

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 17 MAY 2021 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL

Present

Mr. Paul Rowley (Chair) Mr. Bob Milne
Mrs. Marilyn Rolfe Mr. Richard Thomas
Mrs. Jennifer Quilter Mr. Clive Robinson
Mrs. Judith Hall – Clerk
One member of the public and County Cllr. Dev Dhillon

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 7.30pm.

21/41/PC To elect a Chair

Richard Thomas nominated Paul Rowley who was then seconded by Jenny Quilter. There were no other nominations and Paul Rowley confirmed he was in agreement to being elected Chairman. Marilyn Rolfe and Bob Milne confirmed their support for Paul Rowley's election and **it was agreed**.

21/42/PC To elect a Vice Chair

42.1 Bob Milne advised that he did not wish to stand as Vice Chair. Richard Thomas nominated Marilyn Rolfe who was then seconded by Paul Rowley. There were no other nominations and Marilyn Rolfe confirmed she was in agreement to being elected Vice Chair. Jenny Quilter and Bob Milne confirmed their support for Marilyn Rolfe's election and **it was agreed**.

42.2 The Chairman advised that three residents had expressed an interest in becoming parish councillors and that they would be asked to complete an application form and to attend the next meeting to see if parish councillors were in agreement to their co-option. He continued that there would still be vacancies so the Parish Council should consider the skills required and approach people who match those skills. Clive Robinson advised that the total number of co-opted councillors allowed for this parish council was three. The Clerk was asked to check this and whether new councillors would need to be co-opted into a particular ward.

21/43/PC Apologies for absence

None

21/44/PC To receive any declarations of Interest from Members

The Chairman asked each parish councillor to declare any interests:

- Jenny Quilter advised that her only potential interest was being a resident of Beeches Road, Farnham Common. Those present felt that this did not need to be declared.
- Clive Robinson declared that he had no relevant interests.
- Bob Milne declared that he had no relevant interests.
- The Chairman declared that he is a director of two limited companies, chair of governors at a local secondary school and trustee of a local academy trust.
- Richard Thomas declared that he is a director of a limited company and Chairman of Farnham Common Sports Club.
- Marilyn Rolfe declared her involvement with the Farnham Common Village Hall.

21/45/PC To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 27 April 2021

With regard to the April 2021 Parish Council Meeting Minutes, Richard Thomas advised that the figure of £1,095 quoted in paragraph three of item 37.2 should actually be £1,950 and that the Club is a local community amateur sports club rather than being made up of local community sports clubs as stated in

paragraph nine. Bob Milne requested the removal of 'with asbestos' from paragraph 11 of the same item. Jenny Quilter identified three typographical errors one in item 37.1, one in paragraph three of item 37.2 and one in paragraph 19 of item 37.2. The minutes, as amended, were **approved** and **it was agreed** that they would be signed by the Chairman. It should be noted however, that Mr. Milne disputed the minutes in relation to item 37.2 and therefore abstained from the vote.

With regard to the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes, Jenny Quilter requested that her surname was updated from Jebson to Quilter. The minutes, as amended, were **approved** and **it was agreed** that they would be signed by the Chairman.

21/46/PC To consider Buckinghamshire Council's Informal Parking Review of the areas around places of natural beauty and Country Parks

The Chairman commented that the consultation did not run for long enough which was unacceptable due to the impact on the village. He confirmed that the authors of the review had agreed to visit the parish to explain the proposals and that a number of methods for responding to the consultation were required not just online.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had spoken with Martin Tett (Leader of Buckinghamshire Council) about the review and Martin Tett had instructed the authors to come to the Parish to explain the proposals. He advised that he had suggested that a closing date of 6 June 2021 was too soon and requested that the formal consultation was delayed as the figures used when formulating the plans were based on Covid19 activities. Cllr. Dhillon stated that Martin Tett had taken the concerns on board and had written to the two authors of the review and Rob Smith (Head of Service). Rob Smith has spoken with Cllr. Dhillon and he understands the position but advised that to make the process cost effective the restrictions proposed for the Parish form part of a larger scheme encompassing Dorney Lake and Black Park to name a couple and any delay would cost approximately £10,000 as if there is a delay for this area there would need to be a delay for all areas. Cllr. Dhillon argued that the issues facing this parish were different due to the proposed parking restrictions proximity to The Broadway and because Burnham Beeches SAC is in a very densely populated area unlike Dorney Lake, Langley Park and Black Park. Rob Smith advised that he had already received 150 online responses so was satisfied that people understood how to review the proposals and respond. He confirmed that he is expecting a huge response.

