

Information for the Parish Council Meeting on 29 January 2024

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

4.1 Update from the Neighbourhood Policing Team

The Neighbourhood Policing Team will either attend the meeting to provide a verbal update or our Police Community Support Officer will provide a written report for circulation.

4.2 Update on Community Speedwatch

The group continues to carry out sessions at two sites each week.

Since the activity started, the group has recorded 24 motorists who were found to be traveling over the prescribed speed threshold. Details below:

Site	Speeders
Beaconsfield Road	2
Beeches Road	1
Collinswood Road	12
Farnham Lane	7
One Pin Lane	2

Of motorists recorded, the maximum speed on a 40mph road is 51mph with the average speed being 49mph. Of motorists recorded, the maximum speed on a 30mph road is 43mph with the average speed being 37mph.

Sessions have recently been held in Beeches Road and the group have received lots of positive feedback.

The group now has at least one site on Beaconsfield Road, Beeches Road, Blackpond Lane, Christmas Lane, Collinswood Road, Collum Green Road, Farnham Lane, Green Lane, Mayflower Way, One Pin Lane, Parish Lane, Parsonage Lane, Stewarts Drive and Templewood Lane and is looking for further volunteers to enable it to carry out more sessions each week.

4.3 Update on 'Meet Your Local Councillors'

The third session was held on Saturday 13 January 2024 in Farnham Common Community Library. Paul Rowley, Katherine Damsell and David Moore attended the session on behalf of the Parish Council but unfortunately Buckinghamshire Councillor Dev Dhillon was unable to attend due to personal reasons.

One resident attended the session and there was an interesting discussion with David Picton, the new Chairman of the Library, about ways the Parish Council and the Library could work together for the benefit of residents.

The next session is on 9 March 2024. Paul Rowley has agreed to attend this session on behalf of the Parish Council and another representative is being sought. It has also been suggested that going forward it might be nice to provide coffee and cake to those who attend and that there should be an agreed method for feeding back to those who raise issues and to the wider public to encourage more to attend.

4.4 Update on Farnham Common Playground

The playground is now finished and open to the public. The Parish Council would like to thank all those who have helped to turn this project into reality.

Plans now need to be made for the official opening.

4.5 Update on Cooper's Market Farnham Common

The last market was held in November 2023 and unfortunately it was another very quiet market so Cooper's Market made the decision that holding a market in Farnham Common wouldn't work for them and their business as they just simply couldn't persuade traders to join them after the two markets held were so poorly attended. They would like to thank those who did turn out to support the market.

4.6 Update on the repairs to a boundary fence at Farnham Common Sports Club

At the November 2023 parish council meeting it was agreed that the Parish Council could contribute to the repairs despite the terms of the lease stating such repairs are the responsibility of the Sports Club. Following the meeting, the Sports Club decided to settle the cost in full themselves and it is noted that the repairs have been carried out.

4.7 Update on the purchase of the new Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign

At the November 2023 Parish Council meeting, it was agreed that one battery operated sign, the associated accessories and onsite training would be purchased and the Clerk was asked to discuss match funding the purchase with the Beeches Community Board. Following these discussions, parish councillors decided to proceed with the purchase without match funding and then apply for match funding for a second sign.

The sign has been ordered and the Clerk is waiting for an estimated delivery date from Swarco.

4.8 Update on the site of the demolished Guide Hut

At the November 2023 Parish Council meeting, the proposal to create a grassed area with some natural habitat and a small picnic area next to the refurbished playground was agreed.

The Clerk was asked to write to the properties in Drew Meadow that back onto the site to explain the plan. This was done before the festive break. No response was received.

In accordance with their recommendation, Amersham Town Council have been instructed to mow the site, weedkill the re-growth, rotovate and re-seed with rye grass. They have also been appointed to install three paving slab bases for picnic benches and one noticeboard.

Three Pembridge picnic tables and a noticeboard have been ordered. Before doing so Tony Birkett, as requested, contacted local businesses giving them the opportunity to sponsor one of the benches. No sponsorship was available.

