

# FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30 P.M. VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

### Present

Mr. Paul Rowley (Chairman)    Mrs. Marilyn Rolfe (from 21.12)  
Mr. Bob Milne                      Mr. Roger Home  
Mrs. Jennifer Quilter            Mrs. Judith Hall – Clerk  
Two members of the public, and County Cllr. Dev Dhillon, County Cllr. Marlene Lewis and County Cllr. 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.

### 20/83/PC Apologies for absence

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

### 20/84/PC Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 20/85/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 24 August 2020

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

### 20/86/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

86.1 Update on Guide Hut – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that as requested he, Mrs. Rolfe and Mrs. Reid had met to try to get to a point where a way forward can be planned forward. It was confirmed that the current lease ends in April 2025 and that the Girl Guides are responsible for maintaining the building. The Chairman advised that the drop dead date for the project is 2025. He also advised that during the recent meeting there were discussions about what the Girl Guides want to do and what the Parish Council wants to do and the Chairman confirmed that he had explained that the Parish Council wants to rework the whole area as the playground and gym equipment are situated there and a plan for the whole area would be ideal. The Chairman also advised that he had been quite firm and stated that ideally, and as per national guidelines, all assets in the Parish should be well used and not dormant week after week and as a result Mr. Reid had agreed to look at the Brian Jubb Hall. The Chairman expressed his feeling that the Brian Jubb Hall would fit the needs of the Girl Guides and offered car parking and storage, although the latter would probably need to be provided by the Parish Council.

86.2 Community feedback from the 2019 A355 Traffic Survey – The Chairman asked Mr. G Thomas to comment. Mr. G Thomas advised that he had posted his summary in the Farnhams Community Facebook Group and there is support for doing something about northbound traffic. He suggested possibly making the traffic camera work in both directions (bi-directional). Mr. Home agreed with this as did Mr. Milne. The Chairman advised that the MVAS was now definitely working. Mr. Milne stated that there is always doubt about whether the speed camera actually works and asked whether the permanent VAS by the school worked. Mr. G Thomas asked whether the southbound camera was working, whether warnings or fines were being issued and whether the information can be sourced from the Police. He further advised that on social media residents have raised concerns about speeding on Farnham Road outside Dair House School, the playing fields and Fairfield Lane. Mr. Home thanked Mr. G Thomas for his feedback and stated his belief that a record of all comments should be kept to help with the Parish Council's case that work needs to be done. Mr. G Thomas also asked whether on Farnham Road a crossing island could be considered outside Fairfield Lane and it was again mentioned that HGVs are ruining the verges of Farnham Lane. Finally, Mr. G Thomas advised that residents were also asking for a 30MPH speed limit along Farnham Road but he acknowledged that may not be practical. The Chairman advised that the Speedwatch initiative has been suspended at the direction of the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police

due to Covid19. He asked Mr. Milne whether he felt the Speedwatch had more impact but Mr. Milne was unsure as he was under the impression that everybody saw the Speedwatch set up miles off and slowed down. Mr. Milne advised that the Parish Council is aware there should be a crossing by the playing fields and requested one a year or two ago but it was accessed by BCC/TfB as too expensive as there had been no accidents. He advised that the Parish Council was trying to get a crossing on Farnham Lane but that it was his feeling that a crossing was needed on each of the four roads going into Farnham Royal. It was agreed that it was important to put everything on the 'wish list' for BC and then prioritise at a later stage. There was total agreement about the northbound camera. Mr. G Thomas advised that he could recognise that a formal crossing at Fairfield Lane was too expensive but clarified that residents were requesting an island like at Cherry Tree Road. Mr. Home suggested that the best approach would not be to suggest the best solutions to the problems rather the Parish Council should highlight the issues and asked BC to suggest solutions. As Community Board funds are insufficient for these types of projects it was proposed that Cllr. Dhillon, Cllr. Anthony, Cllr. Egleton, Mr. G Thomas and Mr. Home get together and look at all avenues including the Community Board. The output could then be taken to the Community Board Annual Meeting. Cllr. Anthony added that the Community Board can play an important part despite limited resources as he, as Chairman of the Board, can speak with the voice of the Community Board and should be listened to by BC. The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council approach the Community Board with priorities. The Chairman agreed with Mr. Home to highlight the problem and Mr. Home advised that local and central government want to hear from residents but channelled through Parish Councils and Community Boards.

