

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 29 JUNE 2020 AT 7.30 P.M. VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present

Mr. Paul Rowley (Chairman) Mrs. Marilyn Rolfe
Mr. Bob Milne Mr. Roger Home
Mrs. Jennifer Quilter Mr. Richard Thomas
Mrs. Judith Hall – Clerk
Cllr. Dhillon and Cllr. Anthony and one member of the public

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.

20/50/PC Apologies for absence

Mr. Clive Robinson, Mrs. Judy Tipping and Mr. John Hodges

20/51/PC Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20/52/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26 May 2020

The minutes were **approved** and **it was agreed** that they would be signed by the Chairman the next day.

20/53/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 can be downloaded from the Parish Council website.

53.1 Update on right of way issues at Ingrams Copse and Boundary Copse – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that the council had already agreed to follow the solicitors advice so this item was merely to update councillors and advised that until a reply had been received from L&Q the financial implications of the letter would not be known but costs should be expected in respect of possibly purchasing a new gate and clearing vegetations. Mr. Milne added that the letter, as drafted by the solicitors, was quite conciliatory so by sending the letter the council was probably committing to costs so if councillors are not prepared for costs then there is no point sending the letter.

53.2 Update on Templewood Lane road surface – the content of the report was noted

53.3 Update on Covid19 community efforts – The Chairman invited Mr. Thomas to provide any feedback. He advised that the group was reducing in size as people aren't busy due to people who were shielding now being able to do more. He stated that he was hoping there wouldn't be a second spike and that if there were the volunteers would come back to the group. He wanted to thank Lizzie Wright of BC who had been very helpful and really excellent in supporting the group and asked Cllr. Dhillon to pass this on. He finished by stating that the group would probably be winding down with more focus being placed on supporting Slough foodbanks. The Chairman thanked the group on behalf of the parish council. Cllr. Dhillon advised that he and David Banks had sent an email of thanks to Lizzie Wright last week.

53.4 Signage Policy – Mr. Milne asked when the policy was going to be considered. The Clerk agreed to email the policy to councillors with a request for a working group to review it.

53.5 2021 Meeting Dates – Mr. Milne asked the Clerk to send out a sheet with the 2021 meeting dates on as this was very useful. The Clerk agreed.

20/54/PC To consider the appointment of new representatives on the following:

4.1 Farnhams Magazine – The Chairman advised that he was happy to continue as the representative on the basis he dealt with the finance and attended only four meetings a year but asked if anybody wanted to back him up if he couldn't attend. Mrs. Rolfe volunteered for the role and **this was agreed**. Mr. Milne stated that following magazine committee meetings it was very important that the information discussed came back to the parish council for review.

4.2 Farnham Common Sports Club – The Chairman advised that for personal reasons Mrs. Tipping had stood down and asked whether anyone would join him as a representative as he was often unable to attend the meetings. Mrs. Rolfe proposed Mrs. Quilter who asked for further details. Mr. Thomas advised that the meetings were during the evening on the first Monday of the month. Mrs. Quilter felt that she would be able to do this. The appointment of Mrs. Quilter as a representative **was agreed**.

20/55/PC Open Spaces:

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing these items. The report can be downloaded from the Parish Council website.

55.1 To consider the recommendation in the quarterly bus shelter inspection report – the content of the report was noted and Mr. Milne asked whether the quote included clearing the Ash tree. The Chairman advised that it did. Mr. Home noted that he had been told that the shelter was something of an antique and should be preserved. It **was agreed** that the work should be carried out.

55.2 To consider TfB's request for a telephone conference call to discuss S106 financial contribution received by BC – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman confirmed that the meeting with TfB was scheduled for 2pm on Wednesday 1 July 2020 and advised that any schemes proposed would be subject to the conditions of the original s106 contribution. Mr. Home wished to flag the verges north of Farnham Royal to Farnham Common where the Parish Council had already spent a lot of money due to years of neglect from BCC and also the newly reported issue with the verges in Purton Lane and asked whether the S106 money could be spent on managing and where necessary reinstating the verges. Cllr. Dhillon agreed with Mr. Home's suggestion and proposed adding the buried footpath by Millwood Nursery. Mr. Milne agreed and reminded those present that he had twice walked the footpath by the nursery with the LAT but nothing had been done. Cllr. Anthony stated that it must be considered to what extent the S106 money was to be spent on BC obligations. Mr. Home advised that this issue had become confused as the Parish Council undertook to keep the verges maintained under the Devolved Services Agreement. Cllr. Anthony clarified that he was happy to consider suggestions regarding verges but not footpaths. Mr. Home expressed his concern that some of the areas defined as verges are now actually thickets and that to reinstate these would be at a large cost. He agreed that if BC would carry out the work then fine but felt that history shows they won't. Cllr. Anthony repeated his, in principle, support for verge works. Cllr. Dhillon felt that improving accessibility for pedestrians particularly the elderly and those with disabilities was very important and urged councillors to consider all available pots of money including the Community Board funds of c. £90,000.