Mrs. Rolfe confirmed that she was happy for the Buckinghamshire Council information session to take place in the Farnham Common Village Hall.

Mr. Mine noted that the review is currently labelled as informal and asked what the difference was to a formal consultation as it seemed quite formal. Mrs. Quilter believed that this informal review would lead to a formal consultation. It was discussed that by doing this work as part of an informal review the proposals can include the maximum restrictions being considered which could then be changed depending on feedback before the formal consultation during which changes cannot be made.

Mr. Milne expressed that the role of the Parish Council is to promote the review to the whole parish and that it was very important that comments are submitted now rather than waiting for the formal consultation and that comments can be positive, negative or neutral.

Mrs. Rolfe asked whether a resident in Mayflower Way can get one of the parking permits. Cllr. Dhillon advised that permits can only be obtained by residents who live on an effected road. Mrs. Rolfe also advised that Slough Borough Council had just increased the price of its parking permits.

Mrs. Quilter advised that she had been on the review website and made comments and had asked how the permits will work and what the associated costs will be. She had received a response from Ian Thomas (one of the authors of the review) which also referred her to the frequently asked questions page on the website and she has requested permission from him to post a copy of the response on the community Facebook page. Mrs. Quilter confirmed that thus far the items posted on the community Facebook page by her had been posted by her personally as a resident rather than a parish councillor.

Mr. Thomas suggested posting on the Parish Council's Facebook page and sharing the post with the community Facebook page requesting that people engage with the review. Mrs. Quilter expressed disappointment that Buckinghamshire Council had not offered to take the steps asked of them (without additional requests) such as information events. Mrs. Rolfe also advised that the opening sentence states that Buckinghamshire Council has consulted with councillors and parish councils which is misleading. Mr. Thomas asked how else the Parish Council could promote the review. It was felt that the website and the noticeboards should also be used.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that Rob Smith and Ian Thomas had agreed to hold an information event with flip charts and response forms in the village hall. Mrs. Quilter expressed that it was important for residents to have a way of commenting on paper. The Chairman asked Mrs. Tipping, a member of the public, whether she would prefer to respond on paper and she confirmed she would and advised that a lot of residents don't go on the web. Mrs. Quilter added that the way of responding online was not easy. Mr. Milne agreed and stated that someone may want to comment about the effect on a road that isn't part of the review so a general comment form would be useful. Mrs. Quilter asked whether people could put their responses through the office door. The Clerk confirmed that she would forward any responses she received to Buckinghamshire Council.

Mr. Milne advised that there are some ringfenced funds for petitions so if the Parish Council was to produce materials to promote the review these funds could be used to settle the costs. Mrs. Quilter advised that a local resident had posted a picture overview of the village showing the proposals so she would contact the resident for permission to use the image on the Parish Council's promotional material. Mr. Thomas suggested placing information in the library and other community venues as the role of the Parish Council is to create a vehicle for encouraging residents to comment.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would produce leaflets and posters. Mr. Robinson asked who was actually going to produce these. Mrs. Quilter offered to do this and Mr. Robinson offered to deliver some. The Chairman and Mr. Milne also offered to help with this and Mr. Thomas suggested posting on Facebook seeking volunteers to help.

Mr. Milne advised that he had three questions. The first question being what the plans were for enforcing the parking restrictions. Cllr. Dhillon advised that officers would visit the affected roads for the first few months and if during that period there are no issues they won't attend regularly. Mrs. Rolfe felt any agreed restrictions should be properly enforced.

