

# FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2020 AT 7.30 P.M. IN FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL

### Present

Mr. Paul Rowley (Chairman)    Mrs. Marilyn Rolfe  
Mr. Bob Milne                    Mr. Richard Thomas  
Mrs. Jennifer Quilter           Mrs. Judith Hall – Clerk  
Six members of the public and District Councillor David Anthony and District Councillor Dev Dhillon

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.

### 20/1/PC Apologies for absence

Mr. John Hodges, Mrs. Judy Tipping, Mr. Roger Home and Mr. Clive Robinson  
The Chairman also noted that Mr. Hodges wife had passed away and offered his sympathies on behalf of the Parish Council..

### 20/2/PC Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 20/3/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25 November 2019

The minutes were **approved** and signed by the Chairman. Mr. Milne asked the Clerk to circulate the minutes again.

### 20/4/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing the items under this section. The report was provided to all those in attendance and can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or a hard copy can be requested from the clerk.

4.1 Update on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – report noted and the Chairman advised that the Group was ploughing ahead to get a plan for the villages within what the Local Plan requires. He advised that the Group had now met twice with residents and serious work was being carried out in connection with the output of those meetings. He further advised that a document is currently being put together which will be brought out to residents in approximately two months to see what parishioners can agree for the villages. The final plan will then need to be submitted for approval following a referendum. He stated that the Plan would bring extra responsibilities but also a small amount of additional funding through S.106 or CiL.

4.2 Update on Kingsway Green Posts – report noted and the Clerk advised that the posts should be installed within the next seven to ten days. The Chairman thanked the residents who conducted the online survey and advised that the small group of councillors who are currently considering the Green would review the comments.

4.3 Update on access to Ingrams Copse – report noted

4.4 Update on Community Payback Application – report noted

4.5 Update on matters raised with TfB Local Area Technician – report noted and the Chairman stated that although the Parish Council does not currently hold BCC to account it is trying to build a relationship. Mrs. Quilter raised the condition of a bollard along the A355 just before the Broadway at the end of Templewood Lane. The Chairman advised her to report this to BCC using the online portal. Mr. Milne advised that although the pothole in Langtons Meadow had been fixed, he had spoken to the TfB employee who checks the quality of work done and he

had advised Mr. Milne that there had been lots of negative comments so it was likely that the work would be redone. Mrs. Rolfe advised that it was her understanding that a hole had to be a certain depth before BCC would repair it. The Chairman advised that he wanted the Parish Council to performance manage suppliers to ensure good levels of service and value for money were being achieved.

### **20/5/PC Open Spaces:**

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing the items under this section. The report was provided to all those in attendance and can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or a hard copy can be requested from the clerk.

5.1 To receive report from the working group chair – Mr. Milne advised that the arboriculturalist's tree survey had been received and that a lot of work had been identified for the next six, nine and twelve months. It was his recommendation that quotes should be obtained for all of the work but noted that this could be quite expensive. He advised that to help with the costs, the projected £3,000 underspend in Devolved Services Extra Works had been moved in the management accounts to Open Spaces Extra Works. The Chairman advised that the issue of arboriculturalist work came up at the recent SBALC meeting as costs are rising due to initiative to plant more trees and that therefore more funding was required at a national level. **It was agreed** that quotes should be obtained. Mr. Milne referred to some issues reported by Mr. Robinson and proposed that the fallen branch on the east side of the A355 (opposite the nursery) should be removed and **this was agreed**. In addition, Mr. Milne advised that he had looked at a footpath on the east side of One Pin Lane and that he was going to ask Mr. Home to take a look at that and at the work carried out last year, including Church Road. MR. Milne also raised that tyre which had been abandoned by the road and Mr. Foulds offered to move it to a location of the Parish Council's choosing. Finally, **it was agreed** that Progress Services should be asked to repair the Kingsway bus shelter as a pane of glass had fallen out.

5.2 To consider the wild flower verge proposal – report noted and the Chairman advised that Parish Councillors had met with both Dr Helen Read of Burnham Beeches SAC and Mark Richardson of Amersham Town Council to discuss the flower verge pilot. He advised that there were three issues to decide: firstly, the site, secondly the seed mixture and thirdly how long the pilot would run. **It was agreed** that the proposed site along the A355 just south of Elm Close would be used and that the trial would last for three years. **It was further agreed** that the seed mix should contain partly native and partly non-native seeds together with yellow rattle with reseeding in Autumn with native annual and perennial plants only. Mr. Milne asked Mr. Foulds if he would spread some seeds on the mound in the field. He advised that the field actually belonged to Richard Allen. Mr. Milne stated that money had been found in the budget for this project.

### **20/6/PC Finance:**

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing the items under this section. The report was provided to all those in attendance and can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or a hard copy can be requested from the clerk. The Chairman advised that finances were tight for the 2019/20 year due to historic expenditure. He continued that the new auditor had spelt out what the Parish Council should be aiming for in terms of general reserves and that this figure was not yet being met but the Finance Committee was putting together a plan to get to the minimum amount. He advised that the Parish Council needed to set its precept to recover the position.

