

FRPC Parish Council for The Farnhams

Information for the Parish Council Meeting on 26 June 2023

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

3.1 Update on Community Speedwatch

Tony Birkett and Tony D'Arcy have now carried out Speedwatch sessions at three locations in the parish: Beaconsfield Road (outside Dair House School), One Pin Lane and Stewarts Drive.



Fifteen of the eighteen sites applied for have been approved by the Police with the remaining three not meeting protocol for reasons such as being too close to a speed camera or traffic signals, insufficient space for the operators to stand and the lack of safe exit routes for operators, if required. This relates to the sites requested outside Farnham Common Infant School and one of the sites near the entrance to Millward House Day Nursery.

The approved sites are on Beaconsfield Road, Collinswood Road, Crown Lane, Farnham Lane, Mayflower Way, One Pin Lane, Park Road, Stewarts Drive and Templewood Lane.

The Group is currently looking for sites that meet the protocol in Beeches Road, Blackpond Lane and Parsonage Lane.

A post was put on the parish council's Facebook page and shared with The Farnhams Community Group. Those that commented were pleased that this activity had started and suggested roads, where they would like the activity to take place.

3.2 Update on siding out footpath between Farnham Common Sports Club and the Playground

Progress Services has completed the siding out and Bob Milne has inspected the work, confirming it has been carried out to a good standard.

Before



After



3.3 Update on demolition of the old Guide Hut

The demolition was due to start on 19 June 2023 but following the discovery of vandalism and unauthorised access of the building on 8 June 2023, it was decided to bring the demolition forward to avoid the cost of securing the property for such a short period of time. The demolition therefore started on 12 June 2023.

Before



After



The demolition was completed on Friday 16 June 2023.

On Monday 19 June 2023 reports were received from residents that the capped off water pipe had been tampered with resulting in a leak. The Chairman inspected the leak and arranged for a plumber to attend to rectify the problem. He would like to thank Farnham Common Sports Club for its help with this. In addition, Progress Services attended and have turned off the water supply to the pipe. It would seem sensible to move the pipe to the edge of the site.

3.4 Update on meeting with Buckinghamshire Highways (inc. verge cutting and dropped kerbs)

On 13 June 2023, the Clerk was joined by Tony Birkett and Cllr. Dev Dhillon at a meeting with the Highways Community Liaison Manager and the Local Area Technician covering our villages for Buckinghamshire Highways.

The following points, some of which have been outstanding since before 2018, were discussed:

- Initially making safe the holes where bollards have been removed outside the public conveniences and along The Broadway and then installing appropriate replacements
- The dip in the pavement in the entrance to the car park behind the Stag & Hounds on The Broadway
- Grass cutting inc. the verges generally, additional verges handed back this financial year, Kingsway Green, the corner of Rectory Close and paying special attention to junctions on A355
- Felling of mature trees on public land
- Potential to move the 50MPH on Collinswood Road further north and other traffic management options for A355 inc. the new MVAS being purchased by the parish council
- The flooding in the dip between the Beaconsfield Services and Farnham Common, which causes traffic to back up into the village
- Phasing of traffic lights at One Pin Lane junction following issues on 10/11 June 2023
- Giving extra time for mobility vehicles at the crossing outside Sainsbury's and Tesco on The Broadway
- The missing 'School 20 when lights show' plates on the flashing light assemblies outside Farnham Common Infant School
- Dropped kerbs and pavement repairs, particularly the one on the Beaconsfield Road near Spring Lane
- Removal and replacement of the barrier at the entrance to the footpath from Beaconsfield Road to Farnham Common Sports Club to improve access for buggies and mobility vehicles
- Collection of rubbish in the vegetation by the bus stop on Beaconsfield Road near Old Beaconsfield Road and the possible addition of a bin.

Whilst it is not possible to solve all these issues, everyone felt there are some actions that can be taken quickly to improve things and then some of the more longer term works can be discussed.

The Group agreed to meet every eight weeks to discuss progress with these issues and to raise any new issues. Cllr. Dev Dhillon and the Local Area Technician will drive around the parish together before each

meeting to review progress and identify any unknown issues.

Residents are encouraged to report all issues, as they arise, on <https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>. If you consider the issue to be dangerous or an emergency, please call Buckinghamshire Highways on 0300 131 6000.

3.5 Update on annual flagpole Services

The annual flagpole services were carried out on 5 June 2023. The engineer checked the foundations, wear on the pole, cleat, finial and flag and he re-roped both poles. Both poles were adjudged to be in good working order with no further work required.

3.6 Update on replacement defibrillator battery at Farnham Common Sports Club

The battery has been replaced.