Mr. Milne's second question asked how people from Hill Place get their points across as they believe that parking charges are the issue not temporary problems caused by Covid19 visitors. Mrs. Quilter advised that they would have to put their concerns against a road but that she believed all comments were read. Mrs. Rolfe advised that all residents would need to comment and that each comment should be slightly different. Cllr. Dhillon advised that he was happy to share and distribute information as people must have the opportunity to respond and he doesn't want people to say they weren't aware. The Chairman said it was the role of the Parish Council to make sure residents are aware and that they know how to respond. He also asked how wider issues can be reported. Mr. Milne advised that there is no general response section. The Clerk advised people could always email the designated email address.

Mr. Milne's third question asked why the proposals specifically state no parking on verges or pavements as he thought this was not allowed anyway. Cllr. Dhillon advised that unless a vehicle parked on a verge or pavement is blocking it, it is not illegal. He advised that the Thames Valley Police will refer the complainant to Buckinghamshire Council. Mr. Milne asked whether the proposed restrictions would then make this illegal and Cllr. Dhillon confirmed that a ticket would be issued if an enforcement officer saw the offence.

Mrs. Rolfe advised that the proposed parking restrictions in Victoria Road will affect the library and village hall.

Mrs. Quilter summarised the following action plan:

1. A statement on the Parish Council's Facebook page to be shared with the community Facebook page
2. A statement on the Parish Council's website
3. A leaflet drop
4. A Buckinghamshire Council information event
5. Posters on the Parish Council noticeboards and in the library and shops

The above **was agreed**. It **was agreed** to order 3000 A5 leaflets and 30 A3 posters from Myco Print Limited ideally for delivery before the end of the week.

21/47/PC Finance:

47.1 To ratify the decision regarding Farnham Common Sports Club's grant request

Mr. Milne advised that he does not think the request is a grant. He also disagreed with Mr. Thomas that funds are rarely given to the Club as he feels the Club receives funding quite often when considered against other organisations in the Parish. He stated that he doesn't know how the Parish Council can justify

grants or gifts to the Club and mentioned previous amounts given for the floodlights and CCTV and noted that the Parish Council turned down the request received from Farnham Common House.

Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Milne how many grants he thought the Club had received in the last 18 years. Mr. Milne advised that he couldn't say. Mr. Thomas advised that to the best of his knowledge in 18 years the Parish Council had very generously given the Club five grants totalling £8,000 so he felt this did equate to rarely and suggested they agree to disagree.

Mr. Milne advised that his main concern was the use of rarely compared to other organisations. Mr. Thomas advised that he comes to the Parish Council on behalf of the Club to request not demand funding, receives criticism about the husbandry of the Club and gets offended. Mr. Milne stated that a prejudicial conflict of interest was not declared and policy was not followed during the discussion at the previous parish council meeting as Mr. Thomas lead the discussion and he should have.

The Chairman expressed that the comments being made felt wrong and did not reflect what the Parish Council wants to deliver. He stated that he is clear that the Parish Council makes decisions and that policy is guidance not an absolute rule. Have asked whether councillors respected that other councillors have other views as he perceived that the situation felt like other views were not being respected. Mr. Milne stated that policies were not being followed and the discussion was becoming emotional. The Chairman asked whether there is a need to take this issue off line to work through what feels like a vendetta. This is not a vendetta of the Parish Council but an ongoing grudge against the Club by Mr. Milne. Mr Milne said this could be added to a future agenda but the Chairman suggested the discussion took place outside a Parish Council meeting. Mr. Milne advised that he was not interested in attending such a meeting. Mr. Milne objected to the use of the word vendetta but changing the word was refused by the Chairman.

