

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 25 JULY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL

Present

Paul Rowley (Chair)	Marilyn Rolfe
Bob Milne	Jenny Quilter
David Moore	Clive Robinson
Judith Hall (Clerk)	

Two members of the public, Councillor Dhillon and Councillor 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.

22/64/PC Apologies for absence

Jigar Trivedi and Richard Thomas

22/65/PC To confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 May 2022

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

22/66/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 27 June 2022

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

22/67/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.

67.1 To note concerns regarding HGV traffic in the Parish – the content of the report was noted and it was also noted that this matter had been discussed in Open Forum. Marilyn Rolfe shared her opinion that the biggest problem is planning applications are looked at individually and what else going on in the local area is not considered. Councillor Anthony advised that there has been a change in the structure of the Planning Department and there is now a central committee to consider bigger issues and then local committees for local issues. Councillor Dhillon expressed that each application has to be considered on its own merits. Jenny Quilter asked whether the point raised about limiting movements past Farnham Common Infant School during certain times of the day could be raised with the Planning Department. Councillor Anthony felt this was an interesting point but that as permission had been granted with no such restriction it would not be possible to add conditions now. Councillor Dhillon asked for the details to be sent to him and Councillor Anthony and advised they would raise it and come back to the Parish Council.

67.2 To note concerns about wheelchair accessibility around the Parish – the content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that this issue had been raised on many occasions previously. Clive Robinson advised that he had been to have a look at some of the dropped kerbs in the Parish and whilst he found only one location where the addition of a new dropped kerb would be useful, he did find that some of the existing dropped kerbs are too steep making them dangerous for wheelchair users. He offered to carry out a survey of the dropped kerbs in the Parish and take pictures of problematic ones. He will report back to the next parish council meeting. He asked the Clerk for contact details for the concerned resident so he could meet with them.

67.3 To note circulation of the Good Councillor's Guide – Circulation of the document was noted and the Chairman urged all councillors to read it.

67.4 To note the date of the Burnham Beeches Rotary Orchard Day and discuss representation – the content of the report was noted and the Clerk confirmed that the event is being held on 24 September 2022. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had a presence last year and expressed his opinion that it should have a presence again this year and asked for volunteers. The Clerk was asked to circulate the event timings to all councillors. Jenny Quilter apologised as she is not available to attend.

67.5 To receive update regarding the playground project – the content of the report was noted. Bob Milne advised that he had prepared some notes for circulation to all councillors by the Clerk. He noted that the proposals currently received either directly by the Parish Council or by the Parent Group estimated the

costs at between £150,000 and £200,000. The Clerk had been asked to obtain copies of the proposals received directly by the Parent Group so that councillors could review all of the proposals. Bob Milne explained that various funding options would be investigated by the Clerk during the summer and then he hoped a meeting would be held between parish councillors and the parent group with some recommendations being brought to the September parish council meeting. Marilyn Rolfe and Jenny Quilter asked about parishioner engagement and making displays for residents to consider and have their say. It was felt that Orchard Day would be an ideal opportunity to start this process. Bob Milne recommended caution in order to avoid raising expectations. The Clerk advised that at a recent course on grant funding, the presenter had stressed the importance of meaningful consultation with parishioners and local groups to ensure there is a need and want to the project.

67.6 To receive update on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – The Chairman advised that Jerry Houdret had stepped down as Chairman of the Group for personal reasons. He had agreed to be in the background to provide information when requested but will no longer participate on the group.

The Chairman advised that, following a discussion with the appointed consultant, a new chairman will not be appointed and that he, the Clerk and Steve Stagg will take the process forward with the help of the other group members. The current focus is looking at how to share the information with parishioners. He commented that the Group has a huge amount of data. He advised that the target date for preparing the Plan is Christmas so that the public referendum is held early in the new year. In order to progress to this point a virtual meeting has been arranged with Steve Stagg, the Clerk, the Chairman and the consultant to agree what needs to be done with timescales and to prepare a programme. The Chairman agreed to come back to the next parish council meeting with plan to get to the referendum.

