

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM ROYAL VILLAGE HALL

Present

Paul Rowley (Chair)	Marilyn Rolfe
Bob Milne	Richard Thomas
David Moore	Jigar Trivedi
Judy Tipping	Judith Hall (Clerk)
County Cllr. Dhillon and County Cllr. Anthony	

The Chair declared the meeting open at 7.30pm. The meeting was adjourned for OPEN FORUM noted at the end of these minutes. The Chair reconvened the meeting.

21/104/PC Apologies for absence

Jennifer Quilter

21/105/PC Declarations of Interest

None

21/106/PC To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 25 October 2021

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

21/107/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.

107.1 Update on New Commemorative Acts Policy – the content of the report was noted.

107.2 Update on Buckinghamshire Council's Public Consultation on Parking, Movement and Speed Orders – the content of the report was noted and the Clerk advised that she had been contacted again by a resident on Green Lane who does not have off street parking and is concerned that his portion of Green Lane is not included in the residents' permit parking proposal. Bob Milne asked whether Buckinghamshire Council had been notified of this and whether it was a mistake. Cllr. Dhillon advised that the resident had spoken to Buckinghamshire Council and that the officers were looking at the consultation feedback. Bob Milne expressed that although the consultation gave everyone their chance to comment on the proposal, he did not feel it was well publicised. Cllr. Dhillon felt that Buckinghamshire Council did everything they could and advised that he knocked on every door in Green Lane and Kingsway and the affected areas in Blackpond Lane.

107.3 Update from the Contracts Working Group – the content of the report was noted and Richard Thomas advised that the contracts would be reviewed primarily in order according to their renewal dates but a meeting with the Manager at Amersham Town Council had been arranged for Friday 3 November 2021 to discuss some areas within the parish and agree how the required work would be carried out. He also advised that the Group felt that it may be sensible for a parishioner to be engaged to help the parish council by checking the quality of the work carried out under the various contracts. Bob Milne expressed that once agreement had been reached with Amersham Town Council regarding the areas to be discussed work should then move on to other contracts such as playgrounds etc. Judy Tipping advised that she had spoken to the men working from Amersham Town Council when they were clearing the flowerbeds on Kingsway Green and she felt they were doing well and working hard. Bob Milne raised that in the minutes of the Group's first meeting Roger Home talked about trees overgrowing verges and preventing them from being cut. Richard Thomas advised that the work won't be carried out to perfection but that it will be 30% further on. Bob Milne noted that the Group's terms of reference included renewal of the devolved services contract and he raised his concern that the parish council would just walk into another contract without detailed consideration. He pointed out that the contract we have to provide the devolved services costs three times more than the payment received from Buckinghamshire Council. It was acknowledged that Buckinghamshire Council had provided for a 3% increase in the amount paid for 2022/23. Bob Milne noted that renewal or not of the contract was not discussed at the recent Finance Committee meeting and asked whether the parish council will actually discuss this and advised that the discussion should include

someone from the Contracts Working Group and someone from the Finance Committee so a recommendation could be made at the January 2022 parish council meeting. Richard Thomas felt this was a policy discussion for every councillor and it was agreed that a discussion would take place at the January Finance Committee meeting. Bob Milne stated that there was no mention of the Clerk's appraisal at the Contracts Working Group. The Clerk advised that her contract provides for an annual appraisal, that she reports to the Chair of the Finance Committee and that in January 2021 she had sent a selection of appraisal documents to the then Chair of Finance Committee and the Chairman for review.

107.4 Update from the Projects Working Group – the content of the report was noted.

107.5 Update on the 20mph lights, signs & lining outside Farnham Common Infant School – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that the parish had been badly let down by Transport for Buckinghamshire. Richard Thomas asked that the Clerk let residents know about the delay and Cllr. Anthony advised that he was not aware of the delay and said to let him know as he would try to nudge the department.

107.6 Update on new insurance claim – the content of the report was noted and the Clerk advised those present that they should not make any statements which may admit liability in any way. The Chairman advised that a branch had fallen from a tree in Ingram's Copse hitting a neighbouring residential property taking out the property's ariel. Capability Landscapes Ltd had attended and removed the branch. The Clerk had reported the incident to the parish council's insurers and they had advised that an excess of £250 would be payable under the terms of the policy. Richard Thomas asked how often the trees were inspected by an arboriculturist. Bob Milne confirmed the inspections were every other year and that the parish council has a contract with Capability Landscapes Ltd to maintain the wooded areas and he felt they should let us know if branches are overhanging. Richard Thomas felt a urgent inspection of all trees in similar positions should be undertaken by a qualified arboriculturist. The Chairman confirmed that the Clerk had provided instructions to the arboriculturist used by the parish council.

107.7 Update on Christmas in The Farnhams – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman asked for volunteers to help from 12noon on Saturday 4 December 2021. Marilyn Rolfe advised that 45 people had booked to attend the Christmas cinema.

