

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM ROYAL VILLAGE HALL, FARNHAM LANE, FARNHAM ROYAL, SL2 3AX

Present

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|---------------------|---------------|
| Paul Rowley (Chair) | Tony Birkett |
| Katherine Damsell | Bob Milne |
| David Moore | Jenny Quilter |
| Judith Hall (Clerk) | |

One member of the public was in attendance.

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.

23/86/PC Apologies for absence

Clive Robinson and Marilyn Rolfe

23/87/PC Declarations of Interest

None

23/88/PC To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2023

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

23/89/PC Chairman's statement regarding the decision to remove Cllr. Clive Robinson from leadership positions on the Parish Council (18/86.8/PC 25 June 2018)

The Chairman read the following statement: The Parish Council meeting held on 25 June 2018, resolved to remove Cllr. Clive Robinson from leadership positions on the Council - namely as Signage Manager, as chair of the play area working group and as a representative on the Local Area Forum. At the June 2023 Parish Council meeting, it was reported that the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils had 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. It was further reported that as such the decision taken on 25 June 2018 is not binding and the councillor is free to take up any roles in the Parish Council. For the avoidance of doubt, Cllr. Clive Robinson is free to take up any roles in the Parish Council.

Following the statement, there was a discussion which confirmed that the statement was required to acknowledge a previously invalid decision and clarify the correct position. It was confirmed that appointments would continue to be made following a vote at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, usually held in May.

23/90/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.

90.1 Update on electricity supply

The content of the report was noted.

90.2 Update on meetings with Buckinghamshire Highways

The content of the report was noted. Tony Birkett added that he was rather disappointed as the first meeting had been encouraging but no actions appeared to have been taken. It was confirmed that the next meeting is due to be held on 4 October 2023 and an update would be circulated after the meeting.

90.3 Update on Annual Playground Inspections

Jenny Quilter advised that she had reviewed the inspection reports and there were some amber risk elements of play that had deteriorated since the last annual inspection.

90.3.1 Looking at the playground in Farnham Park Playing Fields, she advised that there are now two moderate risk elements; the basket swing and the flat swings and that these elements should be closed until the remedial work had been carried out. The Clerk advised that the basket swing had been removed whilst the supplier was arranging a new timber to replace the rotten one, so this element was closed. With regard to the flat swing, the Clerk advised that the worn shackles and bushes had been replaced. The Clerk was asked to seek advice from the supplier regarding the condition of the surface.

90.3.2 Looking at the playground at Farnham Common Sports Club, she advised that she would double check the multiplay unit and advise the Clerk of any recommended actions.

90.4 Update on Neighbourhood Plan

The content of the report was noted. There was then a discussion about making the Parish Council's desire to protect the Green Belt more prominent in the full document and the 'bitesize' version being delivered to all homes in the parish as part of the Formal Consultation. It **was agreed** that a short additional statement to reflect this should be included in both documents in an appropriate place.

In addition, it was discussed that all planning applications received, including those within the Green Belt, are reviewed by the Planning Working Group with comments being brought to the Parish Council meeting. The Clerk was asked to ensure that the minutes of Planning Working Group meetings were issued to all parish councillors as and when they are produced.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was urged to communicate with residents before the 'bitesize' is issued so residents know to expect them in an effort to stop them from being thrown away as junk mail on receipt.

There was then a discussion about the draft policy which proposes the establishment of a 'shared back garden' linking the communities of Stoke Poges and Farnham Common and how it came to be included in the Draft Plan. It was confirmed that the Stoke Poges Steering Group raised the possibility with their consultant who is also the consultant for the Farnhams Neighbourhood Plan. Concern was raised by one councillor that creating a new cycleway, especially when one already exists, would create conflict between pedestrians and cyclists which pedestrians would find difficult. It was noted that residents would have the ability to make comments on the proposal during the Formal Consultation and that any comments would be considered prior to the final referendum.

90.5 Update on Community Board Meetings

The content of the report was noted. The Chairman advised that he was no longer able to attend the main meeting on 3 October 2023, so the Clerk was asked to send an invitation to all councillors.

90.6 Update from the Neighbourhood Policing Team

PCSO Angela O'Connell and PCSO Peter Pretty attended the meeting and provided the following update:

This month, burglaries have increased by three in Farnham Common, two in Burnham and two in Taplow. The Neighbourhood Policing Teams are carrying out targeted patrols in these locations and also giving out crime reduction advice at local events.