6.1 To reconsider The Fremantle Trust's grant request – report noted and the Chairman advised that he had reflected on the policy as so far it had refused everybody who had applied. He therefore felt that the policy needed to be looked at so it supports small groups who need a helping hand. He noted that The Fremantle Trust were appealing as they are a charity but stated that this request should be considered once the policy has been revised. Mr. Milne added that due to the reduction in the grant budget it may be unaffordable.

6.2 To approve payments and note receipts, as per the cashbook  
The payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were approved**.

6.3 To consider the December 2019 Management Accounts – the quarterly income and expenditure figures together with the revised annual forecast were discussed by those present and the following points were highlighted:

- A resident had offered a donation of £2,000 for a specific project in connection with Kingsway Green and it

is hoped that this will be spent by 31 March 2020.

- Due to the expected arboriculturalist work, funds have been moved from Devolved Services Extra Work to Open Spaces Extra Work
- The budget to open spaces has increased by £1,000 to cover the cost of the flower verge.
- The final LAF invoice has not yet been received but the cost was previously confirmed.
- The reduction in Devolved Services Grass Cutting is as a result of only paying as and when cutting took place rather than under the terms of a contract.
- The amount included for Devolved Services Extra Work relates to work for health and safety purposes only.
- Again the churchyard spending has been incurred as and when cutting has taken place rather than under the terms of a contract. The Chairman added that the Parish Council needs to discuss what work it will pay for and what work it wont pay for given recent communication from St Mary's Church regarding the paths.
- If the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group does not spend all of its budget for this year, the funds will be carried forward as ring fenced reserves.

Mr. Thomas asked whether the accounts included any provision for the playground project and suggested a figure of £20,000 to £30,000. Mrs. Rolfe suggested the figure would be more like £100,000 and advised that crowd funding and grants would be required to pay for the project. She explained that she had visited many local playgrounds to research funding and the majority had a minimum of ten sponsors. Mr. Thomas asked that if the playground is for the benefit of parishioners then why not increase the precept to pay for it. The Chairman remarked that most of the town and parish councils that attend SBALC meetings had put up their precepts. Mr. Milne expressed frustration that this was not brought up at the last meeting where councillors agreed he was on the right track in preparing the budget. Mr. Thomas stated that it is good financial management to be putting money aside and that residents needed to appreciate that if they want things it will cost.

The management accounts **were approved** and the Chairman thanked Mr. Milne and the Clerk for recovering the position.

6.4 To consider the 2020/21 budget and projections for 2021/22 and 2022/23 – the draft budget previously circulated was reviewed. The breakdown of the £7,500 in Open Spaces for projects was discussed as was carrying forward the unused Emergency Traveller Fund in order to build a pot should enforcement action be required. Mr. Milne explained that the amount included for LAF Funding was arbitrary as the costings for the application submitted in August 2019 had not been received from BCC. In addition, he highlighted the difference between the devolved services income and devolved services expenditure. He also reminded those resent that the last payment would be made in 2020/21 in respect of the pension deficit. Mrs. Quilter asked what was included in Sundry and suggested this would need to include maintenance for the new Kingsway Green posts. Those present then discussed the effect of the proposed increase in precept included in the budget on a household in each council tax band, which ranged from £4 to £10 per annum. Mr. Milne expressed his feeling that historically the Parish Council had been poor at getting projects done and therefore was it right to save with no plan or wait until a plan had been formulated and then start saving. Mrs. Quilter stated that by increasing the precept the Parish Council would have funds available to focus on projects that parishioners feel need completing – including those identified in items such as the neighbourhood plan questionnaires etc. The Chairman asked whether councillors felt that money should be going in a savings pot before definitive plans had been made. Mr. Thomas stated that if money is held then the Parish Council would have to do something and parishioners would need to say what they wanted done so communication and engagement would be needed. Mrs. Rolfe asked councillors to remember that it wont just be the Parish Council that increases its amount, three or four different bodies make up the council tax and all are likely to increase which could make residents very upset.

6.5 To agree the 2020/21 precept – following the discussion above, Mr. Thomas suggested raising the precept to get to six months reserves by the end of 2020/21. Mrs. Quilter asked whether this had been modelled and Mr. Milne advised that it had not as at the last meeting councillors agreed he was on the right path with the included increase. He added that this would require an increase of £45,000 and Mr. Thomas calculated that would be an annual increase of approximately £12 to £30 depending on a resident's council tax band. Mrs Quilter felt that the production of infographics would help illustrate what the precept is spent upon and would provide visual representation for parishioners of what the precept is utilised for. Mrs. Rolfe suggested the use of a pie chart. Mr. Milne asked councillors for a proposal. The Chairman proposed an increase of £25,000 to the precept. **This was agreed** but

Mrs. Rolfe abstained from the vote. The Chairman added that it was his understanding that the Parish Council wants to make equality between the two villages and it was suggested that this should be added to a future agenda.

### **20/7/PC Planning:**

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing the items under this section. The report was provided to all those in attendance and can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or a hard copy can be requested from the clerk.

