

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 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
Jenny Quilter
Clive Robinson
Judith Hall (Clerk)

Three 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 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 from the Clerk upon request.

24/103/PC Apologies for absence

David Moore

24/104/PC Declarations of Interest

None

24/105/PC To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2024

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

24/106/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

106.1 Update on road safety initiatives (Community Speedwatch & MVAS)

The content of the report was noted and Tony Birkett shared his belief that the benefit of the MVAS is starting to be seen with the data now being produced. He also reiterated that the Police are considering whether it is appropriate to deploy a speed camera van in Collinswood Road. Katherine Damsell suggested that it would be interesting to see over time whether there is a reduction in speed because of the initiatives implemented. Those present agreed and felt the data now being obtained would evidence whether there is or isn't a speeding problem in the parish and if so, where. Clive Robinson advised those present that six to eight years ago a speed survey was carried out on Collinswood Road and he suggested it would be interesting to compare that data with up to date results, again those present agreed. A resident from Farnham Royal queried the suitability of the MVAS site in Blackpond Lane as it is positioned on a bend, so vehicles are naturally braking. Tony Birkett acknowledged his point but advised that all locations had to be approved by Buckinghamshire Council, so the parish council does not have flexibility. He hoped that the sign would still encourage some reduction in speed when drivers see it ahead of them.

106.2 Update of antisocial behaviour in footpaths FAR/6 and FAR/7 in Farnham Royal

The content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that further discussion had taken place in the Open Forum (recorded below).

106.3 Review of discussions at Orchard Day

Katherine Damsell expressed her feeling that the event had gone really well and the positioning of the

parish council's stand was really good. She also felt that having something to draw people in such as Community Speedwatch and the Kingsway Green vote was very good as it started a conversation. She felt the most common topics discussed were Kingsway Green and the implementation of free car parking in The Broadway car park. The Chairman added that he had been asked about progress with the Neighbourhood Plan. It was also noted that feedback had been received regarding the venue, Temple Dell, some stallholders requested improvements to vehicle access and Signature care home raised that they have difficulty with access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Jenny Quilter noted that music would have been useful to create more atmosphere and the Chairman advised that there had been an issue with the electricity supply, which the Clerk has raised with the contractor. Jenny Quilter also asked whether the parish councillor rota for helping on the stand was of benefit. Those present felt it was and agreed to use a rota for future events.

106.4 Update on actions following annual playground inspections

The content of the report was noted and Jenny Quilter advised that during September 2024 she and the Clerk had reviewed the inspection reports and looked at all actions and recommendations. She confirmed that they had met with Amersham Town Council to discuss the actions and recommendations and agree the work that would be done. She advised that they had also now met with Proludic regarding the playground at Farnham Common and after a discussion, Proludic had agreed to rectify all of the issues raised with them and they had logged the spongy areas of the wet pour surfacing for further review nearer the end of the 5 year guarantee period. Bob Milne asked what Proludic thought about the findings for the double gate at the playground in Farnham Common. Jenny Quilter advised that Proludic checked the speed of closure for the permanent access part of the double gate and did not feel it was a problem. She also advised that they agreed that a padlock should be put on one side of the double gate to secure it as that side is intended to aid maintenance rather than provide permanent pedestrian access. Finally, Jenny Quilter advised that Proludic were unable to suggest any solutions for the tops of the reused fence posts. She was therefore continuing to research this with the Clerk.

106.5 Update on South Bucks Association of Local Councils' quarterly meeting

The Chairman advised that he had attended the latest meeting of the South Bucks Association of Local Councils to discuss sending a letter to Buckinghamshire Council detailing the most raised issues. The meeting agreed to include issues relating to planning applications and enforcement, hedge maintenance, drainage, environmental protection and greenbelt protection. The Chairman also raised with the Association that a town or parish council should not be required to work with neighbouring county councils such as Slough Borough Council and that the Community Boards are now nothing like what was originally intended when they were set up and have moved away from localism. Finally, the Chairman advised that members had been asked to talk with Stoke Poges Parish Council and other local town or parish councils to engage them with SBALC. He advised that a copy of the minutes would be circulated to all parish councillors once they had been received and that Jenny Quilter, as Vice Chair, would attend future meetings with him.