3.7 Update on Farnham Common Playground Project

At the Parish Council meeting on 24 April 2023, it was agreed that Proludic would be appointed to replace the playground in Farnham Common. It was also agreed that the replacement would be funded by a Public Works Loan Board loan. An update on the loan application will be provided at the meeting.

3.8 Update on application to Beeches Community Board for match funding for a new MVAS

The application was made on 5 February 2023. The Clerk contacted the Beeches Community Board recently for an update and was advised that they are missing some detailing around the application and that the co-ordinator will pick this up as a matter of urgency on his return to work on Tuesday 27 June 2023.

3.9 Update on Farnham Pump Sign



After the Farnham Pump Public House closed the sign was removed and stored in the parish council office.

With the help and support of Berkeley Homes we have been able to return this piece of local history to Farnham Royal.

Residents and visitors can now enjoy the painting as it has been installed in a specially made case on the wall near its former home.

A post was placed on the parish council's Facebook page and this was shared with The Farnhams Community Group. Those that commented were pleased that the sign had been made available for all to enjoy.

Berkley Homes have issued a press release about this and a copy will be circulated to parish councillors separately.

The Parish Council would like to thank Berkeley Homes for designing and manufacturing the case which will ensure it can be enjoyed for years to come.

3.10 Update on Annual Parish Meeting web page

This year's Annual Parish Meeting was held on 22 May 2023. Approximately 40 residents joined parish councillors, the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Southmead Surgery, our Neighbourhood Plan consultants and Buckinghamshire Councillors to discuss village matters, opportunities, aspirations, projects and initiatives.

This year, an audio recording was made of each speaker session and these together with the presentation slides can be accessed on the parish council's website at <https://farnhamroyal-pc.gov.uk/annual-parish-meeting-2023/>.

3.11 Update on Electricity Contract

On 1 October 2022, the Parish Council entered into a 24 month group supply contract with Buckinghamshire Council for electricity for the streetlights. Based on the April and May invoices, the energy charge is 37p/kWh, the non energy charge is 21p/kWh and the Climate Change Levy is 0.775p/kWh. It is not a fixed price contract.

The contract remains in place but Buckinghamshire Council has negotiated an option that provides group members the choice to exit the electricity contract at the end of the current year (30 September 2023) if they wish.

Buckinghamshire Council operate a flexible purchasing contract for electricity, where volumes of electricity are purchased throughout the year in advance of use. At present Buckinghamshire Council has purchased 50% of electricity for contract year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.

This option will contain a termination fee, the termination fee is set by Drax (the supplier) using the following calculation:

$$\text{Termination fee (£)} = \frac{\text{Value of Energy Already Purchased (£)}}{\text{Value of Energy sell back to market (£)}} + \text{Margin} + \text{Admin}$$

Termination fee = value that you would need to pay exit electricity contract at the end of the current year (30 September 2023)

Value of energy already purchased = the value in £ of the 50% of electricity already purchased for contract year 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.

Value of Energy sell back to market = the value of the energy £ of the 50% of electricity based on current wholesale market values

Margin = Drax profit margin on energy

Admin = Drax administration fee for providing termination

Buckinghamshire Council have put together an exit process as follows:

Phase 1 - Notification

If you would like to receive a termination offer (no obligation quote) please complete and return the “*Request for Electricity Supply Contract Termination Offer*” form by 23 June 2023 to bucksenergy@eenergy.com

Phase 2 -Termination Offer

By 30 June 2023, eEnergy will provide you with an indicative quote for the cost of termination on a ‘Electricity Supply Contract Termination Offer’ form via signable.

Phase 3 – Decision

You will have until mid-day on 14 July 2023 to complete and return the form. Once accepted you are agreeing to leave the portfolio and pay the cost of termination. We appreciate you may need to discuss this with decision makers, so please make necessary arrangements in advance.

Phase 4 – Confirmation

Once you have accepted, the energy will be sold back and the termination cost will be invoiced to you by Drax as a separate invoice as soon as possible after the 14 July 2023. Please note that the final cost you are invoiced will vary to the quoted cost based on the wholesale market movements between the quoted date and the date of sellback

It is important to emphasise that you should complete your own evaluation of this option reviewing both benefits and disbenefits of accepting it. eEnergy have advised that the option to terminate is likely to not be best value and may be cost prohibitive.

If you did decide to action termination, once confirmed you will exit the contract from 30 September 2023 and you will be responsible for making your own arrangement for the supply of electricity from the 1 October 2023.

Having discussed this with the Chairman and Katherine Damsell, Interim Chair of the Finance Committee, the Clerk has requested the termination offer so that the termination fee is known and steps can then be taken to review the best option for the Parish Council. Given the timescales imposed, a decision will need to be taken over email to be ratified at the July 2023 parish council meeting.