We have seen a decrease in theft from vehicles with none reported in the Farnhams area at the time of this report but one has subsequently been reported, one reported in Burnham and two in Taplow/Dorney. The team are continuing to patrol the car parks at these locations and identifying vehicles with valuables on display and sending the owners a letter to remind them to keep out of sight.

This month we have had one reported theft of a motor vehicle in the Burnham area, none in Farnham Common and one reported for Taplow/Dorney.

This month we will be holding two 'Have your say' events for the local community to pop down and have a chat. We will also have a selection of crime reduction advice to give away. The dates are:

29 September between 10-12am at Burnham Library

30 September between 10-11am at Farnham Common Library.

Councillors were advised that complaints had been received regarding parking issues in Scott Close during

drop off and pick up times at Farnham Common Infant School and these were being discussed with the school. In addition, councillors were updated that only one resident is talking to Cllr. Dhillon about the off-road bikes that had been causing issues at the bottom of Blackpond Lane with nothing now being reported to the Police and nothing being seen during patrols.

There was then a discussion regarding the Parish Council's Speedwatch activity and it was agreed that the Clerk would forward the results of each session to PCSO O'Connell for her records. Tony Birkett advised that from sessions held on Collinswood Road outside Millward Day Nursery, it was clear that drivers speed up as they approach the traffic lights at the junction with One Pin Lane and also advised that lorry drivers complain that the different speed limits along the A355 are confusing.

One councillor noted the break in at Sunrise Dry Cleaners but PCSO O'Connell was not aware of the incident. Another councillor raised motorbikes and nitrous oxide gas canisters being left in Stewarts Drive. PCSO O'Connell advised that residents should report the motorbikes if they are causing a nuisance but there was nothing the Police could do about the use of nitrous oxide gas as it is currently legal. It was also noted by a councillor that the Police had ticketed a vehicle parked on the zig zag lines outside Tesco Express on The Broadway. PCSO O'Connell confirmed that this is done when a police officer sees the vehicle and the driver is present. It was confirmed that the Police cannot ticket vehicles on double yellow lines but traffic wardens can ticket vehicles on zig zag lines and double yellow lines.

Finally, it was confirmed that our new PCSO, PCSO Pretty, was leaving with no replacement expected until January 2024. In the meantime, PCSO O'Connell would be working in the Farnhams.

The Chairman thanked the officers for attending the meeting and they left.

23/91/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.

91.1 To note the External Auditor's Report

The External Auditor's Report was noted.

91.2 To note the publication of Notice of Conclusion of Audit

The publication arrangements for the Notice of Consultation of Audit were noted.

91.3 To consider repairs to the bus shelter near Kingsway Green

The replacement of the broken glass panel with an 8mm tempered safety glass panel at a cost of £345 **was agreed.**

91.4 To consider improvements to northern pedestrian access at Temple Dell

It was agreed that Type 1 mixed with concrete would be used to level off the ground in the entrance gate at the north of Temple Dell at a cost of no more than £200 plus VAT. It was noted that the new contractors, Amersham Town Council, had done a very good job at cutting back the boundary hedge.

91.5 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the September 2023 cashbook

The payments were **approved** and the receipts were noted. Jenny Quilter, who is not Chair of the Finance Committee nor a cheque signatory, offered to review the bank reconciliation once a quarter and at each financial year end, in accordance with the Finance Regulations. This **was agreed.**

23/92/PC Contracts:

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.

92.1 To note Insurance arrangements for 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.

The insurance arrangements were noted and it was acknowledged that two potential claims had recently been received and forwarded to the insurers for consideration.

92.2 Update on new office lease

The content of the report was noted.

92.2.1 To consider purchasing an external mailbox

The purchase of an external mailbox at a cost of £63.99 **was agreed.**

92.2.2 To consider purchasing blinds to comply with insurance recommendations.

The purchase of blinds for the office windows at a cost of £166.61 **was agreed.**

23/93/PC Planning:

93.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

93.2 To note recent planning decisions

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

93.3 To note current enforcement issues

The current enforcement issues **were noted**. The Chairman advised that Planning Town & Parish Council Representatives' Liaison Surgeries were now being offered by Buckinghamshire Council and he suggested that the Clerk should apply for one to discuss the changing landscape of Templewood Lane.