106.6 Update on Buckinghamshire Highways' Stakeholder Conference

Tony Birkett advised that he had attended the Conference earlier that day. He advised that it was clear that Buckinghamshire Highways was constantly restructuring making it very hard for town and parish councils to communicate effectively with them. He confirmed that Buckinghamshire Highways is now housed under a service directorate. He advised that during his discussion with a senior officer of Buckinghamshire Highways, it had been confirmed that Beaconsfield Road (A355) was scheduled to be resurfaced in 2025 from the speed camera near Green Man Hill down to the Farnham Pump. Whilst confirming that this would be very welcome, Tony Birkett requested early notice of the roadworks due to the disruption they would cause.

Tony Birkett also advised that it had been stated at the Conference that the ongoing Cadent gas works have caused a number of complaints as the work to reinstate the road and footway surfacing is poor. Buckinghamshire Highways confirmed that they had reviewed the work on The Broadway but made no comment on the specifics apart from stating that Cadent had been fined multiple times already for poor work but the maximum fine available is £80. It was also mentioned that a lot of complaints had been received about work carried out by Thames Water.

The senior officer assured Tony Birkett that Buckinghamshire Highways is fully aware of the challenges at this end of the county particularly with recent government announcements concerning planned changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the need to improve infrastructure of any future developments forced on the parish.

106.7 Confirmation of arrangements for Christmas lights and Christmas tree

The content of the report was noted.

106.8 Neighbourhood Policing Team Reports

The Chairman acknowledged receipt of the reports, which had been provided to the Clerk by email. Those present were asked to raise any issues with the Clerk, who would then forward them to the NHPT.

24/107/PC Projects:

107.1 Woodlands and Open Spaces

107.1.1 To consider the results of the consultation on planting for Kingsway Green

The Clerk announced there had been a total of 272 votes and the results were as follows:

<u>Options</u>	<u>Votes</u>	
Seasonal planting with new water supply	32	12%
Drought tolerant planting with no additional watering	150	55%
Plant Spring bulbs and grass over flowerbeds	90	33%

As a result of the vote, it was **agreed** that the parish council would move forward with drought tolerant planting with no additional water supply. Katherine Damsell advised that she and the Clerk would now work with the contractor to formulate a detailed plan. A resident from Farnham Royal also noted that the Green is currently a mess due to ongoing utility work.

107.1.2 To consider planting for Rectory Close flowerbeds

It was **agreed** that this matter would be kept under review until the plan had been finalised for Kingsway Green. Bob Milne suggested that planting Spring bulbs and grassing over the flowerbeds may be the most appropriate for this area.

107.2 Community

107.2.1 To consider Buckinghamshire Council's Memorandum of Understanding for free parking sessions in The Broadway car park

The content of the report was noted and the Clerk confirmed that the memorandum of understanding had still not been received. Tony Birkett advised that he had spoken to the Head of Parking Services at Buckinghamshire Council whilst he was at the Buckinghamshire Highways Conference and she had committed to issuing the memorandum of understanding within 10 days. He stated that he had also been given some useful documents and that Buckinghamshire Council has been caught in a quandary about methods of payment to accommodate App payments, card payments and cash payments.

107.2.2 To consider future steps for CCTV on The Broadway & in the playgrounds

The content of the report was noted and parish councillors asked to see the application submitted by David Moore so they could understand exactly what the grant was awarded for. Katherine Damsell reminded those present that the installation of CCTV was not an agreed project that had been voted on and committed to and it was still necessary to ascertain how the shortfall would be funded. Katherine Damsell reiterated her request for David Moore to talk to the shops along The Broadway to seek contributions towards the cost as they would benefit significantly from any system installed. Bob Milne asked whether figures would be required for the Finance Committee meeting on 11 November 2024. Katherine Damsell confirmed they would if the project was to be considered for inclusion in the 2025/26 budget.

24/108/PC Contracts:

108.1 To consider Microsoft 365 licence renewals

The content of the report was noted and the licence renewals were **agreed** at the following cost:

	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Unit Price (£)</u>
Microsoft 365 Business Premium	1	21.72
Exchange Online	8	3.96

24/109/PC Community Engagement/Events:

109.1 To consider a budget for the Design a Christmas Bauble or Christmas Jumper Competition

The content of the report was noted and Jenny Quilter confirmed that it was agreed at the September 2024 parish council meeting that the parish council would not hold a Christmas event this year but would

organise a 'Design a Christmas Bauble or Christmas Jumper' competition. She read through the budget she had prepared and Katherine Damsell advised that £5,000 had been included in the approved 2024/25 budget for a Christmas event. Following a discussion a budget of £1,000 was **agreed** but it was noted that it was not expected that it would all be spent. The Clerk advised that she had asked Richard Thomas whether it would be possible to have a small stand to publicise the competition at Farnham Common Sports Club's Christmas Fayre on Saturday 30 November 2024 and he felt that would be possible. The Clerk asked for volunteers to man the stand and offered to email parish councillors with details. Jenny Quilter also reminded those present that as is usual, Christmas cards would be sent to the residents at Farnham Common House and Chandos Lodge.

