

# FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM ROYAL VILLAGE HALL

### Present

Paul Rowley (Chair)	Marilyn Rolfe
Bob Milne	Jigar Trivedi
Jenny Quilter	Judith Hall (Clerk)
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.

### 22/10/PC Apologies for absence

Richard Thomas and David Moore

### 22/11/PC Declarations of Interest

None

### 22/12/PC To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 24 January 2022

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

### 22/13/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.

13.1 John Hodges – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman confirmed that he would attend the service on behalf of the Parish Council.

13.2 Update from Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that the Group, which is made up of residents, fully understands that development on the Green Belt is not acceptable to the Parish Council. Jenny Quilter asked whether the letter to businesses within the Parish that was circulated to councillors for comment had been issued by the Group. The Clerk advised that an amended version was due to be issued during the following week.

13.3 Update from Projects Working Group – the content of the report was noted and Jenny Quilter, Chair of the Working Group advised that unfortunately the meeting scheduled for 18 February 2022 had to be cancelled but she advised that:

- Beeches Community Board Projects – the Community Board had been asked for updates on the agreed projects that had not yet been carried out and on the new projects that are awaiting a funding decision.
- Playground at Farnham Common Sports Club – progress has been made following a meeting with a group of residents in November 2021. The Parish Council provided the group leader with contact details for nine playground companies who he then contacted seeking an outline concept, price and design. So far three quotes have been received, two companies have confirmed that they do not wish to be involved with the project and proposals are expected from the remaining four companies shortly. All submissions will then be reviewed and the Parish Council will need to look at funding options as the parish precept is unlikely to be the sole source.
- Boundary Copse – the tent encampments, fly tipping and general rubbish have been cleared.
- Potential New Projects – at the next meeting there would be a discussion regarding potential new projects such as Christmas 2022 and Platinum Jubilee activities. It was noted that Buckinghamshire Council had confirmed that they would not charge road closure fees for closures regarding Platinum Jubilee street parties. Marilyn Rolfe mentioned that public liability insurance would need to be in place.

The Chairman added that the various sections of the Farnham Common branch of Girl Guiding were now operating from the Brian Jubb Hall and that the Clerk had submitted the funding request for the outdoor storage shed and site clearance at the Brian Jubb Hall to the Beeches Community Board. Once the outdoor storage has been installed at the Brian Jubb Hall, the Guide Hut will be fully vacated and the Parish Council

plans to move quickly to demolish the Guide Hut. Currently, the Guide Leader has been asked to conduct weekly visits to the Guide Hut to check for any vandalism or damage.

13.4 Update on the Betty Redfern Oak tree – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman confirmed that he and Clive Robinson had met the contractor at Temple Dell to agree the location of the new tree. He also confirmed that the tree had now been planted and paid for. The Chairman noted that the adoption of a new Commemorative Item policy was outstanding.

13.5 Update on the Local Council Devolution Scheme Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council – the content of the report was noted and the Clerk advised that it would be necessary to update the website to reflect the decision and provide the correct reporting processes to residents. Cllr. Anthony advised that whilst he understands the decision, he does regret it as Buckinghamshire Council will not carry out the work as well as the Parish Council. The Chairman agreed but Marilyn Rolfe and Bob Milne reminded those present that the decision was necessary for the Parish Council to manage its budget and carry out the projects that are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

#### **22/14/PC To consider a request from the tennis section of Farnham Common Sports Club for a path from their pavilion to the farthest courts**

Bob Milne, who is a member of the FC Tennis Club but does not sit on the committee, advised that there are six courts that often get mud on in the winter as players move between the courts on the grass. Following the resurfacing of two of the courts with Tiger Turf, an artificial sports surface, it is particularly important that these courts do not get mud on them. He advised that a lot more members now use the courts in winter. At the moment the Club was just asking for permission, in principle, to lay a new path along the side of the courts as shown in the picture. The type of path (e.g. slabs or tarmac) would be notified to the PC at a later date. The Clerk advised that she had reviewed the lease and could see no reason why permission could not be given but noted that any path must not block the existing right of way around the grounds. Bob Milne acknowledged this and advised that he had a suggestion for a project concerning the existing right of way but would bring that to the Projects Working Group separately. It **was agreed**, in principle, that the requested path could be laid.

#### **22/15/PC To consider quotes received for the 2021 arboriculture work**

The Clerk advised that she had requested quotes from three companies but only one quote had been received. South Bucks Tree Surgeons Ltd submitted a quote, which totalled £11,980. The appointment of South Bucks Tree Surgeons Ltd **was agreed**. It **was also agreed** that additional work identified in Jubilee Copse by the arboriculturist following a complaint from a neighbour would be carried out by South Bucks Trees Surgeons Ltd whilst they are working at Jubilee Copse.

