

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 29 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL, VICTORIA ROAD, FARNHAM COMMON, SL2 3NL

Present

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

Six members of the public were 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 and advised that prior to the meeting all councillors had been provided with a report giving information on agenda items. The report can be downloaded from the Parish Council website or a hard copy is available upon request.

The Chair started the meeting with a tribute to Marilyn Rolfe who had sadly passed away a few days before. There was then a minute silence.

24/1/PC Apologies for absence

Jenny Quilter

24/2/PC Declarations of Interest

None

24/3/PC To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023

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

24/4/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

4.1 Update from the Neighbourhood Policing Team

Unfortunately, the Neighbourhood Policing Team did not attend the meeting and no report was provided.

4.2 Update on Community Speedwatch

The content of the report was noted and the Chair expressed his opinion that seeing low numbers of speeders recorded was a positive. Tony Birkett advised that if the same vehicle is caught twice, it may be recorded on the insurance database.

4.3 Update on 'Meet Your Local Councillors'

The content of the report was noted.

4.4 Update on Farnham Common Playground

The content of the report was noted.

4.5 Update on Cooper's Market Farnham Common

The content of the report was noted.

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

The content of the report was noted.

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

The content of the report was noted.

4.8 Update on the site of the demolished Guide Hut

The content of the report was noted.

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

The content of the report was noted and the Chair advised that further discussions would shortly be taking place with Cllr. Dhillon and Buckinghamshire Council.

24/5/PC Finance:

5.1 Finance Committee Recommendations

5.1.1 To consider the December 2023 Management Accounts

Katherine Damsell, as 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**.

5.1.2 To consider the 2024/25 Budget

Katherine Damsell advised that the Finance Committee had met twice to produce a budget that would continue to provide all the current services, allow some projects and reflect the wider economic environment. She confirmed that the Finance Committee recommended acceptance of the budget. The budget was **agreed**.

5.1.3 To consider the 2024/25 Precept

Katherine Damsell advised that the Finance Committee was recommending a 4.99% increase in line with that announced by Buckinghamshire Council. In real terms this is an annual increase of £3.30 (27.5p per month) for a Band D Council Tax Property. The precept for 2024/25 was **agreed** at £224,800.

5.1.4 To consider revised Reserves Policy

Katherine Damsell presented the draft policy and some councillors expressed concern about setting a maximum reserve of only six months net revenue expenditure. The Clerk was asked to discuss this with the internal auditor and report back at the next parish council meeting. The policy was **not agreed**.

5.1.5 To consider maximising interest on reserves

The content of the report was noted and Katherine Damsell proposed placing £35,000 into a 95 day notice account with the Co-operative Bank plc. This was **agreed**.

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

The content of the report was noted and the following was **agreed**:

- The costs of rejuvenating the Community Orchard would be met from the Community Orchard ringfenced reserves of £1,828.
- The costs of laying paving underneath the benches on Kingsway Green would be met (in full or in part) from the Kingsway Green ringfenced reserves of £714.
- The Farnham Park Action Group ringfenced reserves of £3,114 would be renamed Green Belt Protection ringfenced reserves and should be used to engage a planning consultant to assist in formulating the Parish Council's comments on PL/23/4125/PIP - Land To The North Of Allerds Farm, Crown Lane, Farnham Royal. See 8.1 below.
- The Emergency Traveller Fund of £4,000 will be retained.
- The Election Expenses of £2,000 will be retained.

5.2 Spending Decisions

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

- It was **agreed** that a replacement head for streetlight 172 in Blackpond Lane would be purchased at a cost of £680 plus VAT. Those present asked the Clerk to investigate whether it would be possible to reclaim the cost from SSE as the damage was caused by a fire in one of their transformers.
- It was also **agreed** that new heads would be purchased for two streetlights in Farnham Park Lane. This informal decision will 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 appointment of South Bucks Tree Surgeons Limited at a cost of £11,320 was **agreed**.

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

The appointment of South Bucks Tree Surgeons Limited at a cost of £2,750 was **agreed**.

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

The email decision to increase the agreed budget of £8,000 to £8,450 following receipt of the updated quote was **ratified**.

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

The content of the report was noted and Katherine Damsell advised that St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Primary School had confirmed that they did not have any enrichment days booked with this provider. The request was therefore **refused**.

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

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

24/6/PC Contracts:

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

The email decision to appoint Amersham Town Council when the newly appointed contractor withdrew

was **ratified**.

24/7/PC Projects:

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

- Tony Birkett advised that he had approached Farnham Common Community Library to discuss holding an exhibition, presentation and Q&A session. He had also approached Caldicott and Farnham Common Junior School about visiting and talking to the pupils. The Clerk suggested approaching St Mary's Farnham Royal and Dair House. He advised that he has all the material so in terms of costs it would just be for printing, if required. David Moore suggested that as a Reservist and member of the British Legion he would like to get involved and may know some other people too.
- Katherine Damsell advised that she had been putting together plans for a 1940s style afternoon tea dance in Farnham Common Village Hall on 1 June 2024. She was looking for a band and was going to discuss catering with Sara Daughtrey of The Beeches Eco Café.
- The Clerk advised that at the recent Finance Committee meeting it had been suggested that Union flags should be flown, the same as for the recent coronation. It was estimated that this would cost between £2,300 and £2,500.
- The Clerk was asked to find out what other local parishes were doing to commemorate the anniversary.