55.3 To consider summaries of A355 traffic survey conduct by TfB on behalf of the Parish Council

This item was discussed during the open forum section of the meeting and the detail of the discussion is produced in the open forum section of the minutes below.

55.4 To consider quotes received in respect of work identified in the Arboriculturist's Report – the content of the report was noted and the Clerk confirmed that information. It was agreed that as the work could not be carried out until after the nesting season more quotes should be sought. M & J Treecare were suggested and Mr. Home said he would provide details of another tree specialist. The Clerk agreed to contact both in an effort to obtain two additional quotes.

55.5 To consider the quote received for servicing and repairing the flagpoles – the content of the report was noted and it **was agreed** that the servicing and repairs should be carried out.

20/56/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 can be downloaded from the Parish Council website.

56.1 To ratify the decision to purchase an annual subscription to Zoom – the content of the report was noted and the decision **was ratified** on the basis the meetings were better and cheaper.

56.2 To consider payment of £50 to enable Mrs. Tipping to attend Zoom meetings – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman confirmed that the work had been done. It **was agreed** that the payment should be made.

56.3 To consider the Farnhams Magazine's request for funding

Mr. Milne advised that parish councillors present had all received the notes of the meeting held with Mr. Houdret on behalf of the magazine and the minutes of the subsequent finance committee meeting at which the issue was discussed. Mr. Milne wanted to highlight three things:

1. He was more than disappointed that Mr. Houdret maintained he was unaware that since 2016 the parish council had been asking the magazine to be self funding as he had attended the relevant parish council meeting and had received an email from the then Chairman. Mr. Milne stated that he hoped other councillors had taken the time to read the notes. Mr. R Thomas confirmed he had read the notes and that he clearly remembered that the parish council said it would provide funding only until the magazine was self funding. Mr. Milne added that given this it is disappointing that the magazine keeps asking for money.
2. He also noted that during the discussion, they were advised that the magazine has reserves of £25,000 which seemed high. Mr. R Thomas agreed. Mr. Milne advised that the reserves in 2016 were £19,000. The current running costs are £18,000. The feeling was that it wasn't right to have reserves of this level and still be asking for money. For the reserves to have grown since 2016, it seems that the magazine may have been making an annual surplus and the parish council has therefore been contributing to this. Mr. Houdret also confirmed during the meeting that the church did not contribute regularly.
3. He finally, stated that the magazine still treats the parish council as an advertiser not a contributor like the church, the schools, JAWS and the sports club etc. and it had been mentioned that if the Parish Council didn't pay for its page(s) it may cease to be included in the magazine. It had also been suggested by Mr. Houdret that the parish council buy the magazine.

Mr. Milne continued that the finance committee had come up with a recommendation which included certain conditions. Mr. Milne detailed the following conditions:

1. The magazine's audited accounts for 2017 and 2018 should be provided to the Parish Council now.
2. The 2019 audited accounts should be provided to the Parish Council as soon as possible.
3. The budgets for 2020 and 2021 should be provided to the Parish Council.
4. Magazine committee members should stop receiving stipends and should reclaim actual expenses incurred.
5. A three year budgeting plan should be prepared which shows the magazine moving to a balanced budget within the period.
6. Any contribution from the Parish Council is to be match funded.
7. The Parish Council's financial contribution is limited to £1,500.
8. No further contribution from the Parish Council will be agreed if the magazine's reserves are greater than £25,000.

Mr. Milne advised that the finance committee felt that the magazine should come to the parish council at the end of the financial year when any shortfall is known and then the parish council might contribute up to £1,500 towards the shortfall. The Chairman advised that another condition was that future meetings between the magazine and the Parish Council should involve both the magazine treasurer and the parochial church council treasurer. Mr. Milne added that the Rector should also be present and that the notes of the recent meeting should be circulated to the magazine management committee.