#### **22/16/PC To review the following protocols/policies:**

##### 16.1 Recording, Photography and Use of Social Media at Meetings

The policy **was agreed**.

##### 16.2 Document Retention and Disposal

The policy **was agreed**.

##### 16.3 Social Media

The policy **was agreed**.

#### **22/17/PC Finance:**

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.

##### 17.1 To ratify the 2022/23 Precept Figure

The Chairman advised that the 2022/23 precept amount had to be communicated to Buckinghamshire Council on or before 31 January 2022 and as an agreement was not reached at the Parish Council meeting held on 24 January 2022 it was necessary to hold an informal meeting on 28 January 2022 to consider the amount. Following discussions at that meeting, the Clerk was instructed to make a request to Buckinghamshire Council for the sum of £198,345. This represents a 5% increase on the precept amount for 2021/22 and based upon Buckinghamshire Council's calculator, the parish 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. The 2022/23 precept amount of £198,345 **was agreed**.

##### 17.2 To agree the 2022/23 Budget and 2023/24 projection

The Chairman noted that the budgeted expenditure had been debated at the January 2022 parish council meeting. Bob Milne advised that there was an error in the 2023/24 projection as the surplus brought forward amount had been incorrectly stated. The Clerk was asked to correct this and circulate the amended document. Bob Milne noted that the reserves required would now not be met until 2024/25 rather than 2022/23 as originally planned but expressed that the budget set for 2022/23, whilst remaining tight, would allow things to be done. He stated his disappointment that the budget includes a provision of £2,500 for contract performance management. He hoped that this did not commit the Parish Council to spending this

amount as he believes there are other ways to carry out this work which would save this money. The Chairman asked those present whether they would like to add any comments and they confirmed they did not. The Clerk advised that, whilst it could not be included in the formal decision, David Moore had sent an email expressing his support for the budget. The 2022/23 budget and 2023/24 projection **were agreed**.

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

The appointment of Steve and Matt Keating at a cost of £1,000 **was ratified**.

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

The Clerk advised that a quote of £11,340 had been received from Amersham Town Council for one year from 1 April 2022 for the maintenance of Kingsway Green, the wild flower verge on the A355 and five identified areas along the A355. The Clerk advised that the price was based on 12 visits/cuts during the year as was currently being carried out. Jenny Quilter suggested that as some areas included in this work would be handed back to Buckinghamshire Council as the Local Council Devolution Scheme Agreement was not being extended and Buckinghamshire Council would be attending three times a year then Amersham Town Council would only be required nine times during the year. The appointment of Amersham Town Council to carry out nine visits/cuts during the year **was agreed** and the Clerk was asked to communicate this to Amersham Town Council.

The Clerk advised that Amersham Town Council currently also maintains 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, had been received for one year's maintenance from 1 April 2022. The appointment of Amersham Town Council **was agreed**

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

The Chairman asked whether those present had reviewed the request received. They confirmed they had. Bob Milne advised that the request did not meet the requirements of the grants policy. Concern was raised by several councillors that if funding was granted on this occasion, it would set a precedent for other requests in the future and whilst the Parish Council may like to help the young people within the Parish to take opportunities such as this given the budget constraints it would not be possible to give funds to all potential applicants. As such the request for funding was **not agreed**. Councillors did however, offer to publicise the resident's Just Giving page if she would like.

17.6 To consider the funding request received from the Farnhams Magazine

The Chairman, who attends the Farnhams Magazine Committee meetings on behalf of the Parish Council, advised that the Treasurer had sent a funding request for £1,000 which had been circulated to all parish councillors for consideration. He noted that the anticipated shortfall in September 2022 was £850 rather than £1,000. Bob Milne advised that he, Marilyn Rolfe and the Chairman were involved in reviewing the previous funding request received from the Farnhams Magazine and Marilyn Rolfe reminded those present that the previous request, which was agreed to, was to be the last time funding would be provided. The Chairman agreed but advised that the current request was necessary due to the adverse effects of Covid19 and the resultant reduction in advertising revenue. Bob Milne agreed with Marilyn Rolfe but stated that it was acknowledged at the time that 2021 would be a difficult year for the magazine. He expressed his frustration that the magazine had agreed to provide accounts every year and these had not been included with the request. He felt it was necessary to see what the magazine's current reserves were and to check that stipends had stopped being used. The Chairman advised that he did not believe there had been any changes in the reserves and that stipends had been stopped. Bob Milne advised that because the Parish Council had said no further requests would be accepted, unless there were extreme circumstances, there is no provision in the 2021/22 budget for a payment to support the magazine. The value of the magazine and the work of the community in publication was recognised but those present felt that as the Parish Council's budget is very tight the magazine should draw any required funds from its reserves and the request for funding was therefore **not agreed**. Councillors did however, offer to support (not financially) the marketing/promotion of the magazine to gain the additional funds by other means.