93.4 To note recent appeal decisions

The recent appeal decisions **were noted** and it was acknowledged that it was very useful for Tony Birkett and Marilyn Rolfe to attend the recent appeal hearings to provide local knowledge.

23/94/PC To further consider the street name for six dwellings on the fields to the west of Blackpond Lane and opposite Devonshire Green, Farnham Royal (Land at Cobblers Close, Farnham Royal)

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.

The revised road name of Berry Drive **was agreed**.

23/95/PC To consider request for a commemorative tree at Temple Dell

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.

Following a discussion, it **was agreed** that it was not possible to grant the request due to space and other practical considerations. The Clerk was asked to suggest a commemorative item at the refurbished playground in Farnham Common.

It was noted that following a previous request a draft policy had been prepared but when considered at a parish council meeting a councillor requested time to make some amendments. The revised policy had not yet been prepared by the councillor and the Clerk was asked to progress this.

23/96/PC To consider request for Edgeminder posts on a verge in Frensham Walk, Farnham Common

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.

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council had no objection to Edgeminder posts being installed by Buckinghamshire Council.

23/97/PC 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.

Update on Parish Council projects

97.1 Traders' Association

Tony Birkett advised that approximately 60 businesses were generally supportive and he would now progress this.

97.2 Residents' Association

Tony Birkett advised that he was in contact with approximately 290 properties, some via management companies and/or associations and they circulate information when requested.

97.3 Community Speedwatch

The content of the report was noted and Tony Birkett advised that on average the Group was carrying out activities at two sites each week. Most sites have now been used and some need to be moved slightly to make them more effective. He continued that feedback had been good and residents were pleased to see them carrying out the sessions around the parish. David Moore advised that he would be happy to join any sessions held at the weekend.

97.4 Woodlands & Verges

97.4.1 Boundary Copse, Farnham Royal

The content of the report was noted. Following a discussion, it **was agreed** that councillors would like

to clear intrusive saplings, shrubs and brambles to create a more open and inviting woodland. The Clerk advised that she had received one quote and was awaiting another. It was suggested that once the second quote had been received a fully costed proposal should be prepared for consideration at the October 2023 parish council meeting.

97.4.2 Woodland Management Plan

The content of the report was noted.

97.5 Playgrounds

97.5.1 To ratify the informal decision to draw down the loan amount of £105,000

The informal decision to draw down the loan amount of £105,000 **was ratified**. It **was also agreed** that the funds received should be transferred to the deposit account until such time as payment needs to be made to the supplier.

97.5.2 To ratify the informal decision to complete a direct debit mandate

The informal decision to complete a direct debit mandate **was ratified**.

97.5.3 To ratify the informal decision to place the order for the replacement playground with Proludic

The informal decision to place the order for the replacement playground with Proludic **was ratified**. Jenny Quilter advised that a meeting had been arranged for next week with Proludic to obtain an update on the project and that the update would be passed on to all councillors following the meeting.

97.6 Old Guide Hut

97.6.1 Update on blocked sewer pipe

The content of the report was noted and it **was agreed** that the Clerk should buy the plan from Thames Water at a cost of c.£50 to ascertain the location of the next manholes.

97.6.2 To ratify payment of £645 + VAT to Clear Drains (UK) Ltd to suck out the blocked sewer pipe

The payment of £645 plus VAT to Clear Drains (UK) Ltd to suck out the blocked sewer pipe **was ratified**.

97.6.3 To ratify payment of £166 + VAT to Clear Drains (UK) Ltd to pressure wash the blocked pipe

The payment of £166 plus VAT to Clear Drains (UK) Ltd to pressure wash the blocked sewer pipe **was agreed**.

97.6.4 To consider tidying up the site

It **was agreed** that a fully costed proposal would be prepared for consideration at the October 2023 parish council meeting. Jenny Quilter advised that a neighbouring resident had raised concerns about the impact on security of removing vegetation along the boundary and installing benches. It **was agreed** that neighbours would be consulted before any plan was finalised.

Update on Community Board Projects

97.7 Update on Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign

The content of the report was noted.

New project ideas for consideration

97.8 To consider revitalising the Community Orchard

The Clerk was asked to discuss this potential project with Mark Frater, who looks after the Community Orchard, to prepare a fully costed proposal for consideration at a future meeting.