67.7 Bob Milne wanted to ensure that all parish councillors were aware of the specific figures contained within the corrected 2022/23 budget that was looked at in April 2022 and that these were minuted for public record. He advised that the budget shows an annual deficit for 2022/23 of £35,600 and the projection for 2024/25 shows that the reserves will be short of the recommended amount by £12,000 despite extending the reserves recovery plan by a year. He felt it was important for parish councillors to be aware of this with all the project discussions that are going on.

22/68/PC To consider co-option of Tony Birkett to the Parish Council

The Chairman advised that he and the Clerk had met virtually with Tony Birkett to discuss the role of parish councillor and Mr Birkett's completed application form had been circulated to all parish councillors. David Moore asked how long Mr Birkett had lived in the area and he advised that he had been a resident on Beeches Drive for 20 years. Bob Milne asked why Mr Birkett didn't stand in the 2021 elections and Mr Birkett advised that he was at that time stepping back from employment and was still the Chair of the Avenue Residents Association but having now finished both he felt it would be nice to carry on with something in the community. The Chairman proposed Mr Birkett's co-option as a parish councillor and Bob Milne seconded this. Following a vote, the co-option **was agreed**.

22/69/PC To consider the relocation of the Parish Council Office to Farnham Common Village Hall

Marilyn Rolfe declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of her volunteer role as trustee and chair of Farnham Common Village Hall and left the meeting. 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.

69.1 Agreement in principle

Clive Robinson felt that in principle, subject to sorting out the financial side, this was an excellent suggestion as there had always been a problem at the current location with accessibility and the traffic noise means a visitor cannot hear the door buzzer. Jenny Quilter felt the village hall would be a better facility to meet the parish council's responsibilities as an employer. Bob Milne commented that the office at the village hall would be a little smaller and not so central but felt that the parking would be better. Clive Robinson sort clarification that a smaller office would safely accommodate the Clerk. The Chairman noted that the rent paid by the Parish Council would be going to a community facility within the parish and advised that, in principle, the village hall trustees had agreed to match the rent currently charged to the parish council. He also added that the village hall would need to spend some money to make the room a suitable space i.e., installation of broadband and entry system etc. Those present expressed some surprise that the rent would not be lower than that currently paid and it was agreed that there should be a discussion between the village hall trustees and some parish councillors to agree terms, if possible. It **was agreed** that the Chairman, Tony Birkett and David Moore would represent the parish council at this meeting. The potential relocation of the parish council office to Farnham Common Village Hall **was agreed, in principle**, subject to sorting out the financial side.

69.2 Associated costs

The Chairman advised that the estimated one off costs of vacating and moving are approximately £5,000. Those present did not feel this was unreasonable.

69.3 Enacting break clause in current lease

It **was agreed, in principle**, to enact the break clause subject to the outcome of the discussion with the village hall trustees regarding the rent and associated costs. The Clerk advised that it would be necessary to summon an extraordinary meeting of the parish council in early September 2022 to formally consider this issue. This **was agreed**.

22/70/PC To consider Beeches Community Board response to potential Highways projects

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.

70.1 The Clerk advised that she had received an email from the Community Board Co-ordinator which stated that due to the end of the current Transport for Buckinghamshire contract on 31 March 2023 some projects would be delayed. Councillor Anthony, as Chairman of the Beeches Community Board, confirmed this was the case and advised that he did not know whether any of the parish projects would be delayed as he was waiting for further details.