86.3 Update on S106 financial contribution projects - The Chairman asked Mr. Home to provide an update. Mr. Home reminded those present that the sum of £39,000 was available following a contribution from the developer of Cranwells Meadow. Initially the Parish Council had requested vegetation clearance along the A355 but BC had confirmed that they will finance all of this work so the contribution would not be used. Mr. Home advised that originally TfB estimated that the clearance work would be finished by the end of September 2020 but there had been slippage and the project had not yet been scheduled. The Chairman asked Mr. Home to keep an eye on this. Mr. Home agreed to do so as he wants to ensure that there is not too much delay and that the work is to the standard requested. The Chairman thanked Mr. Home for his efforts in this regard. Mr. Home thanked BC for taking on the project.

Mr. Home advised that initially TfB had suggested that the potential crossing on Farnham Lane could be funded by a S106 contribution from the developer of the new Verdun Court development but unfortunately it had now been confirmed that there was no such contribution. It was agreed that B should be asked why no contribution was obtained and if one had been obtained where the funds were used. Mr. Home advised that the £39,000 could be used to part fund the crossing but the total cost would be between £80,000 to £100,000. The project was currently therefore not viable as the Parish Council doesn't have the money to make up the difference. Mr. Home advised that he has asked BC to go back and find more money as part of the road is a cycle route and it doesn't fulfil the necessary criteria. The options available to BC are to reroute the cycle route through Bishops Orchard, deregulate the cycle route or build the requested crossing with cycling provision. Mr. Home advised that by the end of this financial year the Parish Council has to have told BC that it will use the funds for a project or the funds will revert to the developer.

Mr. Home advised that the Government set a target for walkers and cyclists in an Active Travel Strategy and he suggests that if The Farnham don't have a strategy detailing what is needed nothing will happen. He continued that the Government is pushing this issue hard with all English local authorities and the Parish Council should develop an aspirational five year plan for 2020 to 2025. He suggested that as S106 funding is unpredictable there must be a better way to get the money needed. He advised that it would be necessary to draw people in from the community to work together on the plan through the Parish Council as the group would be more powerful if working together.

86.4 Update on Community Payback projects – The Chairman asked Mr. Home to provide an update. Mr. Home advised that he had that morning discussed the projects with the Supervisor and she had advised that the enhanced Covid 19 restrictions would have an impact as a portable toilet was now needed on site. She had assured Mr. Home that the projects will be carried out by the end of this calendar year. Mr. Home had look into the costs of a Portaloo and advised that the projects would still come within the budget of £2,000 suggested.

86.5 Update on the relocation of the defibrillator in Farnham Royal – as per report.

86.6 Update on Covid19 community efforts – The Chairman advised that Mr. R Tomas is the Parish Council's link into the Community Group and as he couldn't make this evening he will ask that the Group remain active in case there is another spike and community responders are required. The Chairman offered to write to him.

86.7 Update on the Burnham Beeches SAC Consultation - responses - The Chairman asked if councillors had had an opportunity to review the report and whether, as the Parish Council's representative, Mrs. Quilter was happy with the response. The Chairman advised that he, Mrs. Rolfe and the Clerk met via Zoom with Mr. Barnard and Dr. Read from Burnham Beeches to discuss the Parish Council's concerns and response. The Chairman advised that he felt it wasn't a very helpful meeting and that he was disappointed as when Burnham Beeches had wanted something from the Parish Council, they consulted the Parish Council but this time they had not approached the Parish Council and when asked why not advised that was nothing to do with Burnham Beeches it was BC. The Chairman advised that it was clear that Burnham Beeches want the plan implemented with no flexibility and that he had advised that the Parish Council was mostly in support of the plan but anything that impacted on the high street needed flexibility. Mr. Barnard was unable to agree the need for flexibility as his job is to protect Burnham Beeches and nothing else. The Chairman advised that Mrs. Rolfe was very clear that the money being discussed should facilitate some contribution to the Parish Council for the good of the villages but that legalities probably wouldn't allow it. The Chairman asked Cllr. Dhillon to press the issue of the high street. There was then a discussion which raised a number of issues experienced by residents in respect of Burnham Beeches such as residents being spoken to rudely by Rangers and the parking issues in Green Lane, Hawthorn Lane and Beeches Road caused by Burnham Beeches parking charges. It was also expressed that it was very disappointing that Mr. Barnard had spoken to Mark Davis (Parking Manager at BC) to devise a parking plan without approaching ward councillors as they, the Parish Council and residents should be consultees. Mrs. Quilter was pleased Cllr. Dhillon was supporting those with concerns regarding the parking plan. The Chairman advised that he had raised the possibility of a judicial review with Burnham Beeches as he felt there had not actually been a consultation and Dr. Read had urged caution as others had tried judicial reviews in the past on similar plans for similar sites and they didn't work. Mr. Milne advised that if people truly wanted to save the high street, the biggest thing would be the abolition for parking charges and that's at the control of BC.

