

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 29 MARCH 2021 AT 7.30 P.M. VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present

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

21/20/PC Apologies for absence

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

21/21/PC Declarations of Interest

None

21/22/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22 February 2021

The following sentence was added to line 18 of the Open Forum '***Cllr. Dhillon was asked to clarify where the parking restrictions are on the roadsides in local roads.***'. The minutes were **approved** and it was **agreed** that they would be signed by the Chairman the next day.

21/23/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

23.1 Update on 2021 Local Elections – report noted and the Chairman advised that the Clerk could provide Elector numbers for proposers and seconders from the Electoral Register if needed.

23.2 Update on wild flower verge – report noted and the Chairman advised that the work would be carried out imminently.

23.3 Update on future projects – report noted and the Chairman advised that four projects had been submitted to the Beeches Community Board and that they were currently assessing costs and viability so nothing would be heard for a little while. The Chairman also advised that he had met Mrs. Rolfe to discuss the playground and guide hut area project and that Farnham Common Sports Club had commissioned a survey to give clarity about the site and what can be done with it including the playground and guide hut area. Mr. Milne asked for notes of the last project meeting to be circulated. It was confirmed that the next project meeting would be on 12 May 2021 and that all councillors are welcome to attend these meetings. Mr. Home advised that it was anticipated that the road safety measures being installed on the A355 by the infant school should be completed in April 2021 and that the Parish Council wouldn't hear about the four new projects until September 2021. Mr. Milne clarified that there are other potential projects as well.

21/24/PC To consider a timetable for returning to face to face meetings and reopening the office

24.1 The Chairman advised that the Clerk had circulated a letter from the Government stating that the legislation allowing remote meetings will not be continued past 7 May 2021. Cllr. Anthony advised that Buckinghamshire Council were interpreting the contents of the letter to mean that no virtual meetings can be held after 7 May so if public meetings are required that must revert to face to face meetings and the comment about the public attending virtually is desirable but may not be possible. **It was agreed** that the parish council meeting in April would be held remotely but it would be necessary to look at the options for May's annual meetings.

24.2 **It was also agreed** that the Clerk would continue to work from home until Government restrictions were relaxed further in line with the published roadmap.

21/25/PC To consider the Draft Parish Charter and any response

The Chairman advised that SBALC wanted to raise a lot of questions via its Chairman but there was some disquiet about what the consultation was actually about. It was felt that the Draft Charter all sounded good until you get into the detail. Mr. Home advised that he applauds the SBALC Chairman and agrees that the draft that has been produced by Buckinghamshire Council is so complicated and can see that the SBALC Chairman is trying to simplify the process. Mr. Milne suggested that the one page version that had been prepared in response was appropriate. **It was agreed** that the Chairman and Mr. Milne would work with SBALC on this matter.

21/26/PC To consider road safety issues on Collinswood Road just before the 30MPH speed limit sign

The Chairman advised that the Parish Council has received complaints and concerns from residents regarding road safety. It was felt that the problem had been exacerbated due to new builds and an increase in property sizes in the area. It was noted that TfB had raised the possibility of painting 'SLOW' in white on the road surface just before the 30MPH sign (travelling south from Beaconsfield). Cllr. Anthony stated that anything involving TfB can be long and drawn out so suggested referring this to Jack Pearce, the Beeches Community Board Co-ordinator. The Chairman advised that this wasn't a project and **it was agreed** that the Parish Council would go back to TfB and accept their suggestion but if that didn't work it would involve Jack Pearce. Mr. Home suggested asking TfB for ways of giving advance warning of the reduction in speed limit.

21/27/PC Finance:

27.1 To ratify the informal decision to repair the village signs

The informal decision **was ratified** but it was noted that the location of the Farnham Common sign should be changed slightly. The Chairman and Mr. Milne agreed to visit the site and feedback to councillors.

27.2 To consider the appointment of AGHS Accounting & Taxation Services to prepare the 2020/21 Annual Accounts

The appointment of AGHS Accounting & Taxation Services **was agreed**.

27.3 To consider the appointment of Azets Audit Services as the Internal Auditor for 2020/21

The appointment of Azets Audit Services was agreed and the Clerk advised that the internal audit was booked for the last week of May 2021.

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

The Clerk noted a larger than usual spend on streetlighting repairs due to a larger than normal number of faults. The Chairman thanked Mr. Milne as Chair of finance and the Clerk for their efforts at managing the budget. The payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were agreed**.

21/28/PC Planning:

28.1 Mrs. Rolfe, as Chair of the Planning Working Group, advised that there had been lots of applications and that properties are getting very large. She continued that planning is a big issue as it will be too late when people realise the damage being done to villages. She advised that she had spoken to Burnham Parish Council and they don't seem to get as many applications.