70.2 Jenny Quilter, as Chair of the Projects Working Group, advised that two projects has been submitted in respect of changing speed limits on the Beaconsfield Road (A355). One in connection with where the speed limit reduces from 50mph to 30mph as vehicles enter Farnham Common from Beaconsfield and another project looking at reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between Farnham Common and Farnham Royal. Clive Robinson commented that accidents are common at the junctions with Parish Lane by what was the Yew Tree pub and Egypt Lane but it was noted that the proposed reductions would have no impact on this. Jenny Quilter continued that the Highways Action Group of the Beeches Community Board had supported the applications but acknowledged that the current response from Transport for Buckinghamshire requires speed surveys to be carried out to support the applications before further consideration would be given to speed limit reductions so was not for the full implementation of the schemes and they were therefore asking what amount the Parish Council was prepared to provide towards the cost of the speed surveys. Jenny Quilter advised that she would support the delivery of the speed surveys as the projects came from suggestions by residents but she recognised that the parish council may need to deprioritise another project. She was therefore proposing that a financial contribution is agreed to enable the surveys to be carried out.

Bob Milne expressed his concern that based upon the advice previously received regarding these projects, in order for the projects to continue after the surveys, the results would need to show that the average speed currently on the relevant sections of the road is no more than 34mph and it is his belief that the survey is unlikely to show this. David Moore added that his concern was whether reducing the speed limit would actually deter speeding. Bob Milne agreed with this particularly for vehicles travelling north out of Farnham Common. He also commented that he didn't see the need to reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between the villages and that he didn't think this would be agreed by Transport for Buckinghamshire. Marilyn Rolfe agreed as in her opinion reducing the speed limit between the villages was unfortunately an impossible dream at this stage. Tony Birkett questioned the impact of reducing the speed limit between the villages as he believes vehicles currently overtake at 50-60mph. He advised that the VAS outside of Highlands records speed data which would provide information for near the infant school. Bob Milne advised that the speed survey carried out in 2018 provided interesting results.

Jenny Quilter proposed carrying out the speed surveys. This **was not agreed**.

70.3 The Clerk advised that she had received requests from the Community Board for additional funding to deliver the previously agreed projects. She explained that an additional £1,850 was being requested in respect of the Templewood dropped kerbs project making the total project cost £14,900 and an additional £32,000 was being requested in respect of the Blackpond Lane footway extension project making the total project cost £125,400.

Bob Milne explained that moving the dropped kerbs in Templewood Lane had been requested by parents who walk to the Farnham Common Village Schools as they feel that the existing dropped kerbs are too close to the junction with Beaconsfield Road (A355). He continued that after the project was submitted the Highway Code was updated and drivers now have a legal responsibility to give way to pedestrians so in his opinion the existing dropped kerbs are in the right location. Clive Robinson agreed. It was noted that driver behaviour had not yet changed in many cases. Clive Robinson suggested that the Blackpond Lane footway extension should be the parish council's priority and the Chairman asked whether the agreed funding for the Templewood Lane project could be moved to the Blackpond Lane project so that was delivered as soon as possible with the Templewood Lane project being defer to a future year.

Clive Robinson advised that he would discuss the existing dropped kerb with the resident who raised the concerns discussed in item 67.2 above. Clive Robinson agreed that if the Parish Council couldn't afford both projects the Templewood Lane project should be paused with the agreed funding being transferred to the Blackpond Lane project to facilitate the completion of the footway extension.

Following a vote, it **was agreed** that the Clerk would ask the Community Board Co-ordinator whether the Templewood Lane project could be paused with the agreed funding being transferred to the Blackpond

Lane project and whether the Community Board would pay any remaining outstanding balance. The Clerk was also asked to obtain confirmation that any delays in completing the Blackpond Lane project would not result in the S.106 monies that had been allocated to the project being lost. Councillor Anthony asked the Clerk whether the CiL money due in October 2021 had been received. The Clerk confirmed that £7,500 had been received in respect of the development on the former site of the Berkeley Homes office.