86.8 Update on Boundary Copse and Ingrams Copse Rights of Way Issues – as per report. The Chairman advised that he will deliver the copy letter to L & Q this week together with letters to the managers of Warren Court and Verdun Court. The Clerk agreed to approach the local fire service about both copses requesting a formal risk review. It was noted that if the issues were resolved, the Parish Council may need to spend money.

#### **20/87/PC To consider a timetable for returning to face to face meetings and reopening the office**

The Chairman advised that currently the Clerk works from home but goes into the office when required. **It was agreed** that this should continue as should all meetings being held remotely via Zoom. **It was agreed** to continue reviewing the position at each Parish Council meeting.

#### **20/88/PC To consider the Draft Social Media Policy**

Mr. Milne advised that the draft policy previously considered was never confirmed. He had reviewed the policy again and inserted paragraph 4.5. He advised that any councillor could comment on social media but official Parish Council comments could only be posted by the Clerk. The Chairman advised that the administrators of the Farnham Community Group cannot edit parish council posts. **This was agreed.**

#### **20/89/PC Open Spaces:**

89.1 To consider recommendations from the Kingsway Green, The Broadway and Village Flowers Working Group – the chairman read through the proposition. He advised that the strip of land next to Kingsway Green on which it was proposed raised flower beds should be placed was narrower than he had remembered. As a result of this, the ongoing maintenance costs and not having any contractors who are willing to carry out the work it was suggested that this project was not feasible and that the donor should be asked to contribute towards the creation of the new flowerbed on Kingsway Green along the service road and then the strip of land should be turfed for ease of maintenance. The proposition with this addition

**was agreed.** The Chairman advised that the group wanted to look at the beds by the car park entrance and asked whether the S106 money could be used to fund any work. Mr. Home advised that it probably could if all other areas had been exploited. Mr. Milne suggested that the flowerbed and benches on Kingsway Green should be replicated by the Pump in Farnham Royal and asked the Clerk to look at who owns the land and whether it was possible for the Parish Council to take it on. This suggestion **was agreed.** Mr. Milne added that the Parish Council needs to be careful how it spends money as there are a lot of potential projects coming up and that the Church Road and One Pin Lane verges still need to be done so spending must be prioritised carefully.

89.2 To consider issues in Boundary Copse - Mr. Milne advised that he had visited Boundary Copse soon after the initial lock down had ended and he was very sad to see all of the rubbish in there. He continued that the latest advice from a local resident was that people are again living in the Copse and he now feels it is unsafe. He asked the County Councillors for help as the Clerk never seems to get anywhere about clearance of the rubbish. Cllr. Dhillon agreed to help and asked the Clerk to send details to him. Mr. Milne suggested that entrance gates allowing pedestrians but not all of the equipment were needed and expressed concern that the BBQs apparently being used in the Copse could start fires.

89.3 To consider strategy for overgrown vegetation – Mr. Milne advised that he had spoken to Amersham Town Council, our contractors, about Church Road and they just needed to get it done. The remaining issues on the road would be where residents have responsibility. Mr. Home advised that Footpath 5 between Blackpond Lane and Hawthorn Lane was being dealt with as three letters had been sent to residents. There had not been any replies yet but it was early days. He advised that the next stage is to issue a hedge cutting notice but before the Parish Council does this it would be necessary to have a meaningful conversation with BC as there is no point issuing the notices unless the Parish Council has the full support of BC and historically this has not happened when the LAT supported the resident. Mr. Home has drafted a service level agreement with BC to give Parish Council confidence that they will be supported.

#### **20/90/PC Finance:**

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

Mr. Milne advised that an invoice had been received by the Christmas light contractor in respect of column stress testing and power supply testing. In addition, small amounts had been charged by Progress services for the removal and storage of the Farnham Royal defibrillator and noticeboard. Mr. Milne also advised that the Clerk's monthly salary for September 2020 had been paid at the end of September 2020. The payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were approved.**

90.2 To consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 and the 2019/20 Internal Audit

The 2019/20 Internal Audit Report was considered and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 **was agreed.**

90.3 To consider a budget for the Community Payback Scheme projects

Mr. Home advised that the Supervisor receive £100 per day which goes to the Probation Service and the current estimate for the projects was 14 days. An allowance of £600 was then suggested for the portable toilet required. **It was agreed** that the budget should be set with an upper limit of £2,000.