Mr. Milne advised that another area of concern, particularly for Mrs. Rolfe, was the stipends that were being paid to magazine committee members and that the finance committee members felt that these should be replaced with invoiced expenses. The Chairman added that claims in respect of repairs to computers etc. should be handled in the same way as HMRC by using a percentage based calculation. The Chairman then sought to summarise the discussion by saying that going forward towards the end of the magazine's financial year an approach could be made to the Parish Council for a financial contribution towards an anticipated shortfall for that year to a maximum of £1,500 and a condition of funding would be for any funding provided to be matched by the magazine from its reserves until such reserves were reduced to below £20,000 at which time match funding should be discussed directly with the parochial church council. He also reiterated that the email sent in 2016, by the then Parish Council Chairman, made it clear that the magazine was to become self funding and Mr. Milne added that the magazine must also have a recovery plan in place in order for this to happen. **This was agreed.**

56.4 To approve payments and note receipts, as per the cashbook

The payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were approved**. Mr. Milne reiterated his comments at the finance committee meeting and stated that it is very important that the Parish Council takes the steps needed to spend the money allocated to specific items and asked the Clerk to prepare a timescale for completing the work on the strip of land next to Kingsway Green for which a donation had been received. In particular he requested an idea of the costs involved for the next finance committee meeting so that a decision could be made at the next parish council meeting.

20/57/PC Planning:

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with schedules of the comments submitted and decisions made by SBDC Planning.

57.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

The Planning Comments **were ratified**. Mrs. Rolfe asked Cllr. Dhillon for an update regarding works in Bybend Close, Farnham Royal and he confirmed that a stop notice had been served which had resulted in a retrospective planning application being made. Mrs. Rolfe also wished to bring an application concerning The Cherubs, Parsonage Lane to the attention of councillors as it concerned the erection of four new detached properties on green belt land which is also on the edges of ancient woodland. She asked all councillors to review the application.

57.2 To note recent planning decisions

The Planning decisions **were noted**.

20/58/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

58.1 Mr. Milne stated that the new notice boards should also be purchased this financial year. The Clerk added that a new notice board was being sought for Farnham Common and that the noticeboard and defibrillator in Farnham Royal needed to be relocated due to construction work. The suggestion was to ask the Dukes Head public house if the noticeboard and defibrillator could be relocated to one of their outside walls. The Chairman volunteered to discuss this with the landlord.

58.2 Mr. R Thomas asked whether the summary of the traffic survey could be put on the parish council's website and published on its Facebook page. All those present, including Mr. G Thomas, felt that this was a good idea. Mr. G Thomas asked if he could add a sentence and update the summary first which was agreed. Mr. R Thomas just warned Mr. G Thomas that he may receive queries and comments from members of the public.

58.3 Mrs. Quilter asked the Clerk to review and amend the roles, memberships and appointments information on the parish council website.

58.4 Mrs. Rolfe asked for an update regarding the application for Community Payback support. The Clerk advised that the application had been sent to Tabish at Burnham Parish Council who was co-ordinating the request with Mr. Robinson so she would ask him for an update.

58.5 Cllr. Anthony said that keeping the public conveniences open was great for business and that the public should be made aware of this. The Chairman expressed thanks to the person who cleans the toilets as he periodically checks them and they are always up to standard. The Clerk undertook to pass this on.

20/59/PC Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.15pm. The next meeting will be a virtual meeting on 27 July 2020 at 7.30pm. Details will be published with the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

Cllr. Anthony asked when the public toilets in Farnham Common were reopening. The Chairman advised that they had remained open throughout lockdown. Cllr. Anthony advised that they were locked at about 6pm and the Chairman confirmed that he would check with BC regarding the opening hours and report back.

Mr. G Thomas, a resident who summarised the data provided by TfB following the traffic survey on the A355 that was commissioned by the Parish Council in September 2019, advised that he was interested to hear councillors feedback on his summary and he was unclear why it was commissioned. The Chairman advised that the survey was commissioned following representations received from residents and that he was interested to see how the