22/71/PC To consider Buckinghamshire Council's Wider Call for Sites

The Chairman advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report detailing this item. The report can be downloaded from the Parish Council website. The Chairman continued that the Parish Council takes a position that it does not support development on green belt land. He continued that the Parish Council may not have a written policy but that is the acknowledged position. He suggested that whilst the Parish Council does not have to respond to the Wider Call for Sites he would suggest submitting a nil response. Jenny Quilter commented that the consultation was for landowners rather than parish councils and noted that the parish council can't stop a landowner suggesting a particular site but felt that the parish council should solidify its position by submitting a nil return as suggested. This approached **was agreed**. The Chairman highlighted that some green belt land at the back of Allerds Farm has recently been sold and has raised the interest of a developer. Tony Birkett expressed his belief that if the parish council were to engage with a developer, the developer would see this as an opening to negotiate.

22/72/PC To consider appointments:

72.1 Finance Committee

The Clerk confirmed that at the Annual Meeting Richard Thomas, Jenny Quilter, Marilyn Rolfe & the Chair were appointed members of the committee. Bob Milne advised that he would like to join the committee and this **was agreed**. The Chairman reminded all those present that all parish councillors are entitled and encouraged to attend the committee meetings.

72.2 Planning Working Group

The Clerk confirmed that at the Annual Meeting Marilyn Rolfe and the Chair were appointed members of the working group. Tony Birkett and David Moore advised that they would like to join the working group and this **was agreed**.

72.3 Contracts Working Group

The Clerk confirmed that at the Annual Meeting, Richard Thomas, Jenny Quilter and the Chair were appointed members of the working group. Bob Milne advised that he would like to join the working group and the Chair advised the Jigar Trivedi would also like to join the working group. He also confirmed that he would like to step down. This **was agreed**.

72.4 Project Lead – Residents' Association (inc. Community Litter Picking)

72.4.1 Tony Birkett **was appointed**.

72.4.2 There was a discussion about how projects would be managed now the monthly meetings had been replaced with less frequent meetings in order to better manage the workload of councillors. Jenny Quilter, as Chair of the Projects Working Group, advised that she would expect regular updates outside of meetings from each project lead which would then be fed back to parish council meetings. The Chairman held up the highlight report he was proposing that each project lead would complete each month and forward to the Chair of the Projects Working Group for review. These could then be put on Sharepoint to help the sharing of information between parish councillors. The Chairman of the Projects Working Group will then feed back to the Clerk if items need to be included on meeting agendas. It was also recognised that for some projects, for example, the Farnham Common playground, the project lead would need significant support from other councillors and community representatives.

72.5 Project Lead – Community Speedwatch

Nobody volunteered to take this role so it **was agreed** that the Clerk would set a date for Clive Robinson, Marilyn Rolfe, Bob Milne and the Chairman, being the councillors who are trained to use the equipment, to meet to agree a programme to take this forward. The Clerk also noted that the Chairman had asked for the scope to be broadened to look at installing additional MVAS equipment in the Parish. The Clerk was also asked to move the existing MVAS to a site on the Beaconsfield Road (A355) to obtain speeding data.

72.6 Project Lead – Woodlands & Verges

Bob Milne **was appointed**.

72.7 Project Lead – Highways

The Chairman advised that Jigar Trivedi would like to work on these projects and Tony Birkett advised that he was happy to work with him. This **was agreed**. The Chairman also noted that Roger Home may be happy to support with these projects.

72.8 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Representative

David Moore **was appointed**.

72.9 Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group Representative

Tony Birkett and Jenny Quilter **were both appointed**.

22/73/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.

73.1 To consider bus shelter work identified during the recent inspection

The work identified **was agreed** at a cost of £80.

73.2 To consider repairs to streetlight EF84 in Inglelen, Farnham Common

The recommended repairs **were agreed** at a cost of £560.

73.3 To note the use of the Chairman's Allowance

The Chairman advised that he had asked General Waste & Refuse to remove a mattress and bed that had been dumped opposite St Johns Church, Victoria Road, Farnham Common. The cost incurred was £70 and it has been allocated to his allowance. This **was noted**.

73.4 To ratify the payments and note receipts, as per the June 2022 cashbook

The payments **were ratified** and the receipts were noted, as per the cashbook.