21/108/PC To consider adoption of Buckinghamshire Council's Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

The Content of the report was noted and the Chairman asked Bob Milne to feedback his thoughts on the new document. Bob Milne advised that his feedback had been forwarded to parish councillors ahead of the meeting but summarised that the tone of this document is completely different to the one adopted by Buckinghamshire County Council in February 2020 which uses phrases such as 'applies to you', 'you should' and the existing Parish Council Code of Conduct from May 2018 which uses phrases such as 'member of the council', 'he/she'. The wording now is 'I do not', 'I will' etc. It comes across like a pledge that you may make and/or sign in order to join a closed organisation. In addition, the new Code brings back the clause that if a councillor has a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter, they must not take part in any discussion or vote on that matter and must not remain in the room. David Moore felt that the main issue was how a breach of the Code is dealt with. Jigar Trivedi felt the new code was vague and vagueness gives flexibility allowing it to be taken in any direction. Clive Robinson advised that the Code of Conduct is underpinned by legal statute being the Local Government Act 1992 and the Localism Act 2011 and any code of conduct must be in line with the provisions in these Acts. He continued that some breaches of a code of conduct result in a slap on the wrist but other constitute misconduct in public office which is a criminal offense. Bob Milne asked Clive Robinson what his view of the new code was and he advised that it was rewording of what Buckinghamshire County Council produced before. Bob Milne asked if there was a legal requirement to have a code of conduct and Clive Robinson confirmed that there was but there was no requirement to have Buckinghamshire Council's version. Bob Milne raised the Nolan Principles, which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public officeholders. The Chairman expressed his personal view that unless there was a compelling reason the Buckinghamshire Council document should be adopted by the parish council. Bob Milne advised that by adopting this document the parish council would be bringing back items previously taken out and that he found the language very strange. He also asked whether, given the phrasing, he would be asked to sign the document. The Chairman asked the Clerk to discuss the issues raised with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.

21/109/PC To consider a request for a Commemorative Tree in Temple Dell

The Chairman advised that when the Clerk asked the question by email in Summer 2021, six councillors agreed to plant the requested tree on the basis that it was not planted in a location that would reduce the open space. At the subsequent parish council meeting, it was agreed that a new policy would be written but given the time it takes to write a new policy it is suggested that the parish council agreed to this request. Richard Thomas expressed that the new policy could say that no more trees would be planted. The request **was agreed** but it is noted that Marilyn Rolfe voted against the request on the basis that a tree could not be offered to all residents so she felt it was not fair to all.

21/110/PC Finance:

110.1 To consider changing email provider and purchasing additional IT equipment and services
The content of the report was noted and changing the email provider and purchasing additional IT equipment and services **were agreed**.

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

21/111/PC Planning:

111.1 Marilyn Rolfe, as Chair of the Planning Working Group advised that the latest application concerning Oak Timbers, Beaconsfield Road which sought to make changes to materials and design was refused by the Planning Authority. Bob Milne advised that he felt the comment made by the parish council in respect of the application made by Caldicott School could have been stronger. Judy Tipping expressed that although it is a school allowing further encroachment on the green belt would open the flood gates. The Chairman also advised that the gross internal area of the new building was four times that of the existing building. Richard Thomas advised that some is underground and built into a bank. The Chairman advised that building on the green belt is a sensitive issue for the parish but Natural England have supported the application. It **was agreed** that the Group would review the comment and strengthen.

111.2 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

The planning comments **were ratified**

111.3 To note recent planning decisions

The planning decisions **were noted**.

21/112/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

112.1 Jenny Quilter advised that she was aware of a couple of properties that had overhanging trees and vegetation. The Clerk asked her to forward details and she would take the necessary steps.

21/113/PC Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.35pm. The next meeting will be held on 24 January 2022 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

OPEN FORUM

The Chairman asked Cllr. Dhillon and Cllr. Anthony if they had any information or issues to share.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had met with the TfB Local Area Technician and been advised that 81.1% of the gullies had been cleared but it was acknowledged that these may be blocked again. It was confirmed that all gullies would be cleared again during 2022.

Cllr. Dhillon expressed his disappointment that not many people attended the Dementia bus when it was at Farnham Common Village Hall. He felt the information provided on the bus was very good and educational.

Cllr. Dhillon also stressed the importance of being represented on the Beeches Community Board and its various sub groups. Cllr. Anthony advised that meeting reminders were being sent out one day before the meetings and echoed Cllr. Dhillon's comments that for the Board to work both Buckinghamshire Councillors and parish councillors must attend.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that he had been contacted by a resident about a lack of streetlighting and parking in Holly Close. He advised that the consultation on parking in the parish had just finished and he was not aware of any problems being raised. He also advised that Buckinghamshire Council has no plans to install more streetlights in the parish. Clive Robinson advised that problems with parking had been caused by a car that had been abandoned in Holly Close, which took six months to clear. It was also reported that a resident in One Pin Lane is carry on a business from their home and using Holly Close to park the business vehicles.

Cllr. Dhillon advised that Mark Davis, the Parking Manager at Buckinghamshire Council is going through the responses submitted to the parking consultation. It is hoped that he will finish this and that a decision

will be made by the end of January 2022 with work to start in February 2022. Judy Tipping raised the car(s) being parked regularly on the verge at the junction of the A355 and One Pin Lane. The Chairman and Cllr. Dhillon advised that they were happy to speak to the owner of the vehicles and Judy Tipping suggested installing bollards. Richard Thomas felt that installing bollards would just move the problem. Clive Robinson advised that a sign on the northside was squashed by a school bus.