7.1 To consider comments submitted on recent applications

The Planning Comments **were ratified**.

7.2 To consider the planning application for East Burnham Quarry (BCC - CM/0055/19) – Mrs. Rolfe advised that Summerleaze Ltd had applied to extend their activities for another four years. Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had been to the Burnham Parish Council meeting earlier that evening to discuss the application and that although there were enough objections, the more the better. Mrs Bennett, a resident, advised that Fox Cottage had been left out of the application details. The Chairman asked what the Parish Council can do and Cllr. Dhillon advised that conditions of the licence were not being complied with and the operation needs to be done properly.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that the application in respect of The Other House for five flats had been refused but that if the application for two houses went to the SBDC Planning Committee he would speak. He also advised that he was watching 1 Fairfield Lane, Farnham Royal.

7.3 To note recent planning decisions

The Planning decisions **were noted**.

7.4 Update on enforcement issues – report noted.

### **20/8/PC Any Other Business (for information only)**

8.1 Mr. Thomas advised that neighbours of 14 Grange Gardens (Plot A & B) are unhappy regarding the development as the builders have changed the design and size of the buildings. That there has been an enforcement order regarding the windows and then a retrospective application to put them back. Cllr. Dhillon advised that he was meeting one of the neighbours tomorrow and would review the position.

8.2 The Chairman asked whether a small sum could be made available to do something on VE Day.

8.3 Mrs. Rolfe advised that the Royal British Legion have no plans for VE Day and Farnham Common Village Hall felt something should be arranged and are proposing an appropriate film, afternoon tea and optional dressing up but planning is in the early stages.

8.4 Mrs. Rolfe advised that the charities needed to be reviewed and the Clerk agreed to arrange this with her.

8.5 Mrs. Rolfe asked whether tidying up The Broadway could be added to the Community Payback scheme as the gullies are full of mud and the weeds are appalling and raised the lack of road sweeping. She noted that these things matter to residents and are getting worse.

### **20/9/PC Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 9.55pm. The next meeting will be on 24 February 2020 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Mr Wayne, a resident, wanted to make the Parish Council aware that the drains on the main road are blocked again and that as a result Elm Close was under 6" of water. He also advised that Forge Drive also gets blocked. Mr. Milne advised that he had met twice with the TfB Local Area Technician in the last couple of weeks. He suggested that Mr Wayne, email the Clerk with the issues and they could then be raised with the LAT.

Mr Foulds, a resident, complained about the number of tipper lorries in the villages. It was his understanding that the M & S Groundworks contract was due to expire at the end of December 2019 so he was curious to know where the lorries are going, what they are taking in and out of the site and what they are doing. Mr. Thomas noted that there were six M & S Groundworks lorries in Grange Gardens earlier and that they are earth movers for developers. Mr. Foulds complained that dozens of companies move their lorries through the villages and wanted to know why

residents were subjected to this activity. The Chairman advised that Summerleaze Limited had applied to continue its activities for four more years and that the deadline for commenting was 29 January 2020. Mrs. Rolfe added that this extension was being sought despite promising that they would be finished on time and commented that the Environment Agency had agreed that the licence should never have been granted. The Chairman asked Cllr. Anthony who residents should contact regarding the lorries and he advised that contact should be made with BCC through the local councillor or Cllr. Dhillon. The Chairman advised that he has a meeting with Cllr. Dhillon scheduled for the next day so would raise it then. Mr. Foulds expressed his frustration and stated that there would be more action if residents go up and down the road as the Parish Council wasn't bothered. Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Foulds what he thought the Parish Council could actually do in this situation and Mr. Foulds explained that residents may be able to do better as they are not an official body and accepted that there was little the Parish Council could do but liken living on the A355 to living on a motorway. Mr. Foulds asked whether the findings would be made public and the Chairman confirmed that they would. Mrs Gray, a resident, advised that she had rung BCC and been advised that it was an issue for them so she had left a message for Lin Hazell but no reply had been received. She added that it was possible for restrictions to be applied but this had to be done through the county councillor.

The Chairman asked Cllr. Anthony for an update regarding the new unitary authority. Cllr. Anthony advised that things were moving at an accelerating pace and that at the end of March 2020 BCC and the district councils would cease and Buckinghamshire Council would commence. He advised that currently all council members are part of the shadow authority and that elections would be held in May 2020 after which there would be 147 councillors. He advised that the budget was currently under active consideration and that the council tax was being set. He advised that his personal view was that more should be devolved to town and parish councils but that there was a remote chance of this. The Chairman advised that he and Mr. Milne had attended a SBALC meeting at which the new boards were discussed. He recalled that there would be 16 boards and that Farnham Royal Parish was part of the Beeches board. Cllr. Anthony shared his understanding that the local unitary councillors will be members of the boards and that Parish Councils and stakeholders will be represented but voting will be determined by unitary councillors. He did suggest that although currently Parish Councils will have no vote, this may change as a lot of unitary councillors object to this as they feel the boards should be democratic.