73.5 To approve payments and note receipts, as per the July 2022 cashbook

The Chairman confirmed that he had carried out the random checks required under the Finance Regulations. The payments **were approved** and the receipts were noted, as per the cashbook.

73.6 To receive and note the 2021/22 Annual Internal Audit report

The 2021/22 Annual Internal Audit report was received and noted. The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor had recommended that an appropriate investment strategy should be developed and implemented as soon as possible. She confirmed that she would work with the Finance Committee on this.

73.7 To consider the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 AGAR)

The 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement **was agreed**.

73.8 To consider the 2021/22 Accounting Statements (Section 2 AGAR)

The 2021/22 Accounting Statements **were agreed**.

73.9 To note the arrangements for the exercise of public rights

The Clerk confirmed that the period would start on Wednesday 27 July 2022 and would continue for 30 working days. These arrangements **were noted**.

22/74/PC Planning:

74.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

Marilyn Rolfe, as Chair of the Planning Working Group, advised that recent applications had mostly consisted of extensions and adapting properties from two floors to three.

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

74.2 To note recent planning decisions

Marilyn Rolfe advised that a few applications have been withdrawn and noted that PL/22/1077/FA Tall Pines, One Pin Lane, Farnham Common had been granted conditional permission despite the objection submitted by the Parish Council regarding overdevelopment of the site. She also noted that there had been quite a few applications concerning protected trees including parish council applications to carry out work identified in the arboriculture report.

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

74.3 Enforcement Update

Marilyn Rolfe advised that the developer of Kingsway Mews has a tiny site on Green Lane with permission for two semi-detached houses but he does not have rights over the car park in respect of the site. She advised that work has recently started at the site and a local resident has expressed concern about material and equipment being brought in across the car park. She confirmed that the issue had been raised with Buckinghamshire Council's Estates Manager and she believed that solicitors have been instructed to write to the developer. Bob Milne asked whether access rights had been granted for the properties once they are occupied. Clive Robinson advised that applicants can obtain planning permission without any access rights to the site.

The Clerk advised that there are currently five other open enforcement issues ranging from the operation of an equestrian business on green belt land without planning permission, deviations from planning permissions granted, the installation of a large aerial and significant changes to street scene without planning permission. In addition, the Clerk advised that she would be referring another matter to Councillor Dhillon and Councillor Anthony as a resident had followed the full process with the Planning Enforcement Department and was now considering applying to the Ombudsman for a review.

Councillor Dhillon urged the Parish Council to attend and speak at Buckinghamshire Council Planning Committee meetings were applications to which it objects are being considered.

22/75/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

75.1 Bob Milne asked for the written reports prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting to be sent to him. The Clerk confirmed that she would.

75.2 Bob Milne asked whether the next meeting would be a full council meeting or a Projects Working Group and Contracts Working Group meeting. The Chairman advised that this would be confirmed as soon as possible.

22/76/PC Next meeting

The meeting closed at 9.50pm. The next meeting will be on 26 September 2022 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall.

Open Forum

Chris Foulds, a resident of Farnham Common, expressed his delight at the first item on the agenda (To note concerns regarding HGV traffic in the Parish) and advised he was looking forward to seeing what's said.

The Chairman asked Councillor Anthony whether he had anything he wanted to update the Parish about.

Councillor Anthony advised that he was aware of issues with HGVs in the parish. He continued that initially there was a problem in Parish Lane where there were a huge number of lorries travelling at great speed with deliveries to the new Country Park that is being built in Stoke Poges. He advised that once he had been made aware of the issues, he raised the matter with the Planning Officers and they put a stop to the use of Parish Lane. He expressed his belief that Parish Lane was now not a problem although one resident had been abused and there is damage to the road surface. Now the HGVs have been redirected to the approved routes which take them along the Beaconsfield Road (A355) through Farnham Common and parts of Farnham Royal. He expressed that as far as he is aware there not much the Buckinghamshire Council can do as the HGVs are now using the approved routes unless they are travelling outside agreed hours. All speeding should be reported directly to the Police.