results were viewed by a parishioner. Mr. G Thomas advised that his personal interest was the number of HGVs travelling through the villages and that he was surprised by the data as there probably seem more than there actually are. He advised that during the five week days most HGVs travel during the rush hours and during the two day weekend most travel around mid-day. He further advised that a small percentage of vehicles travel at speeds greater than 50MPH but this occurs mostly in the early hours of the morning. He did not consider that the result showed anything too bad in terms of speeding as most vehicles travel between 25-30MPH. The Chairman advised that he felt that the design of the village along the A355 self limited speeding where the shops are and he was therefore not surprised by these results unless reckless driving was taking place and the results showing that speeding takes place outside busy hours make sense. Mr. Milne advised that he had reviewed that summaries prepared and a comment was made that vehicles tended to travel faster going north out of the village. Mr. Home added that users know the roads and are aware that southbound there is a camera. The Chairman advised that he did not consider the results or summary to be surprising. Mr. Milne advised that he was surprised about the number of trucks per hour at certain times and felt that this was the biggest concern but felt that there wasn't much the Parish Council could do. The Chairman invited Mr. G Thomas to continue. He advised that at the weekend in terms of trucks they were mostly smaller and, in the week, there were up to 20 trucks per hour which were fewer than he was expecting. The Chairman expressed his feeling that the summary produced by Mr. G Thomas was sensible and honest. He felt that the area to tackle with BC, if possible, is the bigger trucks. Mr. G Thomas advised that on weekdays there are about six three or four axel and arctic lorries in each direction which isn't as many as he was predicting. Mr. Home expressed that the problem with statistics is that they don't include the impact. Mr. G Thomas also advised that he had discovered that air quality is being measured at Robin Parade and the particulate levels are quite low so air quality concerns raised by him previously are not worth pursuing. He advised that the quality is much better than Iver. The Chairman advised that the App on his iPhone supported this and thanked Mr. G Thomas for his efforts and assistance in interpreting the raw data provided by TfB. Mr. R Thomas expressed that the Parish Council receives comments all the time about too many large vehicles and poor air quality but it appears the evidence doesn't support this and that it should be remembered that residents live close to one of the largest industrial estates in Europe. He advised that he had lived in the village for 50 years and remembers that there was always talk of action groups to tackle the issue but that given location and the evidence he felt the Parish Council would be onto a loser. He asked whether the Parish Council could publicise the summary provided by Mr. G Thomas to show residents that it really isn't that bad. Mr. G Thomas agreed but said that this version was only a draft prepared for comments, Mr. Thomas stated that the summary was a really useful document. Mr. Home agreed with Mr. R Thomas and suggested putting together a history of the A355 as he had lived in the village for almost as long and he believes that the traffic is no worse now than it was then despite there being five to six times as many vehicles in use generally. Mr. Milne questioned this but Mr. Home explained that he feels that the traffic lights act as a deterrent and put people off as does the traffic on the Farnham Road. The Chairman noted at this point that the discussion had really covered item 5.3 on the agenda (55.3 in the minutes above).

Cllr. Dhillon agreed with Mr. R Thomas and advised that he'd had a long discussion with BC regarding the A355 and it was not possible to take any steps regarding this long 'A' road between two motorways other than to ensure the maintenance of the road surface. Cllr. Dhillon advised that parish councillors needed to consider what they would like to suggest as a project or projects to be paid for from the S106 financial contribution. Mr. Home advised that the money should be spent on improving road surfaces and clearing gullies as it wasn't enough to solve a big problem but could solve small ones to improve residents' quality of life. He advised that the puddling that occurs in heavy rainfall is a problem. Mr. Milne asked whether Mr. Home would be at the meeting and he confirmed he would.

The Chairman asked Cllr. Anthony to provide an update regarding the progress of the new unitary authority. He advised that the pace was accelerating rapidly as councillors got the hang of video conferencing which was now allowing meetings to take place. He advised that the first Beeches Community Board meeting was on 8 July 2020 and he hoped FRPC would attend. He advised that on the whole he was pleased and optimistic about the new unitary authority. The Chairman asked the Clerk whether she was aware of the meeting on 8 July 2020. She advised that she was and that Mrs. Rolfe, as one of the Parish Council's representatives, would be attending with her. She advised that the co-ordinator had confirmed that only the Clerk and one councillor could attend. Mrs. Quilter, the other representative, was happy for Mrs. Rolfe to attend.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that Joy Morrisey, MP for Beaconsfield, thanked the Parish Council and parishioners for their efforts during the Covid19 lockdown and that she was sorry she couldn't attend the planned community meeting. Cllr. Dhillon added that he would be attending the Community Board meeting at which the structure and some early priorities would be discussed. He also advised that it was hoped that the September and November meetings would be face to face and would allow some volunteer groups to attend. He also advised that he had attended the BC Planning Committee meeting that considered the recent application made by Summerleaze and it was agreed that Fox Cottage had been missed off the plans and a decision was deferred to the September 2020 meeting. Discussions between Cllr. Dhillon and Summerleaze are ongoing. He advised that the building work in Foxhollow Drive was not in accordance with the planning permission granted and enforcement had been notified and that a stop notice had been served in respect of the work being carried out in Bybend Close and as a result a retrospective planning application was being made. He also advised that he had been to see footpath FAR/5/1 which lead from Blackpond Lane to Hawthorn Lane due to overgrown vegetation and asked when maintenance would be carried out. Mr. Milne advised that it was not the Parish Council's responsibility to carry out the maintenance of footways and Mr. Home suggested that the Parish Council write to the residents of the relevant property. Mr. Milne confirmed to Cllr. Dhillon that the Parish Council would look into it. Cllr. Dhillon advised that the surface work had been carried out on Hawthorn Lane and if there were any other roads that needed work to let him know. Cllr. Anthony suggested that work was required on Rectory Close as the surface was shocking. Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had met the trust, the trustees of a slough primary school, a slough temple and another organisation regarding the Khalsa School and that a decision would be taken by the Board of Heads on 15 July 2020.