

FRPC Parish Council for The Farnhams

Information for the Parish Council Meeting on 21 February 2022

3 Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

3.1 John Hodges

The Clerk is sad to report that John Hodges passed away on 26 January 2022 following a fall at home. John Hodges joined the Parish Council on 17 May 1999 and only stood down at last year's election. Everyone involved with the Parish Council over the last 22 years would like to thank John for his dedicated service.

3.2 Update from Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

A copy of the minutes of the last steering group meeting has been circulated to councillors separately. In addition, the grant application made to settle the associated costs has been successful for 2021/22 and the sum of £6,700 has been received and a first meeting has been held remotely with the company appointed to carry out the Housing Needs Assessment required as part of the process.

3.3 Update from Projects Working Group

A copy of the minutes of the last working group meeting has been circulated to councillors separately.

3.4 Update on the Betty Redfern Oak tree

Clive Robinson and Paul Rowley met Mark Frater of Capability Landscapes Ltd in Temple Dell on Monday 7 February 2022 to agree the location for the new oak tree. The new tree was planted on Saturday 12 February 2022 with the family present.

3.5 Update on the Local Council Devolution Scheme Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council

In line with the decision on 24 January 2022, the Clerk confirmed to Buckinghamshire Council on 25 January 2022 that the Parish Council would not be extending the Agreement due to the disparity between the costs in carrying out the required services and the amount received from Buckinghamshire Council.

Buckinghamshire Council has advised that the Parish will be added back onto Transport for Buckinghamshire's grass cutting schedule which will provide either three and four cuts per year between April and November, subject to Buckinghamshire Council's budgets.

Buckinghamshire Council has confirmed that any issues in respect of hedging, siding out, weed killing, street furniture, traffic signs, fly posters and illegal signs, footway obstructions and charity advertising should be reported through Fix My Street (<https://www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/>) and this will then be inspected against its Highway Safety Inspection Policy for repair. The policy can be found at: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/road-maintenance-and-repairs/highways-inspection-policy/>

Buckinghamshire Council has confirmed that any issues in respect of the Parish's Rights of Way should be reported at <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/public-rights-of-way/report-a-rights-of-way-issue/>.

4 To consider a request from the tennis section of Farnham Common Sports Club for a path from their pavilion to the farthest courts

The tennis section of Farnham Common Sports Club has requested permission to install a path from their pavilion to the farthest courts as the new surface that the courts will have fitted cannot have mud or grass on them and at present players have to walk across the grass to get to these courts. It is anticipated that the path will be made using tarmac, concrete or paving slabs and will be about 900mm wide. A photograph showing the approximate location is over the page:



5 To consider quotes received for the 2021 arboriculture work

The arboriculture reports were sent to three contractors and quotes have been requested by 18 February 2022. Once received these will be forwarded to councillors for their consideration.

6 To review the following protocols/policies:

6.1 Recording, Photography and Use of Social Media at Meetings

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allow any member of the public to take photographs, film or audio records of the proceedings at meetings held in public and to report them using social media.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance for members of the public and representatives of the press about taking photographs and audio/visual recordings of any council meeting which is held in public. It also covers blogging, tweeting and use of other social media tools.

A copy of the protocol has been circulated to councillors separately.

6.2 Document Retention and Disposal

The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of documents.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.

In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

The aim of this policy is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of – and if so by what method.

A copy of the policy has been circulated to councillors separately.

6.3 Social Media

The Parish Council recognises the importance of social media in providing an opportunity to communicate with a wide audience instantaneously on a range of subjects relating to the Parish Council's activities.

This policy is intended to help employees, volunteers and councillors make appropriate decisions about the use of social media to ensure that such use is effective, lawful and does not compromise Parish Council information.

A copy of the policy has been circulated to councillors separately.

7 Finance:

7.1 To ratify the 2022/23 Precept Figure

The 2022/23 precept amount had to be communicated to Buckinghamshire Council on or before 31 January 2022. As an agreement was not reached at the Parish Council meeting held on 24 January 2022 it was necessary to hold a meeting on 28 January 2022 to agree the amount. Following discussions, £198,345 was agreed. This represents a 5% increase on the precept amount for 2021/22 and based upon Buckinghamshire Council's calculator the precept for a Band D property will increase from £60.23 to £62.98 per year. This equates to a 4.57% or £2.75 per year increase to the household.