90.4 To ratify granting a three month rent free period to Farnham Common Sports Club

A three month rent free period **was agreed.**

90.5 To consider the request for a grant received from The Farnhams Magazine

The Chairman advised that he, Mr. Milne and the Clerk, in line with the insistence of the Parish Council, met with Mr. Houdret and the new magazine treasurer, Mrs. Randall. Mrs. Randall took everyone through the figures and she demonstrated that with the effect Covid 19 had had on advertising the magazine will run into a negative cashflow. The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council provide the requested grant of £1,500 in one tranche on the basis that the magazine committee had done all the Parish Council had asked i.e. stopped paying stipends are transferred to invoice based expense claims and cut costs in terms of distribution in reaction to a drop in income. It was also confirmed that the amount given by the Parish Council would be match funded from the magazine's reserves held by the Parochial Church Council. The £1,5000 grant **was agreed.** Mr. Milne asked that the 2019 audited accounts were obtained before the funds were given.

#### **20/91/PC Planning:**

91.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

The Planning Comments **were ratified.**

91.2 To note recent planning decisions

The Planning decisions **were noted.**

#### **20/92/PC Any Other Business (for information only)**

92.1 Mr. Milne asked Cllr. Dhillon whether he had found anything out about who is responsible for kissing gates. Cllr. Dhillon advised that kissing gates are the landowner's responsibility. Mr. Home agreed that the

landowner cannot abdicate responsibility. Mr. Milne felt that didn't get the situation any further as in this particular case there are two different landowners. It was suggested that the Clerk report the issue to the Rights of Way officer.

92.2 Mr. Milne reported that BC had fixed the permissive way he had registered on Fix My street.

92.3 Mr. Milne asked whether there had been any progress with the path repairs at St. Mary's Churchyard. The Clerk advised that she had discussed it with Amersham Town Council and they would review the site and advise her whether they could carry out the repairs as it was extremely unlikely that BC would carry out the work.

92.4 The Chairman asked if he could review the 2019 Arboricultural Report as a number of trees at FCSC have major branches down particularly along the Sherbourne Walk side. The Clerk agreed to forward the report to The Chairman for his review.

92.5 Cllr. Dhillon advised that applications in respect of Community Board funding for Children and Young People 2021/22 need to be submitted by the end of October 2020.

### **20/93/PC Next Meeting**

The meeting closed at 21.30pm. The next meeting will be a virtual meeting on 26 October 2020 at 7.30pm. Details will be published with the agenda.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Cllr. Dhillon advised that TfB were in the villages this morning dealing with flooding issues and all flooding from Green Lane now clear and all gullies are now clear. He advised that he will provide an update regarding the car park as soon as possible but previously the car park was owned by SBDC who never did any maintenance. BC doesn't know if the drains are connected with the gullies so in the next couple of days they will look and investigate as about 24 car parking spaces are currently not usable due to flooding. He advised that he may need to take the matter further with the Executive Committee or the Community Board as although BC is now one council it doesn't work quite how councillors wanted.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he is a member of the post Covid 19 regeneration scheme in Burnham and due to Covid 19 residents have got used to using local shops and BC should do all possible to encourage this to continue and he is asking for free parking to be extended. He advised that he is still fighting but is unsure how far he will get. The Chairman offered help and support.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that it was announced today that any person who tested positive for Covid 19 or who had been in contact with Covid 19 whether they are employed or self employed can apply to BC for £500 if they are on low incomes or certain benefits.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had objected to a proposed development in Cobblers Close as he believes it is on green belt but is not 100% sure. He advised that a couple of members have asked him to call the application in to a BC Planning Committee meeting but the proposed development sits in Wexham and Stoke Poges district so he has asked that ward's councillors to call it in. The Chairman asked Cllr. Dhillon to explain how the development sits in Wexham and he advised that there are different boundaries for parishes and community boards.

Finally, Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had received an email from a resident in Hawthorn Lane about the parking consultation with BC and Burnham Beeches SAC and wanted to forward it to Mark Davies at BC but his email address has gone from the directory so he will find out who to forward it to and progress it.