

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 23 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL, VICTORIA ROAD, FARNHAM COMMON, SL2 3NL

Present

Paul Rowley (Chair)	Marilyn Rolfe
Bob Milne	Clive Robinson
David Moore	Tony Birkett
Katherine Damsell	Judith Hall (Clerk)
Two members of the public	

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.

23/1/PC Apologies for absence

Jenny Quilter

The Chairman also noted that Richard Thomas had resigned with immediate effect due to other commitments and he thanked him for his service.

23/2/PC Declarations of Interest

2.1 Paul Rowley declared an interest in respect of item 5 below. He advised that one of the contractors had been recommended to him by TSL Limited, a company partly owned by the brother of his daughter in law.

2.2 David Moore declared an interest in respect of item 5 below. He advised that one of his best friends works for TSL Limited.

2.3 Katherine Damsell declared an interest in respect of item 12.2 below. She is the joint owner of a property subject to a recent planning decision.

23/3/PC To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 24 October 2022

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

23/4/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.

4.1 Update on projects with Beeches Community Board

4.1.1 Festive Fun & Carols

The content of the report was noted. Bob Milne asked whether this year's event will be discussed at the next Projects Working Group Meeting. The Chairman confirmed it would and that he anticipated meeting representatives from St John's Church to discuss this year's event. Bob Milne asked for feedback from those discussions to be brought to the Projects Working Group meeting.

4.1.2 Blackpond Lane Footway Extension

The content of the report was noted. Bob Milne asked how far Transport for Buckinghamshire ("TfB") had got. Tony Birkett advised that the base layer of tarmac had been laid. The Chairman advised that it looked like it would be finished by mid-February as estimated by TfB.

4.2 Update on The Queen's Green Canopy

The content of the report was noted.

4.3 Extra-ordinary Meeting to review the Neighbourhood Plan

The content of the report was noted. The Chairman explained that he would like to call an extra-ordinary meeting so that the parish council could consider the draft plan before it is reviewed by the community. It is therefore likely that a meeting will be called in February. Following a discussion, the Clerk agreed to contact the consultant for advice regarding the format and content of the meeting and to ask if she would attend so she could answer questions, where necessary. David Moore offered to handle the social media aspect of the Plan.

4.4 Update on King Charles III's Coronation

Katherine Damsell advised that with the help of the Clerk and Tony Birkett she has reached out to residents, residents' associations and local parish councils to see what others were planning. She advised that one parish council was planning a village event, one was providing decorations and that residents have a desire to do their own thing in small groups. She is contacting a few more residents before formulating a plan. She continued that there is a desire for bunting and flags so she is in contact with the parish council's usual provider who will send a plan based on a budget of £1,000.

Mrs Waye, a resident, added that the village looked lovely for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Clive Robinson advised that for one royal celebration the Parish Council closed Victoria Road for a street party. Marilyn Rolfe advised that the Village Hall trustees had discussed holding an event but had decided not to.

David Moore expressed that he would like the managed decline of celebrating events to be reversed. The Clerk reminded those present that funding may be available from the Beeches Community Board.

23/5/PC To consider the appointment of contractors to demolish the Guide Hut

The Chairman advised that 12 samples were taken from the building for laboratory testing to confirm the asbestos levels and that the full results were due back in a few days but interim finding suggested that the majority of samples contained very low levels of asbestos.

He continued that three quotes had been obtained for demolishing the building and removing the foundations. The quotes are:

Paragon - £29,000

The One Group - £30,847

The Shannon Group - £12,626 plus VAT (assuming the asbestos is non-notifiable)

The Chairman stated that it would not be possible to confirm the appointment of a contractor until the asbestos results had been received and any revisions had been made to the quotes provided. He also added that all insurances, risk assessments and licenses would need to be checked. As a result, he asked for agreement that the Clerk and the Chairman, with assistance from Jenny Quilter, were able to engage one of the above contractors to undertake the demolition and associated works, which following this discussion would include removal of the fence and hedge and topping up the ground level with top soil, provided the total contract price does not exceed £15,000 plus VAT. In addition, any such action must be reported at the next parish council meeting. This was **agreed**.