3.12 Update on 130 years of Farnham Royal Parish Council

The Parish Council will be 130 years old next year as the first meeting was held on 19 December 1894.

It would be lovely to embrace this during 2024 and use it to engage with the community, promote the activities of the parish council and push for the recruitment of new councillors and volunteers. If parish councillors agree, can everyone start pulling together some ideas.

3.13 Update on Parish Councillor recruitment

The Parish Council is currently made up of eight councillors with three vacancies. The relevant notices have been issued and Buckinghamshire Council has confirmed that the Parish Council is free to co-opt individuals to fill the vacancies. It has been suggested that a plan is put together to actively recruit new members to

enhance the skills and resources of the Parish Council for the benefit of the villages. If parish councillors agree, can everyone start pulling together some ideas.

3.14 Update on actions taken in respect of the Rectification Notice received pursuant to Article 16 UK GDPR
BP Collins LLP, the Parish Council's solicitors, have replied to the Rectification Notice in line with the decision taken at the May 2023 parish council meeting. A period of 14 Days from 14 June 2023 has been given to object to the proposed approach. If no objection is received, the proposed statements will be included on the relevant documents.

3.15 Update of flowerbeds at Rectory Close, Farnham Royal

Concern has been raised that a plan has been put in place to maintain the flowerbeds on Kingsway Green but no plan is in place to maintain the flowerbeds on the verge at Rectory Close. The Clerk has contacted Clarke's Garden Services, who maintain the flowerbeds on Kingsway Green, to obtain a quote for maintenance. They have agreed to review the beds and provide a quote during week commencing 26 June 2023.

In addition, the Clerk has raised the maintenance of the grass on the verge with Buckinghamshire Highways as if the grass is not cut regularly this will negatively impact on the flowerbeds.

4 **Parish Council Appointments and Roles**

4.1 General statement about appointments

The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils has advised that a parish council does not have the power or authority to remove certain roles from a councillor pending the outcome of a complaint for breaching the Code of Conduct.

As such the decision taken on 25 June 2018 to remove a councillor as Signage Manager, chair of the play area working group and as a representative on the Local Area Forum is not binding and the councillor is free to take up any roles in the Parish Council.

The Association has also advised that the following information item is added to the Parish Council's website: *"Councillors are entitled to the enhanced protection afforded to the expression of political opinions on matters of public interest, and the benefits of freedom of expression in a political context which outweigh the need to protect the reputation of the other councillors against public criticism. Rigorous debate will lead to resilient decisions and this Council, as a collective body will seek to provide the framework in which honest debate may take place."*

4.2 To consider the appointment of David Moore as Lead Councillor for Environment

This Councillor will look at environmental issues and for opportunities to help the Parish become carbon neutral by 2050 (Buckinghamshire Council's target), which could include initiatives in connection with air quality monitoring, sustainable travel and increased biodiversity. The Lead Councillor will attend the Environment Action Group of the Beeches Community Board to learn from and share information with our neighbouring parish councils.

David Moore has volunteered to take on this role.

4.3 To consider the creation of a role of Lead Councillor for Communication

At the May 2023 parish council meeting it was suggested that a new role should be created for Lead Councillor for Communication. Following the meeting the following scope was put together for further discussion.

- Looking at future plans / events / projects and put in place an appropriate overarching communications plan for the year ahead that covers all the activities.
- Strategy for social media including Facebook and Farnhams Magazine to include response to questions from the Parish
- Parish Council website profiles with links to other sites and possible quarterly newsletter updates
- Annual Parish Meeting plans and presentations with key messages directed by the wider parish council
- Liaise with Buckinghamshire Council on their plans for communications and understand cross over with the Parish Council
- Liaise with other groups in the Parish to see where to leverage media and communications and to give a coordinated approach i.e., calendar of Christmas events in the Parish.

It has also been suggested that there should be a standing item at each parish council meeting for updates and reviews and it is recognised that it may be necessary to adopt a policy/agreement for signing off written documents.

5 To consider holding ‘Meet Your Local Councillors’ Sessions

It has been suggested that to improve communication and engagement with the community, Parish Councillors and Buckinghamshire Councillors should join forces and hold joint sessions where residents and business owners are encouraged to discuss village matters that concern them with a view creating a better place to live and do business.

Both the Chairman and Cllr. Dev Dhillon are happy to commit to attending these sessions but all parish councillors are invited to attend. The following dates have been provisionally agreed:

Saturday 9 September 2023

Saturday 4 November 2023

Saturday 13 January 2024

Saturday 9 March 2024

Saturday 11 May 2024

Saturday 13 July 2024

All sessions would start at 10.00am and be held in Farnham Common Community Library. Thank you to the Library for accommodating these sessions.