In addition to the much publicised increase in inflation which affects some expenditure, the Parish Council is committed to carrying out projects within the parish to improve pedestrian safety, playground facilities and our open spaces such as Boundary Copse. It is also necessary to undertake the careful demolition of the old Guide Hut. Plans are also being made to increase the litter picking provision and to introduce a pest control programme in Temple Dell. The number of replacement heads and posts required following damage to streetlights has significantly increased over the last 12 months and there have been increases in energy prices in relation to the streetlighting. Despite the savings made as a result of not extending the Local Council Devolution Scheme Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council it is still necessary to apply a small increase to the precept. A focus for the Parish Council during the following 12 months is implementing a performance management programme which will ensure value for money is being achieved in respect of all of the contracts entered into by the Parish Council.

7.2 To agree the 2022/23 Budget and 2023/24 projection

The 2022/23 budget was discussed at the parish council meeting held on 24 January 2022. The budgeted expenditure was agreed by a majority but certain items have subsequently been revised due to additional information becoming available.

A copy of the revised 2022/23 budget and 2023/24 projection has been sent to councillors separately.

7.3 To ratify the appointment of Steve and Matt Keating to clear the rubbish at Boundary Copse

The Parish Council has previously discussed clearing the rubbish in Boundary Copse. Some photographs are below.





The Chairman and Clerk met two contractors on site on 1 February 2022 and given that the rubbish is a health and safety concern, particularly as on this latest visit drugs paraphernalia was seen for the first time the decision was taken to appoint Steve and Matt Keating, one of the contractors, to complete the clearance. The work started on 16 February 2022 and will be completed on 17 February 2022. The cost will be no more than £1,000.

7.4 To consider renewing the appointment of Amersham Town Council as contractor for Kingsway Green, five identified areas and St Mary's Churchyard

The current contract with Amersham Town Council ends on 31 March 2022. As the Parish Council decided not to extend the Local Council Devolution Scheme Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council some of the services currently supplied by Amersham Town Council will not be required from 1 April 2022. A revised quote of £11,340 has been received in respect of the 2022/23 maintenance of:

- Kingsway Green
- Golden Oak Close, Farnham Common – Grass verge, both sides of the exchange to Golden Oak Close including the frontage of the exchange in Beaconsfield Road around glass bus shelter.
- Rosewood Way, Farnham Common – Shrubs and grassed areas on both sides of entrance to Rosewood Way, including the Island verge in front of Robin Parade where seats, bin and telephone box are located.
- Beeches Road, Farnham Common – Grass verge at the junction of Beeches Road with Beaconsfield Road.
- Rectory Close, Farnham Royal – Rose and shrub gardens and grassed areas on both sides of the entrance to Rectory Close including the lilac bush by the wall adjoining the Farnham Pump Londis store.
- The Broadway – Farnham Common – Shrub bedded area outside public conveniences and paved areas along the Broadway either side of the A355

Amersham Town Council currently maintain St Mary's Churchyard on behalf of the Parish Council and a quote of £7,416, which is a 3% increase on the cost for the current year, has been received in respect of 2022/23.

7.5 To consider a request from a young resident for funds to help her take part in The Buckinghamshire Grand Tour 2023

A copy of the request received has been circulated to councillors separately.

7.6 To consider the funding request received from the Farnhams Magazine

A copy of the request received has been circulated to councillors separately.

7.7 To consider repairs/replacement of a bridge in Ingrams Copse

A resident reported that the end of the wooden bridge in Ingrams Copse is broken, one of the middle planks is missing and the wire netting on top is broken so the bridge is really slippery. The Clerk is advised that the bridge forms part of the footpath network within the Copse. A photograph of the bridge is below:



The Clerk contacted Capability Landscapes Ltd who is contracted by the Parish Council to maintain the Copse. They have provided a quote for removing the current bridge and installing a new one. A quote has also been requested from Progress Services and should be available at the meeting.

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

The cashbook has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Finance Committee and has been circulated to councillors separately.

8 Planning:

8.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

The schedule of comments submitted to the planning authority has been circulated to councillors.

8.2 To note recent planning decisions

The schedule of planning authority decisions has been circulated to councillors.