7.2 To consider proposal for rejuvenating the Community Orchard

The content to the report was noted and the following was **agreed** with an approximate cost of £800:

- Seven dead and/or vandalised trees would be replaced with the replacements being protected by wooden frames.
- All the tree plaques and their wooden plinths would be replaced with plaques on long metal stakes.
- Some minor repairs would be made to the lectern which houses the information board.
- New plants would be put in the fruiting hedge to fill the gaps.

The Clerk advised that Mark Frater and Dr Helen Read had kindly volunteered to complete the project.

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

The content of the report was noted and it was **agreed** that in order to tidy up the benches on Kingsway Green, paving would be laid underneath them. Following a discussion, it was also **agreed** that an application would be submitted to Thames Water at a cost of £132 to obtain a quote for installing a water supply on the Green. Bob Milne voted against this proposal as he felt it was inappropriate.

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

The content of the report was noted but Bob Milne asked the Clerk to check that the Annual Parish Meeting was a legal requirement. It was **agreed** that the meetings would revert to being held on two separate evenings and the Clerk was asked to circulate some dates to parish councillors for review.

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

The Clerk advised that unfortunately, the ecology report had not been received so it would not be possible to consider its contents at this meeting. It was hoped that it would be available for the next parish council meeting.

24/8/PC Planning:

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

The content of the report was noted and following a discussion, it was **agreed** that the application should be publicised with posters, banners, and posts on Facebook and the parish council's website encouraging residents to submit comments. It was also **agreed** that O'Neill Homer should be appointed to provide expert advice regarding the application with their costs being met from the newly created Green Belt Protection ringfenced reserves. Finally, it was **agreed** that the Clerk should ask to call in the application for consideration by Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Committee rather than a Planning Officer under delegated powers.

8.2 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

8.3 To note recent planning decisions

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

Tony Birkett drew parish councillors' attention to the decision regarding the following application:

- PL/23/0706/FA Silver Beeches, Collinswood Road, Farnham Common for change of use from residential triple garage with first floor ancillary accommodation to 2 treatment room dental surgery with rear dormer, front and side porch canopies, changes to doors and windows, installation of solar panels, and amended access from Collinswood Rd (part retrospective) and for the existing north eastern access point to be reinstated to serve Silver Beeches.

24/9/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

- 9.1 Katherine Damsell advised that there are lots of posts about dog fouling on the Farnhams Community Facebook page and asked whether there is anything that the parish council could do to address this. Those present were reminded that the bins, bags and notices at Farnham Common Sports Club are provided by the Parish Council. In addition, it was noted that out of control dogs are also often mentioned on the page.
- 9.2 David Moore reflected on the sad news of Marilyn Rolfe's passing and expressed that the Parish Council needs to push for new councillors and retain the ones already in office. He continued that this is a national issue and suggested putting a poster on the Farnhams Community Facebook page, advertising in the Farnhams' Magazine and possibly a leaflet drop through letterboxes.
- 9.3 Tony Birkett suggested asking Clive Robinson to lead on formulating the Parish Council's response to PL/23/4125/PIP - Land To The North Of Allerds Farm, Crown Lane, Farnham Royal as he feels strongly about protecting the green belt and has the skills and knowledge to assist. Those present supported this suggestion.
- 9.4 Tony Birkett advised that he wanted to explore installing CCTV in The Broadway and the playgrounds. He planned to speak with Smartech Security to formulate a proposal and understand the costs involved. He continued that Cllr. Dhillon had advised that once the system had been installed, he would be able to use the Buckinghamshire Council monitoring centre for ongoing monitoring. The Clerk reminded those present that there are protocols to consider when installing CCTV. David Moore expressed his support for this proposal and offered to put the Parish Council in contact with Thames Valley Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley.
- 9.5 Tony Birkett advised that he would like to look again with Buckinghamshire Council at whether there is an opportunity for some free parking in The Broadway car park.

24/10/PC Next parish council meetings:

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Full Council (Focus on Projects) on 26 February 2024 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

Full Council (Focus on Contracts) on 25 March 2024 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

Full Council on 29 April 2024 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

OPEN FORUM

Two residents from Farnham Common wanted to again raise the condition of the footway between Elm Close and Forge Drive following a fall in summer 2023. They advised that the issue had been reported twice on fixmystreet.com with nothing meaningful in receipt. They believe that the footway is particularly dangerous and reminded those present that young children walk along there to school. They do not believe a lot of work is required and asked the Parish Council to help get the repairs done by Buckinghamshire Highways. The Clerk advised that the Local Area Technician at Buckinghamshire Highways had advised that the repairs had been added to the schedule of works but no timescale had been provided. David Moore offered to contact Buckinghamshire Highways to progress this.

Carol Linton introduced herself as the Liberal Democrat candidate in the upcoming election for Buckinghamshire Councillor for Burnham and Farnham Common.

A resident from Farnham Common asked to see a copy of the ecology report for Boundary Copse. The Clerk advised that unfortunately this had not been received so would not be considered at this meeting.