Mr. Robinson advised that anyone can bring a matter to the Parish Council but that if there is a prejudicial interest, they cannot say a word. All should be put in writing and they should step back from the discussion. Mr. Thomas felt that it was bizarre if someone can't speak. Mr. Robinson advised that they must not influence or appear to influence the discussion. Mrs. Quilter stated that Mr. Thomas was invited to speak to explain the request. She also requested that the discussion was taken offline as she has started to become anxious about discussions at Parish Council meetings regarding the Club. Mr. Thomas advised that he was happy to meet and find out what the issues are as he did not want to waste anymore Parish Council time. Mr. Milne stated that he was sorry if he felt it was a waste of time. The Chairman stated that it felt like a vendetta and that there was no respect of councillors and Parish Council decisions.

Mr. Milne asked why the Parish Council treat the Club in a certain way compared to other organisations. He continued that he didn't ask Mrs. Quilter at the last meeting why she supported the decision. He asked whether she felt she had to. Mr. Thomas felt Mr. Milne was pedantic. The chairman advised that he had looked back at minutes of previous parish council meetings and Mr. Milne always grilled the Club. Mr. Milne felt this was only on certain issues.

Mr. Thomas suggested talking about it and formally agreeing what the Club does, what the Club provides and how the Parish Council treats the Club going forward. Mr. Milne advised that different issues come up regarding the Club such as the boundary and cricket nets. Discussions are not always related to funding.

Mrs. Quilter suggested that the Parish Council reviews the relevant policy and Mr. Robinson advised that this issue of prejudicial interest is set in law rather than one of the policies. Mrs. Quilter then suggested the Parish Council needed to review how it applies this law as she was now unclear about how she can raise items regarding Beeches Road for example. Mr. Robinson advised these issues were detailed in the Code of Conduct.

Mr. Milne advised that agreeing the boundaries at the Club needs to be kept on the agenda as it is clear this needs to be finalised and resolved for the playground and Guide hut area project. The Chairman agreed that this needed to be resolved once the Parish Council has proposals for the area. Mr. Milne asked whether the boundary is represented by a line on the survey. Mr. Thomas advised that there is no line rather a plan of the whole area and suggested that it may be sensible to let sleeping dogs lie. Mr. Milne expressed that he didn't want an inaccurate record. The Chairman advised that there were two different issues. Mr. Milne advised that he did not want a line on the survey and Mr. Thomas confirmed that there was no line.

Mr. Milne advised that as Chair of the Finance Committee, he did not feel supported at all when he suggested a payment of £500 at the previous meeting. He expressed that although it was not minuted he had stated that when the budget was done it was all about recovering the recommended reserves with a

3% or 3.5% increase in precept. At the time some members of the Finance Committee wanted a 5% increase but this was not necessary. Eventually he had agreed to a 4% increase but there was no budget line for the Club or the survey. He felt that a payment of £500 was generous and does not feel £1,500 provides value for money. At this point he confirmed that he would be stepping down as Chair of the Finance Committee at the committee meeting in June 2021. Mr. Robinson stated someone once told him that a forecast is what would have happened if what did happen hadn't and therefore it has to be flexible. Mr. Milne agreed and advised that the budget includes lines for extra things that crop up. He advised that the budget was agreed in January 2021 and only a couple of months later councillors are agreeing something else. He felt all the work put into the budget was ignored and reiterated that he had been reluctant to put the precept up by 4%.

The Chairman advised that it is the Parish Council that makes decisions and asked those present whether they wished to ratify the decision taken at the April 2021 Parish Council meeting to give £1,500 to Farnham Common Sports Club. Mr. Thomas did not take part in the vote. Mrs. Quilter, Mrs. Rolfe and the Chairman voted in favour so the decision **was ratified**.

47.2 To approve payments and note receipts, as per the cashbook
The payments and receipts, as per the cashbook, **were agreed**.

21/48/PC Planning:

48.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

Mrs. Rolfe, as Chair of the Planning Working Group advised that the Group was a bit behind with submitting comments but that this would be caught up shortly. She advised that the only major concern was the application relating to 9 Fairfield Lane as the usage of the properties along this road was changing from traditional domestic dwellings to houses of multiple occupancy. The Chairman advised that these houses were being used for social housing. Mr. Thomas asked if the houses were owned by the same individuals and Cllr. Dhillon advised two individuals owned different properties along the road. The Planning Comments **were ratified**.