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

Those present discussed the safety of the bridge and agreed to appoint Progress Services at a cost of £820 to carry out the necessary repairs. In addition, those present felt that it would be sensible to investigate other bridge structures that may be more durable and safer going forward possibly bringing a replacement programme to the Projects Working Group.

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

The Chairman confirmed he had carried out his checks in his capacity as Chair of the Finance Committee. The Clerk advised that two payments had been added to the cashbook since it was circulated. The first £1,000 to settle the invoice for clearing Boundary Copse and the second for £50 for the additional arboriculture report for Jubilee Copse. The payments and receipts, as per the revised cashbook, **were agreed**.

## **22/18/PC Planning:**

### **18.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications**

Marilyn Rolfe, as Chair of the Planning Working Group, advised that there had been a few controversial applications particularly PL/21/4644/FA Caldicott Trust Ltd, Caldicott Boys Preparatory School, Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, PL/22/0216/FA Greenways, Beeches Road, Farnham Common, PL/21/4665/FA Land East Of Cut Heath House, Parsonage Lane, Farnham Common and PL/22/0215/FA Land at Farm Cottage, Collinswood Road, Farnham Common.

The planning comments on the circulated schedule **were ratified**

### **18.2 To note recent planning decisions**

The planning decisions on the circulated schedule **were noted**.

## **22/19/PC Any Other Business (for information only)**

Marilyn Rolfe advised that she had been contacted by Swish Fibre who apologised for being behind with their feasibility study but expressed thanks for the number of residents who had registered an interest in their services. They advised that the response had been overwhelming. Swish are continuing with their research.

## **22/20/PC Next meeting**

The meeting closed at 9.35pm. The next meeting will be held on 28 March 2022 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

## **OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman advised that he had spoken with Cllr. Dhillon and Cllr. Dhillon had asked him to ask the Clerk to write to Mark Davis and Ian Thomas at Buckinghamshire Council about the recent parking restriction consultation requesting that they attend a meeting with residents of Green Lane and Hill Place to discuss the planned restrictions. Cllr. Anthony advised that it is very important that the ward councillors know what is wanted as the plans will not happen if ward councillors disagree with them.

The Chairman advised that he had recently listened to a Buckinghamshire Council presentation and had heard that the Community Boards' budgets would be slashed for 2022/23 and that the rollover brought into 2021/22 was being taken back by Buckinghamshire Council. Having discussed this just before the meeting with Cllr. Dhillon he had been advised that the decision to take back the amount brought forward into 2021/22 had been reversed and that the budgets would not be slashed. Cllr. Anthony advised that initially Community Boards were told that they would be allowed to carry forward any surplus funds to 2022/23 but this decision was subsequently reverse in order to help Buckinghamshire Council balance its budget. He also advised that the total annual budget to be shared amongst the Community Boards had been reduced from £3.9million to £2.4million. He did note though that Cllr. Dhillon may have more up to date information as the storms had knocked out his internet so he had not been able to keep up to date over the last few days. The Chairman stated that he was worried about the effect reduced funding would have on the Community Boards, which were already being criticised for not working. Cllr. Anthony advised that this point had been made to Buckinghamshire Council by the Chairs of the Community Boards but stated that we are where we are. He also clarified that funding for projects that had been submitted but not decided by 31 March 2022 was allowed to be carried forward to 2022/23. The Chairman expressed his feeling that things were heading in the wrong direction but Cllr. Anthony reminded those present that providing funding is only part of the role of the Community Boards. He advised that providing an interface between local communities and Buckinghamshire Council is the way forward for Community Boards. He agreed to check the funding for 2022/23.

Cllr. Anthony stated that there was a beautiful flowering cherry tree 100 yards towards the Farnham Road from Farnham Royal Village Hall and asked who was responsible for it as it should be replaced. Marilyn Rolfe advised it would be either Buckinghamshire Council or L&Q. Cllr. Anthony asked the Clerk to write to Buckinghamshire Council requesting a replacement and to copy him in on the email.