

103.5 Mr. Thomas expressed his opinion that up to now the Parish Council has not engaged with Facebook and that it is a powerful tool for getting and giving information which, the Parish Council should find a way to use. A general discussion then took place regarding the positive and negatives of Facebook and whether it was appropriate for the Parish Council to comment. Mr. Thomas said that he would meet with the Clerk to review the Parish Council's engagement with social media and report back at a future Parish Council meeting.

Paul Rowley left the meeting at 9.30pm and Mr. Milne took over as Chairman.

103.6 Mr. Milne advised the meeting that the Parish Council had received a request from a resident in Kemsley Chase to move the lamp post situated on his land two metres to the right (still on his land) to allow for a third parking space for his son. Mr. Milne advised that in principle the lamp post could be moved subject to obtaining the resident's agreement to: settle the costs, use the Parish Council's contractor and carry out the work only after limited consultation with neighbours. Mr. Milne advised that he now plans to meet the resident to progress the matter.

**18/104/PC Next meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall.**

The meeting closed at 9.37pm. The next meeting will be on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall.

**OPEN FORUM**

Mr. Foulds said that as the result of an accident at 6am on Green Man Hill some trees had been disturbed and he asked the Parish Council whether it would clear the mess. Mr. Milne advised that clearing the trees was the responsibility of the Highways Agency and he should contact BCC.

Mr. Foulds also stated that he did not manage to take on board Mr. Robinson's comments at the last Parish Council meeting regarding his activities with the speed detector gun and could the Parish Council clarify this. Mr. Milne read from the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 where Mr. Robinson reported that he had been out with the Speedwatch team on two occasions in Rosewood Way and the Avenue with some success. Mr. Milne clarified that the equipment used by the Speedwatch team records the speed of passing traffic and tells motorists how fast they were going. This information is then passed to the Police who notify drivers travelling above the speed limit although no enforcement action can be taken with the data. Mr Foulds commented that whilst side roads are important it might be an idea to carry this out on the A355.

Mr. Foulds continued that there had been a huge number of comments on Facebook regarding the speed and volume of trucks travelling through the village. Mrs. Tipping advised that lorries were now going through the village from the Beaconsfield Service Station down to the M4 to gain access to the M25 which is causing damage to buildings. She advised that originally the lorries were supposed to return to the M40 to gain access to the M25 but she believes satellite navigation systems are showing the route through the village instead.

Mr. Houdret requested that the Parish Council put pressure on McCarthy & Stone to relay the road by their development as the surface has dropped approximately half an inch.

Ms. Jebson expressed her disappointment that Beeches Road was such a heavy traffic route and stated that it is not suitable for the HGVs using it. She advised that vehicles are regularly speeding and mounting pavements. She asked the Parish Council what it could do to assist and whether anything could be negotiated with BCC. Mrs. Rolfe advised that she had lived on Beeches Road for 34 years and that she proposed to canvas the road's residents about a potential one way system. The system would take vehicles down Beeches Road, left into Green Lane and then left onto Kingsway. Both Mr. Norvill and Mr. Home felt that this type of system would encourage vehicles to travel faster on those roads. The Chairman asked whether the Parish Council could get any assistance from Transport for Bucks and Cllr. Anthony advised that contact should be directly with BCC. Mr. Home stated that the concerned residents would require support from everybody and should then write to the Parish Council detailing what is dangerous and then Transport for Bucks would need to be put under pressure to act.

Mr. Houdret stated that he felt that the Neighbourhood Plan committee needed to be sorted quickly and raised the issue of a residents' action group ("RAG") which would usually consist of 20-30 concerned people. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council was waiting for the steering groups terms of reference before it could start meeting and that it may be suitable for a RAG to sit behind the steering group.

Mr. Houret also asked what the current position was regarding the car park referendum and expressed his hope that the questions asked were not biased. He expressed concern for the shops who had reported a 15-20% reduction in footfall as a result of the new charges. The Chairman advised that the referendum postcard would be delivered in the Farnhams Magazine at the end of August or beginning of September and that responses were to be received by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018 with the anticipation of being able to report back at the Parish Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Mr. Foulds stated that it had been years since a traffic census was conducted in the village to ascertain where vehicles were coming from, where they were going to and why they were travelling. Mrs. Tipping advised that it was last done when planning for the Beaconsfield Service Station. The Chairman stated that it might be a good idea to have another but that the request would need to come from the public.

Ms. Jebson suggested making requests to Transport for Buckinghamshire ("TfB") for width and/or height restrictions in Burnham Beeches where travellers have previously gained access. The Chairman advised that he had good relations with TfB and that he would politely ask them.