The Chairman advised that the cost of the asbestos tests and report was £500 and requested agreement to pay this. This was **agreed**.

23/6/PC To receive report from Clive Robinson regarding dropped kerbs in the Parish

Clive Robinson advised that the current legislation regarding dropped kerbs is not retrospective, so the issues with the ones in the parish are a legacy problem. He referred to the report prepared by him and recommended the following:

6.1 The Parish Council adopt the following policy:

"Whenever a road in the Parish is to be remade, to actively pursue Buckinghamshire Council to include in the remaking of that road any dropped kerbs that do not meet the legislation standards." This was **agreed**.

6.2 To refer the worst issue to the Parish Council projects team to construct a bid to rectify the path and dropped kerbs. The worst issue is on the A355 west side near Spring Lane, which is the only pathway linking Farnham Common and Farnham Royal. This junction has kerbs higher than 30mm and the pathway immediately next to it has completely failed, making this link impassable to mobility scooters. Following a discussion, it was **agreed** that this kerb and pavement would be reported to Buckinghamshire Council via Fix My Street as a safety issue.

The Chairman suggested that he and Clive Robinson met to risk assess each of the dropped kerbs using the national risk analysis matrix. This was **agreed** and it was further **agreed** that the report prepared by Clive Robinson would be referred to the Projects Working Group to formulate a plan. It was noted that there may be scope to work with the Beeches Community Board.

23/7/PC To consider the following Speeding Projects

7.1 The purchase of a new Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (with or without maintenance)

7.1.1 Tony Birkett advised that SWARCO had recommended purchasing a replacement sign due to

old and out dated software on the existing sign. He confirmed that he was dedicated to downloading and using the data recorded by the sign and would produce information for the parish. He proposed that it would not be necessary to purchase a maintenance package as the new sign would have a 12 month warranty. It was **agreed** that a new sign would be purchased without maintenance if the parish council was successful in a match funding application to the Beeches Community Board. It was further **agreed** that the application to the Beeches Community Board was to be made as soon as possible but if there were insufficient funds remaining in the Board for 2022/23 then an application should be made in 2023/24 and the purchase should be put on hold.

7.1.2 Tony Birkett advised that he was chasing Buckinghamshire Council for the data collected by the Fixed Vehicle Activate Sign near The Avenue in Farnham Common.

7.1.3 Tony Birkett stated that the contract with the existing contractor responsible for charging and moving the sign around the parish should be terminated and no more payments should be paid to contractor in this regard. This was **agreed**.

7.2 The purchase of a training package for the effective use of the above sign

Tony Birkett proposed purchasing an onsite training package which would ensure councillors were able to install and use the new sign including data downloading and sign configuration uploading. The cost of the package is £350. This was **agreed**.

7.3 The purchase of a handheld radar gun and hi vis vests for Speedwatch

The purchase of a handheld radar gun and six hi vis vests was **agreed**.

23/8/PC To consider updates to the Parish Council's website to improve communication

8.1 Neighbourhood Plan Pages

The Clerk advised that two new pages had been created for the Neighbourhood Plan. One would provide information regarding the process and plan and the other would host the questionnaire for the upcoming consultation. She advised that she had been provided with links to the draft pages and that she would forward these to parish councillors for review and information. She continued that the cost of creating the pages should be covered by the grant obtained. The creation of these pages was **agreed**.

8.2 Parish Projects Page

The Clerk advised that the idea of providing project details and updates on the website had been mentioned before and had been included in the Chairman's Statement prepared regarding the budget for 2023/24. The creation of the page was **agreed**.