4.9 Update on discussions with Buckinghamshire Council about vehicle access across The Broadway Car Park to a new development

It has previously been discussed that the developer building two houses at the Rear of Honey Cottage and The Brooms, Green Lane, Farnham Common is seeking permission from Buckinghamshire Council for vehicle access to the site from The Broadway car park. The Parish Council has previously objected to this and continues to do so. The Chair, Clerk and Cllr. Dhillon recently met with John Reed, Director of Property and Assets at Buckinghamshire Council to discuss the situation. A further discussion took place between Cllr. Dhillon and the Planning Working Group. The Chair and Planning Working Group will provide an update at the meeting.

5 Finance:

5.1 Finance Committee Recommendations

5.1.1 To consider the December 2023 Management Accounts

A copy of the December 2023 Management Accounts and notes have been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.1.2 To consider the 2024/25 Budget

A copy of the 2024/25 Budget has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.1.3 To consider the 2024/25 Precept

A copy of the precept calculation has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.1.4 To consider revised Reserves Policy

A copy of the revised Reserves Policy has been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.1.5 To consider maximising interest on reserves

Typically, the Parish Council holds £50,000 in an instant access deposit account with its bankers, the Co-operative Bank. The interest rate paid on funds in this account is 1.63% AER variable. The Clerk was asked to investigate other deposit account options and can confirm that there are two other deposit accounts available:

35 days notice – 2.13% AER variable

95 days notice – 2.51% AER variable

Katherine Damsell, as Chair of the Finance Committee, will provide details of her proposal at the meeting.

5.1.6 To consider using ringfenced reserves to fund or part fund three projects

Currently the Parish Council is holding the following ringfenced reserves:

The Community Orchard - £1,828

Kingsway Green - £714

Farnham Park Action Group - £3,114

Emergency Traveller Fund - £4,000

Election Expenses - £2,000

It is suggested that the reserves held for the Community Orchard are released in full or in part to fund the project at item 7.2 below.

It is suggested that the reserves held for Kingsway Green are released in full or in part to fund the project at item 7.3 below.

It is suggested that the reserves held for the Farnham Park Action Group are released in full or in part to fund the project at Boundary Copse. Since receiving the planning application at item 8.1 it has been suggested that some of the funds could be released to engage a planning consultant to assist in formulating the Parish Council's comments.

The ringfenced reserves held for the Emergency Traveller Fund and Election Expenses will be retained.

5.2 Spending Decisions

5.2.1 To consider purchasing a replacement head for streetlight 172 in Blackpond Lane

There was recently a fire in the SSE transformer on a post near streetlight 172. The damage caused means a new head is required for this streetlight. The cost is £680 plus VAT.

Since issuing the agenda the heads on two streetlights in Farnham Park Lane have been reported as broken and needs replacing. Any decision regarding these two heads will need to be ratified at the next parish council meeting.

5.2.2 To consider the quote(s) received for the arboriculture work required under the 2023 Report

The annual arboriculture survey was carried out in December 2023 and the report identified a number of trees requiring work. The specification was sent to three contractors. The survey and quotes received have been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.2.3 To consider the quote(s) received for the arboriculture work identified in Boundary Copse

When Bob Milne and the Clerk met with the arboriculturist to agree the scope for the clearance work a number of trees were identified for felling to improve the overall condition of the Copse. The specification was sent to three contractors and the quotes received have been circulated to parish councillors separately.

5.2.4 To ratify the increased cost of the repairs to the retaining wall at Boundary Copse

At the parish council meeting held in November 2023, it was agreed that the wall repairs and repointing should be carried out and in the absence of an updated quote a budget of £8,000 was agreed. Shortly after the meeting the updated quote was received in the sum of £8,450. The Clerk advised all parish councillors that the updated quote was more than the agreed budget. The increased amount was informally agreed by email and this decision must be ratified.

5.2.5 To consider a grant request received from Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley

A grant request has been received from Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley requesting a contribution towards to cost of providing health, wellbeing and drug prevention education at St Mary's CE Primary School in Farnham Royal. A copy of the request has been forwarded to parish councillors separately.