The Chairman raised the condition of Collum Green Road as it has collapsed in places and the repairs that have been carried out are not to a good enough standard. Bob Milne agreed that it does not look like a proper job has been done in a couple of places. They agreed that the road surface is very, very dangerous in places. The Chairman asked what Buckinghamshire Council does to check the repairs that are carried out to ensure they are to a good standard. Councillor Anthony advised that prompt action had been taken and stated that things were slightly better but agreed that it is still dangerous. The Chairman expressed that Buckinghamshire Council doesn't appear to have the resources required to check the work is done properly, it feels like parishioners are relied upon to report issues. Councillor Anthony advised that he will follow up with the LAT to make sure the road repairs are done to standard. Clarification was sought as when the issue was first raised with Buckinghamshire Council it was thought that some of the HGVs using Parish Lane were going to Wexham Golf Club and it's thought their lorries are still going down Parish Lane. Councillor Anthony was asked what recourse Buckinghamshire Council has. Councillor Anthony advised that it would be a long enforcement process. He continued that Buckinghamshire Council had written to the director of the Golf Club and received a positive response. Marilyn Rolfe advised that the planning permission for the golf club requires the HGVs to turn right when leaving the site and the fact they are using Parish Lane means that they aren't doing that. She continued that she had been to the golf club several times but no one knows anything. Councillor Anthony asked her to send full details and he offered to take it up.

The Chairman asked what Buckinghamshire Council do to make sure what is approved actually happens on the big issues. Councillor Dhillon advised that when permission states that contractors can't use small roads, they will use trunk roads such as the A355. He continued that Buckinghamshire Council took HS2 to court and lost the case today about lorry routes. He advised that he had discussed the lorries with the LAT and noted that the villages are not only affected by these contractor lorries but also those coming to and from Slough Trading Estate which he has tried to discuss for the last 30 years with no success. He noted that due to the weight of the vehicle and especially if empty the noise makes it sound like they are going faster. Finally, he advised that another Councillor, Thomas Broom, had talked to the relevant Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member about the lorry problem in the south of the county.

David Moore asked how long the HGVs will be in the village. Marilyn Rolfe advised it would be for a

maximum of four years as it was originally planned for three years but the development is running behind. Councillor Anthony advised that he thought it was only going to be another six months but conceded that he may be wrong. Tony Birkett stated that the development at Wexham Golf Club should be finished this summer. The Chairman acknowledged that lorries in the villages had always been a problem with the Slough Trading Estate and Summerleaze but it felt like the additional developments need a different level of oversight. Chris Foulds advised that he had spoken to some of the contractors and the main contractor fully understands the disruption being caused and hopes that by Wednesday 27 July 2022 the residents will see a reduction. He continued that all hardcore is coming from a factory the other side of High Wycombe and that all lorries are coming down the hill full of hardcore going to the country park. Mrs Foulds expressed her upset that she can't sit in her garden due to the thumping from empty lorries.

The Chairman asked Councillor Anthony whether he had anything he wanted to update the Parish about.

Councillor Dhillon advised that the proposal from Buckinghamshire Council to the Boundary Commission Review was for Farnham Royal and Farnham Common to be placed together in one ward with one Buckinghamshire Councillor and possibly 9,000 electors.

Councillor Dhillon advised that the sum of £188,000 previously requested to install broadband to the remaining homes in Farnham Royal has now reduced to £38,000. He has therefore sent an email to Councillor Anthony and Joy Morrissey MP as this affects about 120 houses. He confirmed that he will let the parish council know what response he receives.

Councillor Dhillon mentioned the additional amount requested by Transport for Buckinghamshire for the Blackpond Lane footway extension and advised that he is very clear that the money needs to be found so the much needed project is completed.

Councillor Dhillon advised that Farnham Royal was one of the worse effected by the refuse collection issues experienced in May and June 2022. He advised that went out with the lorries to make sure all waste had now been collected. It's his understanding that all issues should now be resolved but asked for any problems to be emailed to him.