23/9/PC To consider relocating the Farnham Pump painting to Farnham Royal

The Clerk advised that for several years the old sign for The Farnham Pump Public House had been in the corner of the Parish Council Office and she felt it would be lovely to display it in a public space in Farnham Royal. This was **agreed** but those present were unsure of where to display it. The village hall was suggested as was an outside wall of the Berkley Homes development (their old offices). It was **agreed** that Tony Birkett would liaise with Berkley Homes to see if they could accommodate the artwork.

23/10/PC To consider items relating to the relocation of the Parish Council's office

10.1 Extra-ordinary meeting to consider: dilapidations, lease, telephone services contract, removal costs and clearance costs

10.1.1 Dilapidations – the Clerk advised that following advice from the solicitors, a meeting had been arranged with the landlord to discuss the work required. The meeting would be attended by the Clerk, the Chairman and Tony Birkett. The work identified and associated cost would then need to be brought back to the parish council.

10.1.2 Lease – the Clerk advised that she is in regular contact with one of the village hall trustee's and he had advised that the first draft of the lease was due to be issued later that week. Agreement of the lease would then need to be brought back to the parish council.

10.1.3 Removal costs – Clive Robinson and David Moore volunteered to move the office contents to the village hall in order to minimise the costs.

10.1.4 The Clerk advised that the Chairman would need to summon an extra-ordinary meeting in February 2023 to consider the dilapidations, new lease and telephone services contract.

10.2 Permission to dispose of surplus office furniture and equipment

The Clerk advised that there were several items of old/surplus office furniture and equipment that should be disposed of prior to the move. Marilyn Rolfe suggested instructing Steve and Matt Keating to do this. This was **agreed**.

23/11/PC Finance:

11.1 Expenditure Decisions

11.1.1 To set up a new direct debit for the streetlight electricity supply

A new direct debit in favour of Drax Energy Solutions Limited, Buckinghamshire Council's chosen provider, was **agreed**.

11.1.2 To consider replacing the glass panel at the One Pin Lane bus shelter

It was **agreed** that the broken glass panel should be replaced with a 9mm plywood panel decorated to match the existing wood at a cost of £150.

11.1.3 To consider tree work required at Ingrams Copse

The appointment of Clark's Gardening Services at a cost of £750 was **agreed**.

11.1.4 To consider tree work at Farnham Common Sports Club requested by the school

It was **agreed** that the requested work to both trees (T011 and G01) would be carried out by Firewood & Chip Arboricultural Services Ltd with the cost of the work to G01 being shared with the school. The maximum cost is £285.

11.1.5 To consider payment of the excess daily rate of the Neighbourhood Plan consultant

The payment of the excess daily rate of £100 was **agreed**. The maximum cost will be £1,500.

11.1.6 To consider the purchase of a laptop docking station

The purchase of a laptop docking station at a cost of £165.70 including labour was **agreed**.

11.1.7 To ratify payments and note receipts, as per the November 2022 cashbook

The payments were **ratified** and the receipts were noted.

11.1.8 To ratify payments and note receipts, as per the December 2022 cashbook

The payments were **ratified** and the receipts were noted.

11.1.9 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the January 2023 cashbook

The payments were **approved** except the payment to the contractor for charging and moving the mobile vehicle activated sign and the receipts were noted.

11.2 Finance Committee Recommendations

11.2.1 To consider the appointment of Katherine Damsell to Finance Committee

The Clerk explained that Katherine Damsell attended the Finance Committee meeting held on 28 November 2022 and following a discussion was nominated and agreed to become the committee chair. Prior to being confirmed as Chair, it is necessary for the parish council to consider her appointment to the committee. Her appointment to the committee was **agreed**. Her nomination as chair will be considered at the next committee meeting but in the meantime, she will be the Acting Chair.

11.2.2 To consider the December 2022 Management Accounts

Katherine Damsell, as Acting Chair of the Finance Committee, asked those present to confirm that they had reviewed the management accounts and accompanying notes. Those present confirmed they had and it was noted that most of those present had attended the latest finance Committee meeting where the accounts were fully considered. She then asked those present whether they had any comments and those present confirmed not. The management accounts **were agreed**.