6 To consider attending Orchard Day 2023 and associated costs

Orchard Day 2023 is being held in Temple Dell on 30 September 2023 between 12pm and 4pm.

The Parish Council had a stall at the event in 2021 and 2022 to share information and receive feedback on parish projects. Those that attended agreed that it was a very useful activity.

It is suggested that the Parish Council has a stall again this year for the same purpose. It will be necessary to produce some printed materials, so a budget is requested to facilitate this.

7 The Farnhams’ Neighbourhood Plan

7.1 To consider various buildings and structures for designation as a Local Heritage Asset

One of the policies in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan discusses the creation of a Local Heritage Asset List. This list will recognise buildings and structures in the Parish that contribute directly to the local character of the area. It does not include buildings or structures that are Grade-listed nor does local listing compare to national listing.

Being on the list means, if the Neighbourhood Plan is made (adopted), Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework will apply if an owner wants to undertake works, but only if such works require planning permission. It will not affect owners permitted development rights and owners will not need any other type of consent to undertake works. Local Heritage Asset listing does not prevent development; it helps to maintain the special heritage and landscape enjoyed by the community.

Paragraph 203 states: ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/16-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

The next part of the process will require the Parish Council to write to all owners for their comments.

A schedule of the buildings and structures that are proposed to be added to the List has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

7.2 To consider methods and a budget for promoting the Formal Consultation

It is proposed that the Formal Consultation will commence on 31 July 2023 depending upon whether the Parish Council approves the Draft Neighbourhood Plan at its meeting on 24 July 2023. It is then anticipated that the consultation will end on 6 October 2023.

To maximise the feedback from residents, it will be necessary to engage in a number of different promotional activities such as banners, posters and exhibitions/events etc. It would be good for parish councillors to start thinking about ways to do this. It will be necessary to produce some printed materials and possibly pay for village hall hire, so a budget is requested to facilitate this.

8 To consider the naming of the access road leading to Cedar House, Oaktree House and Laurel House off Collinswood Road, Farnham Common

Buckinghamshire Council has advised that they have received a request to name this access road Claybourne Drive.

The Parish Council has been asked to comment on the proposed street name or to make an alternative suggestion. Buckinghamshire Council promote names with a local or historic significance to the area and this is an approach used previously by the Parish Council.

Having discussed the suggestion with Judy Tipping, a local historian, she has advised that as the site is close to Collinswood House which was the former country home of Sir Douglas Shields, who was an eminent surgeon in the early 1900s, a road name to recognise him may be more appropriate.

Should parish councillors wish to review Buckinghamshire Council's Street Naming and Numbering Policy before making any comments or street name suggestions it can be found at:
<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/street-naming-and-numbering/buckinghamshire-council-street-naming-and-numbering-policy>

9 Contracts:

9.1 To consider the lease for the new office

A copy of the amended lease has been reviewed by the small group of parish councillors appointed to carry out this function. It has also been circulated to the members of the Finance Committee, who it is proposed will be responsible for the preparation and content of all contracts. A copy has also been issued to all other councillors ahead of this meeting.

It is proposed that the Chairman and Katherine Damsell (as Interim Chair of the Finance Committee) will sign the lease on behalf of the Parish Council.

9.2 To award the contract for Woodland & Grassland Maintenance from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2027

A copy of both tenders received have been reviewed by Bob Milne, as Lead Councillor for Woodlands and Open Spaces. They have also been circulated to the members of the Finance Committee, who it is proposed will be responsible for the implementation of any tendering processes and the preparation and content of all contracts. A copy has also been issued to all other councillors ahead of this meeting.

10 Finance:

10.1 To consider amendments to the Finance Committee's Terms of Reference

At the May 2023 parish council meeting it was agreed that the Finance Committee's Terms of Reference would be amended to include the powers and responsibilities of the disbanded Contracts Working Group. A copy of the amended terms of reference has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

10.2 To consider 2023 Christmas lighting quote

The company who installs the Christmas lighting in the villages has provided its quote for the same display as 2022. This quote has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

10.3 To receive and note the 2022/23 Internal Audit report

The 2022/23 Internal Audit Report has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

10.4 To consider the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 AGAR)

The 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

10.5 To consider the 2022/23 Accounting Statements (Section 2 AGAR)

The 2022/23 Accounting Statements have been circulated to parish councillors separately.

10.6 To note the arrangements for the exercise of public rights

Assuming the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements are approved, the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounting records for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 will commence on Wednesday 28 June 2023. The period continues for 30 working days and ends on Tuesday 8 August 2023.

10.7 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the June 2023 cashbook

The cashbook has been reviewed and approved by Katherine Damsell, as Interim Chair of the Finance Committee and has been circulated to councillors separately.

11 Planning:

11.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

11.2 To note recent planning decisions

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