24/110/PC Public Engagements/Invitations:

110.1 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Grant Award ceremony

The content of the report was noted and Tony Birkett volunteered to attend the ceremony in place of Paul Rowley. This was **agreed**.

110.2 Formal opening of the Stag and Hounds Public House

The content of the report was noted but Tony Birkett advised that if other parish councillors were happy to attend the opening, he would step back given he was now going to the ceremony above. Bob Milne advised that he would attend as well. This was **agreed**.

110.3 Proud of Bucks Awards ceremony

The content of the report was noted and the Chairman confirmed that he would attend the ceremony but asked if anyone else would like to join him. Those present were unable to attend due to existing commitments so the Chairman advised he would ask David Moore if he would like to join him. This was **agreed**.

24/111/PC Policy Review

111.1 Communication and Involvement Strategy and Policy

The content of the Communication and Involvement Strategy and Policy was **agreed**.

111.2 Social Media Policy

Katherine Damsell proposed adding some wording to ensure that if individual parish councillors wish to make a post on social media that purports to express the views of the Parish Council it must be approved by the moderators of the Parish Council's social media pages before being published. This was **agreed** and Katherine Damsell will work with the Clerk on the amendment bringing a revised policy to the November 2024 parish council meeting.

24/112/PC Finance:

112.1 Spending Decisions

112.1.1 To consider quotes for work to a tree in Ingram's Copse

The content of the report was noted and given the need to complete the work within the recommended timescale and that all bar one of the tree management companies approached have declined to quote, a budget of up to £1,700 being the quote received was **agreed** but the Clerk was asked to chase the other companies one final time.

112.1.2 To consider quotes for cable runway inspection at Farnham Park Playing Fields

The content of the report was noted and the appointment of Wicksteed Leisure Limited, the supplier, was **agreed** at a cost of £600 to dismantle, inspect and replace any necessary parts and up to £2,127.08 for potential parts.

112.1.3 To consider quotes for a body camera for the Community Speedwatch team

The content of the report was noted and Katherine Damsell expressed her slight concern that wearing a camera may escalate violence. Tony Birkett accepted her comment but advised that this had been recommended by the Police and the volunteers would like one. Bob Milne felt that one should be purchased but queried what would be done with the footage. Tony Birkett advised that any incidents would be reported to the Police and the footage would be provided to them. Clive Robinson confirmed that an offence would have taken place. The Clerk advised that the Police would not recommend any particular camera so those present asked her to obtain some quotes that could be reviewed by email for ratification at the next parish council meeting.

112.2 To note the External Auditor's Report

The content of the External Auditor's Report was **noted**.

112.3 To note the publication of Notice of Conclusion of Audit

The publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was **noted**.

112.4 To consider September 2024 Management Accounts

Katherine Damsell asked those present whether they had reviewed the document circulated and highlighted that the anticipated annual expenditure would be approximately £40,000 more than budgeted but given a higher opening balance was brought forward from 2023/24 it was still forecasted that the final position would be within the reserve policy. She noted that a good amount of bank interest had been received and that the total cost of electricity under the supply contract with Drax Energy was still awaiting clarification once Buckinghamshire Council had worked through all the credit notes raised by the supplier. She confirmed that the cost of the free car parking trial had been reduced to reflect payment for just six months due to the delay in receiving the memorandum of understanding from Buckinghamshire Council. She reminded those present that some of the CIL receipts were being allocated against this expense and that no provision was included for CCTV but the cost of a Christmas event had been removed and the Christmas competition had been included together with the agreed change to the Clerk's salary and legal fees paid. She concluded that after taking everything into account, the forecast showed that the minimum reserves would be met and there would be an excess reserve of £20,000. Bob Milne expressed that 'excess reserve' was a strange phrase but that £20,000 on top of minimum reserves was a good position to be in. He asked whether a larger brought forward is because the parish council didn't spend things last year and Katherine Damsell confirmed that it was as certain expenses were not incurred/paid before the end of 2023/24. Following this discussion, the management accounts were **agreed**.