11.2.3 To consider allocating the 2022/23 CIL receipts to the Blackpond Lane Footway project

During 2022/23 the parish council received two Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") amounts totalling £11,399,86. It was **agreed** that these funds should be allocated to the Blackpond Lane Footway project.

11.2.4 To consider the 2023/24 Budget

Katherine Damsell advised that the Finance Committee had met twice to prepare a prudent budget to reflect the wider economic environment. It honours the parish council's desire to restore its reserves in line with the auditor's recommendations but still provides all services and funding for projects and celebrations such as Christmas and King Charles III's Coronation. It also allows for a performance management process to ensure value for money. She acknowledged that there is a little more work to do to confirm some of the costs but overall the Finance Committee recommends acceptance of the budget. The budget was **agreed**. Katherine Damsell confirmed the statement of the Chairman of the Parish Council had been approved and issued to the editor of the Farnhams Magazine for inclusion in the March 2023 issue. It will be uploaded to the website and Facebook on 1 March 2023.

11.2.5 To consider the 2023/24 Precept

Katherine Damsell advised that the Finance Committee was recommending a 5% increase in line with that announced by Buckinghamshire Council. In real terms this is an annual increase of £3.15 (26p per month) for a Band D Council Tax Property. The precept for 2023/24 was **agreed** at £209,750. It is noted that Clive Robinson abstained from the vote.

11.2.6 To consider the appointment of a new signatory for the bank accounts

The Clerk advised that following the resignation of Richard Thomas, a new signatory should be appointed to replace him. The Chair proposed Katherine Damsell. There were no other nominations. Katherine Damsell agreed to become a signatory. This was **agreed**.

23/12/PC Planning:

12.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

12.2 To note recent planning decisions

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

12.3 Slough Borough Council's Wider Area Growth Study

Marilyn Rolfe advised that the Planning Working Group would review the Study and asked for it to be added to the agenda for the next Working Group meeting. Clive Robinson expressed his opinion that the information provided was short on detail. It was noted that there appears to be potential for 1,700 homes.

12.4 Local Plan for Buckinghamshire Evidence Base – Settlement Review

Marilyn Rolfe advised that the Planning Working Group would consider the Review and asked for it to be added to the agenda for the next Working Group meeting.

23/13/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

13.1 Clive Robinson requested confirmation of whether his and David Moore's offer to move the Clerk's office had been accepted. Those present felt that some of the larger furniture items would require a removals company.

13.2 Tony Birkett advised that the part of Blackpond Lane from The Emperor Public House down to Chandos Lodge is icy caused by a blocked drain and freezing weather. He expressed that additional gritting would be useful.

13.3 Katherine Damsell advised that there had been some posts on the Community Facebook page which had been moderated by the Administrators who had reminded members to report potentially criminal activity to the Police rather than on the page. Other complaints appeared to be about freezing conditions, various roadworks on the A355 and fireworks.

23/14/PC Next parish council meetings:

The meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Projects Working Group on 27 February 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

Contracts Working Group on 27 March 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

Full Council on 24 April 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

OPEN FORUM

A resident of Farnham Common advised that before the pandemic she raised the condition of the pavement between Elm Close and Forge Drive. She advised that this had been further exacerbated by a cherry tree that was blown down on the verge last year. She noted that some of the branches had been cut off but they were just thrown down and could be dangerous. She wanted to know who owns the land. The Chairman advised that he would assume it's a verge owned by Buckinghamshire Council. Marilyn Rolfe advised that there was the same problem with another tree on the A355 nearer Farnham Royal. Bob Milne advised that the trees should be reported with a photograph on Fix My Street. The Clerk was asked to report the trees as well.

A resident expressed her disappointment that her and her husband were the only residents attending the meeting. The Chairman advised that sometimes, if there is a particular issue in the parish, lots of residents attend.