28.6 To note recent planning decisions
The Planning decisions **were noted**.

21/49/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

49.1 Mr. Robinson advised that he had received an email about an appeal for Allerds Farm and asked whether there was a new application. None of the members of the working group nor the Clerk were aware of this and the Chairman asked Mr. Robinson to forward a copy of the email to parish councillors for review.

4.2 Mr. Robinson advised that part of the Queen's Speech mentions changes to planning and although he was waiting for details, he was concerned that the Parish could be sucked into new developments due to Aylesbury.

21/50/PC Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.35pm. The next meeting will be held on 28 June 2021 at 7.30pm. Details will be published with the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman invited issues from the public.

Mrs. Tipping advised that when she was a parish councillor, she attended meetings at Farnham Common Sports Club and they were always very professional and minuted. She expressed that the Club was a really good facility in the Parish. She stated that the land on which the Club sits was given by Miss Drum to the Parish Council for the good of the Parish and not for building but it would make a lot of money for someone if the Club was intentionally run down. She continued that the Parish Council must take care of it as an amenity for the Parish especially as it is not an expensive club.

Mrs. Tipping also raised how lovely the village hall was looking and advised that the majority of the work had been sorted out by Mrs. Rolfe. She felt there had been a great improvement and that if anyone was looking to hire a hall this would be a good place.

Mrs. Tipping advised that historically any parish councillor who had an interest in an item for discussion was asked to leave the room while it was discussed. They were not allowed to sit in. Mr. Milne advised

that this is still the guidance from County but following a discussion with the then Chair, Trevor Clapp, when the code of conduct was being reviewed it was agreed that unless there was a management role or financial gain the councillor would not have to leave. Any such role or gain should be declared and the councillor shouldn't join in the discussion. Mrs. Tipping felt that as landlord the Parish Council should be careful about putting the sports club down. Mr. Milne advised that Miss Drum owned half of the land and the Parish Council owned the other half. He added that there had been some controversy as to whether the Parish Council took over the land but that this was not a matter for him. He advised that the Parish Council had taken on maintaining the trees as this had become arduous and costly and that he had supported that decision. He continued that the last big project carried out by the Club was the hall and toilets for which the Club didn't get funding. There was a lot of controversy at the time and a previous parish council representative on the Club's committee resigned as he felt the Club's halls would conflict with the village halls. He stated that he had been a member of the Club for 40 years and on a committee for 10 years and that the Club had always had lots of volunteers. Mr. Thomas was pleased to hear this and felt everyone should be nice to each other.

The Chairman asked County Cllr Dhillon if he had any information or issues to share.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that Buckinghamshire Council had started writing a local plan. He didn't feel that the Government's new planning laws would be helpful in protecting the villages and advised that he questioned the number of new houses stated as being required.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had attended a meeting with representatives from the Boundary Commission and he felt that the village of Farnham Royal being in the Stoke Poges and Wexham ward was unfair as Farnham Common and Farnham Royal should be together. Mr. Robinson asked whether this was in respect of the internal Buckinghamshire Council area and Cllr. Dhillon confirmed it was. He advised that there are still 147 councillors and more than 70 is too many so new boundaries are being developed to bring the number of councillors down. Mr. Milne asked if this would be a formal consultation and Cllr. Dhillon confirmed it would.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that action to address people's concerns about speeding on the A355 needed to start with the Parish Council and then he could take it up with Buckinghamshire council. He felt achieving a speed limit of 30MPH all the way through the villages may be achievable but not 20MPH.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had been made aware of a problem with home to school transport which he thought had all been resolved so he will contact the relevant school and if there is a problem the portfolio holder at Buckinghamshire Council.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that if there is fly tipping in a farmer's field, Thames Valley Police now have monies to fund its removal.