5.3 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the January 2024 cashbook

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

6 Contracts:

6.1 To ratify the appointment of Amersham Town Council to maintain the physical assets

At the parish council meeting held in November 2023, it was agreed that the Chair and Katherine Damsell would review the references provided for RJC Landscapes Ltd and meet the contractor before deciding on which contractor to appoint with the informal decision being ratified at the January 2024 parish council

meeting.

The Chair, Katherine Damsell and the Clerk met with RJC Landscapes Ltd and offered them the contract and they accepted. The contract document was issued but not returned. On 3 January 2024, the Clerk received an email from RJC Landscapes Ltd advising that having considered the terms of the contract over the festive break, they did not feel able to accept the appointment. The director also rang the Chair to explain.

As a result, the Chair and Katherine Damsell asked the Clerk to see if Amersham Town Council would accept the appointment. They confirmed they would and started carrying out the required inspections and maintenance on 15 January 2024. This appointment was ratified.

7 Projects:

7.1 To consider proposal for marking the 80th Anniversary of D Day

It has been suggested that the Parish Council puts together an exhibition to take place on or around 6 June 2024 which could be attended by residents and the pupils of local schools. Tony Birkett will provide further details of his proposal at the meeting.

In addition, it has been suggested that the Parish Council holds a 1940s themed tea dance on Saturday 8 June 2024. Katherine Damsell will provide further details of her proposal at the meeting.

7.2 To consider proposal for rejuvenating the Community Orchard

The Clerk has met with Mark Frater and Dr Helen Read to discuss the rejuvenation of the Community Orchard. It is proposed that seven dead and/or vandalised trees are replaced with the replacements being protected by wooden frames. It is also proposed that the plaques and their wooden plinths for all trees are replaced as they are now very rotten. The plinths will be replaced by long metal stakes. Some minor repairs will also be made to the lectern which houses the information board. Finally, it is proposed that new plants will be put in the fruiting hedge to fill the gaps. It is estimated that these proposals will cost approximately £800.

In addition, as part of this discussion, the Clerk reviewed the Management Plan for Temple Dell which includes provisions for the Community Orchard and noted that the Orchard was intended to be a setting for celebratory events connected to the management of trees such as:

January – Wassailing

May to June – Blossom days

June – Cherry Harvest

August – Plum Harvest

September to Early November – Apple and Pear Harvest

The September harvests are celebrated at Orchard Day but there is a suggestion that there could be an afterschool event for local children in May or June to celebrate the new blossom, possibly with maypole dancing.

7.3 To consider proposal for laying paving under the benches on Kingsway Green

It is proposed that in order to tidy up the benches on the Green, paving is laid underneath them. The Clerk has asked the current contractor for a quote.

In addition, following comments received from residents about the Green this time last year, it is suggested that the Parish Council reviews the option of installing a water supply on the Green to increase the planting options for the flowerbeds. The Clerk has made initial enquires of Thames Water and has been advised that an application would need to be submitted with a payment of £132. Thames Water would then carry out a site survey and provide their advice and detailed costing.

7.4 To consider a change to the date of the Annual Parish Meeting

In recent years, the Annual Parish Meeting has been held straight after the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, which makes for a long evening. Prior to 2019, the meetings were held in March and May respectively. Legislation requires the Annual Parish Meeting to be held after 6pm between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive).

It has been suggested by some parish councillors that it would be more effective to return to holding the meetings on different evenings.

7.5 To consider the contents of the ecology report for Boundary Copse

The ecology survey was due to be carried out week commencing 22 January 2024 so it is hoped that the report will be available for consideration at the meeting.

8 Planning:

8.1 To consider PL/23/4125/PIP - Land To The North Of Allerds Farm, Crown Lane, Farnham Royal

The Parish Council has received notice of a planning application for permission in principle for a residential development of 5 open market dwellings and 4 affordable dwellings on land to the north of Allerds Farm, Crown Lane, Farnham Royal, which is within the green belt. Comments must be submitted to the Planning Officer at Buckinghamshire Council on or before 5 February 2024. There will be a discussion at the meeting about publicising the application and formulating the Parish Council's comments.

8.2 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

8.3 To note recent planning decisions

The schedule of planning authority decisions has been sent to councillors separately.