28.2 Mrs. Rolfe advised that there is an ever increasing list of enforcement issues which don't seem to be getting anywhere for instance there are two bungalows next to each other on the A355 which have taken over two metres of the grass verge and Buckinghamshire Council have said that they have no issue with this giving a green light to others. Also, there is an application where the head of the Buckinghamshire Council Planning Committee supports complaints submitted by a neighbour concerning lack of privacy but the Planning Officer has overridden this. It is accepted that the Enforcement Department is not confrontational but more needs to be done. It was agreed that the Clerk will forward the ongoing enforcement issues to Cllr. Anthony who advised that the Enforcement Department has been in difficulty for many years. Cllr. Anthony said he would take forward any outstanding enforcement issues.

28.3 Cllr. Anthony advised that historically the Planning Committee would consider any application with ten or more objections but that this rule had gone so applications would now only be referred to the planning committee if called in by a councillor.

28.4 Mrs. Rolfe advised that planning comments are now removed once a decision has been made.

28.5 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

The Planning Comments **were ratified**.

28.6 To note recent planning decisions

The Planning decisions **were noted**.

21/29/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

29.1 Mr. Thomas advised that Farnham Common Sports Club had arranged for the surveys to be carried out on the assumption that there will be a contribution from the Parish Council towards the costs as per Mr. Thomas' email to the Chairman. Mr. Milne expressed surprise that the surveys had been commissioned without Parish Council agreement on costs. Mr. Thomas was surprised that Mr. Milne was surprised and stated that this had been discussed at previous Parish Council meetings where the Parish Council had asked Mr. Thomas not to request funding piece meal. Mr. Milne stated that he would like to see the email and what the plans are. He added that the Parish Council budget is done for this year and this potential expenditure wasn't mentioned. Mr. Thomas advised that the Club was happy to wait for the money but wanted to know that some would be received. Mrs. Rolfe supported Mr. Thomas in commissioning the surveys.

29.2 Mr. Home advised that there was no further update about the clearance of the vegetation along A355.

21/30/PC Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.55pm. The next meeting will be a virtual meeting on 26 April 2021 at 7.30pm. Details will be published with the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman invited issues from the public but none were put forward.

The Chairman asked the County Councillors present if they had any information or issues to share.

Cllr. Anthony advised that Buckinghamshire Council is reviewing its constitution and if the Conservatives win again there will be quite a few changes. In respect of planning, it is proposed that Parish Councils will have the same right to require an application to be called in to the Planning Committee thus resolving a historic issue. The Chairman advised that this was really good news. Those councillors present felt this was a positive step.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that on the Kingsway coming from the Broadway there are a couple of parking spaces but after that the road is all no parking. On Beeches Road entering Green Lane one side has double yellow lines and the other side should have cones which have been removed again. On Beeches Road there are a few spaces on the left just past the first house. Mrs. Quilter advised that there were parking restrictions past Green Lane but none before. He advised that it had been hoped to have permanent parking restrictions by the end of March but due to the local elections and difficulties it is running late for consultations which is disappointing as we still don't know the options but we will after the election.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that Buckinghamshire Council has made provisions to support all families on free school meals throughout the Easter holiday with vouchers.

With regard to the flooding, Cllr. Dhillon advised that Buckinghamshire Council and Joy Morrissey MP were in discussion with Thames Water. He advised that Thames Water have acknowledged there is a problem but the current action being proposed is not acceptable and that Joy Morrissey MP gives him an update every week and the pressure is continuing. He is in discussion with the Planning Department as by 2025 the water reservoir will be over capacity so he is seeking clarification from them about future planning applications given this. It was agreed that Cllr. Dhillon and a parish councillor would attend the next meeting of the Residents Action Group but Cllr Dhillon noted that due to purdah he couldn't really say anything. The Chairman asked whether there is an example in the country which would allow Buckinghamshire Council to reject all applications until water quality is resolved. Cllr. Dhillon advised that when he was on the Planning Committee the planners had to contact the utility companies and he is waiting for a response from the Head of Planning to see where we stand if services are not up to standard. Cllr. Anthony advised it is very difficult as the utility companies have to be consulted and if they say an application is fine the Planners have to accept that as if approved by the utility companies and then rejected on the basis of utilities any appeal will be allowed. Mrs. Quilter advised that she had received a response from Thames Water on this point and she agreed to forward it to Cllr. Dhillon, Cllr. Anthony and the Chairman. Mr. Home advised that the residents are paying for a service that is not being delivered and asked what the legal position was for the residents who are suffering. Cllr. Dhillon stated that either Buckinghamshire Council or Thames Water need to take accountability for this and is querying the purpose of asking the utility companies. The Chairman advised that the reality of putting the position right is that it won't be quick. Mrs. Quilter advised that Thames Water are saying not for at least 5 years. Mrs. Rolfe

advised that she was happy to attend the meeting and represent the Parish Council and Cllr. Dhillon agreed to also attend even if not as a county councillor as a resident.

Cllr. Dhillon also advised that there had been a Buckinghamshire Council public consultation on how to improve the notification of planning applications to local residents. Mr. Milne sought clarification. Cllr. Dhillon advised that there was a consultation about what residents want for notifications as currently the notice on local lampposts is no longer required. The Clerk confirmed that the consultation was called Statement of Community Involvement Consultation and had closed.