97.9 To consider the revised proposal for a Farmers Market

David Moore advised that Cooper's Markets had agreed to postpone the start until Sunday 22 October. It was noted that Farnham Common Village Schools had already publicised the market on the Farnhams Community Facebook group. The proposal for a Farmers' Market **was agreed** but David Moore was asked to obtain confirmation that Cooper's Market submit all of the legal notices required and hold the necessary risk assessments and insurance. A budget of £100 **was agreed** for reusable banners to publicise the market.

97.10 To consider holding a community event in Spring 2024

It **was agreed** that a fully costed proposal would be prepared for consideration at the October 2023 parish council meeting.

97.11 To consider how to mark the Parish Council's 130th Anniversary

It **was agreed** that a fully costed proposal would be prepared for consideration at the October 2023 parish council meeting.

23/98/PC Claims received from and on behalf of Cllr. Clive Robinson

98.1 Update on actions taken in respect of the Rectification Notice received pursuant to Article 16 UK GDPR

The content of the report was noted. Tony Birkett advised that BP Collins, acting for the Parish Council, had confirmed that the proposed wording and subsequently rectified documents were agreed by Simon Muirhead Burton, acting for Cllr. Clive Robinson and as such the matter had been concluded.

98.2 To consider the increased legal costs for responding to the Rectification Notice

It was noted that a further invoice had been received, details of which had been provided to parish councillors. The total costs **were agreed**.

98.3 To consider the policies requested by Cllr. Clive Robinson

The content of the report was noted. There was then a discussion where councillors expressed disappointment that Clive Robinson was not present to explain the suggested policies and discuss the emails sent by him to other councillors. Tony Birkett was asked whether he was proposing the adoption of the suggested policies on behalf of Clive Robinson. He advised he was not but felt they were worthy of being considered as they were relevant to the current parish council but stated that Clive Robinson must represent himself.

98.4 To note the letter received from Wellers Reece-Jones and update on steps taken

The receipt of a letter from Wellers Reece-Jones, acting for Clive Robinson, was noted.

A copy of the letter received was sent to the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils for advice. They recommended that the letter was sent to the Parish Council's insurers and that advice was sought from the Monitoring Officer at Buckinghamshire Council. Following this the Clerk forwarded the letter and accompanying email to the insurers and Tony Birkett had a telephone conversation with the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils and another with the Monitoring Officer. It was noted that Wellers Reece-Jones had also written to Buckinghamshire Council.

It was also noted that at the same time as the letter was sent to all parish councillors individually, an email was sent by Clive Robinson that parish councillors felt was threatening and inappropriate. Tony Birkett then offered to meet with Clive Robinson on behalf of parish councillors to talk about what the parish council could do to move forward and to separate legacy issues from current parish council matters. This offer was accepted and a meeting was held.

The Monitoring Officer provided the following advice:

- An announcement, in the public forum, that Clive Robinson is not banned and can hold any position within the Parish Council can go ahead.
- Any issues, complaints raised by Clive Robinson about present councillors, should be raised formally by him to the Monitoring Officer for a code of conduct review.
- Any concerns over financial matters, past or present, raised by Clive Robinson need to be raised by him with the Parish Council's auditors.
- Any pursuant of financial recompense/expenses by Clive Robinson needs to be reviewed by the Parish Council's insurers.

Tony Birkett was thanked by several councillors for his efforts to move the matter forward.

It **was agreed** that this matter would appear as a recurring item on future agendas until such time as it is closed.

23/99/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

99.1 The Clerk advised that the first 'Meet Your Local Councillors' session was attended by Cllr. Dev Dhillon and Tony Birkett who were joined by six or seven parishioners. It was considered by all to be a good and useful session. The next session is planned for 4 November 2023.

99.2 The Clerk advised that a personal injury claim had been received following a fall in the playground at Farnham Park Playing Fields. This had been passed to the insurers.

99.3 Katherine Damsell advised that as part of the budgeting process, she intended to review the ringfenced reserves and that the budget for 2024/25 would be based on carefully calculated costs and as part of the process she and the Clerk were preparing a schedule of parish assets which would include

ownership details and maintenance arrangements.

23/100/PC Next parish council meetings:

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Full Council (Focus on contracts) on 30 October 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

Finance Committee on 13 November 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

Full Council on 27 November 2023 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

OPEN FORUM

The member of the public who was present confirmed that they did not wish to raise any issues or make any comments.