112.5 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the October 2024 cashbook

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

24/113/PC Planning:

113.1 The Clerk advised that the applicant for one of the current homeowner planning applications had asked to discuss the application with the Planning Working Group as objections had been submitted to a previous application put forward for the property. The application had already been allocated to Paul Rowley but a comment had not yet been submitted. Paul Rowley said that he was happy to have a discussion with the applicant but asked to be joined by another member of the Planning Working Group. Tony Birkett, Chair of the Planning Working Group, declared a conflict of interest due to the proximity of the site to his home so it was **agreed** that Jenny Quilter would join Paul Rowley for the discussion.

113.2 Bob Milne asked the Planning Working Group to look at the issue raised by a resident from Farnham Royal concerning a small woodland in Blackpond Lane (more details in the Open Forum recorded below). Tony Birkett agreed that the Group would have a look at it.

113.3 The Clerk advised that the appeal against an enforcement notice in respect of the erection of two antenna masts and supporting cabins without planning permission at the South side of Parish Lane, Farnham Common (also known as Pondswood) has been dismissed and the enforcement notice was upheld with only a change in the time period to comply with the notice from six months to 18 months.

113.2 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

113.3 To note recent planning decisions

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

24/114/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

114.1 Katherine Damsell advised that she will now be starting the 2025/26 budget preparation with the Clerk using the known costs and contract terms, reasoned assumptions and agreed projects. The Chairman asked the Clerk to send him an Outlook invitation to ensure the meeting is in his diary.

114.2 Paul Rowley wanted to let all those present know about a new government consultation on the reinstatement of remote meetings for town and parish councils and asked the Clerk to send details to all parish councillors.

114.3 Bob Milne thanked the Clerk for preparing the open spaces article for the next edition of the Farnhams Magazine.

114.4 Tony Birkett acknowledged that Cllr. Dev Dhillon often attends parish council meetings but proposed

that the parish council should seek more engagement from other ward councillors, excluding David Moore who is also a parish councillor and that they should be encouraged to attend parish council meetings.

114.5 The Clerk asked parish councillors whether anyone would like to attend the Youth Roundtable that the Beeches and Wexham and The Ivers Community Boards have organised to help them understand the best ways to support local young people, aged 10 to 18 as they look to collaborate on projects to improve the lives of young people. The Clerk agreed to circulate the details to all parish councillors.

24/115/PC Next parish council meeting:

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Finance Committee on 11 November 2024 at 7.30pm at Farnham Common Village Hall

Full Council on 25 November 2024 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall

OPEN FORUM

A resident of Farnham Royal asked for an update regarding the installation of the K Barriers on footpaths FAR/6 and FAR/7. He thanked the Parish Council for their help in securing a grant of £2,000 and reiterated the resident group's £1,000 funding. The Chairman advised that the parish council has asked Buckinghamshire Council to confirm responsibility for the K Barriers going forward from a maintenance, ownership and liability point of view. He advised that the parish council is still waiting for sufficient clarification on these aspects and that Cllr. Dev Dhillon is assisting with the discussion. The Chairman also advised that following a recent conversation, the Beeches Community Board has raised a concern that tackling the behaviour at this site may just see it move and continue at another location. They have therefore asked the Anti-Social Behaviour Team at Buckinghamshire Council to have a look at this with a view to suggesting whether a broader concerted action may help solve the issue completely. The Clerk was asked to follow this up with the Beeches Community Board. The resident offered to talk to Secure a Field, the supplier of the K Barrier, for any information or precedent for working with Buckinghamshire Council to progress this aspect.

A resident from Farnham Royal raised concerns about a possible future planning application for dwellings on a small woodland in Blackpond Lane and agreed to send further details to the parish council for review. The concerns are around the protection of green belt, mature trees and protected species such as albino badgers, which are believed to be living in the woodland.

A resident from Farnham Royal advised that there are no road signs warning of two pinch points in Blackpond Lane where the road width reduces to just one lane and with the addition of overgrown vegetation coming from the roadside, he believes it is only a matter of time until there is an accident at these locations. He wanted to know how to raise this with the appropriate body. Tony Birkett advised that he would discuss it with the Local Area Technician for Buckinghamshire Highways at the next meeting which was planned for 31 October 2024. The Chairman advised that the issue of overgrown vegetation had been raised at the recent meeting of the South Buckinghamshire Association of Local Council as a countywide issue that is common across all parishes. Tony Birkett advised that it was also raised at the recent Buckinghamshire Highways Conference. Bob Milne suggested reporting the issues to Buckinghamshire Highways using their portal [fixmystreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com). Tony Birkett confirmed that it was necessary to report all issues on [fixmystreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com) and that all issues raised are categorised and departments have service expectations.