

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7.30PM AT FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL, VICTORIA ROAD, FARNHAM COMMON, SL2 3NL

Present

Katherine Damsell (Chair)
Bob Milne
Jenny Quilter
Paul Rowley
Judith Hall (Clerk)

24/9/FC Apologies for absence

Tony Birkett

24/10/FC To approve minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2024

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a true and accurate record and they were then signed by the Chair.

24/11/FC Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda

None

24/12/FC To consider the draft 2025/26 budget as presented

The Chair advised that she and the Clerk had prepared the draft budget and notes circulated prior to the meeting and would welcome a discussion on the items included.

12.1 Discussion on Expenditure (inc. Projects) specifically Free Car Parking, CCTV and Community Events

The Chair read through the draft 2025/26 budget and notes circulated and the following additional points were made:

Item	Comments
Expenditure	
Open Spaces	
Contract (Woodlands & Grasslands inc. picnic area & playground)	<p>The Clerk was asked to add £200 to the cost of this contract for siding out the footpath between the car park at Farnham Common Sports Club and the playground as this had been carried out annually for the last couple of years.</p> <p>The Clerk was asked to add £500 to the cost of this contract for cutting the perimeter hedge at Temple Dell as this was required annually and had been omitted from the contract.</p>
Contract (Kingsway Green & Rectory Close Flowerbeds)	Those present expressed disappointment at the state of Kingsway Green because of the work being carried out by Cadent Gas Limited. They expressed that no work should be done to create flowerbeds until all work was finished.
Projects	
Free Car Parking (12 months if trial successful)	Some of those present expressed concern that the amount stated would increase if usage increased due to the method of calculation proposed by Buckinghamshire Council. Those present did not disagree but stated that the six

	month trial should show any issues.
CCTV	The Chair advised that there was still a lot of work to do to finalise the project proposal ready for consideration by the parish council. She added that it would be necessary to investigate funding opportunities and what policies would be required.
Woodland Management Plan Work (inc. Boundary Copse)	The Clerk was asked to add £2,500 to the project cost to provide for the potential additional cost of an ecological watching brief to monitor the woodlands during the work required.
Councillor Mileage (General)	The Clerk was asked to check the correct mileage rate was being used as some felt the rate had increased from 45 pence per mile.
Councillor Mileage (Contract Performance Management)	The Clerk was asked to check the correct mileage rate was being used as some felt the rate had increased from 45 pence per mile.

In addition, the Chair raised that there were still some significant estimated amounts in the estimated brought forward figure for 2024/25 as despite repeated requests Buckinghamshire Council had not invoiced for the cost of cleaning the public conveniences since December 2023 or confirmed the balance due in respect of electricity for the streetlights for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 September 2024. The Parish Council had also agreed some further inspections at the playground in Farnham Park Playing Fields which could impact the final position for 2024/25.

The Clerk mentioned that the long awaited pavement repairs at Spring Lane were now being planned by Buckinghamshire Highways and in line with previous discussions at a parish council meeting it may be desirable to install the dropped kerb at the same time.

The Clerk also mentioned that one of the lampposts in Lawkland does not appear to be owned by either Buckinghamshire Council or the parish council and the fact that it does not work and has not worked for many years causes a great deal of distress to local residents.

Following a discussion, the budgeted expenditure was **agreed in principle** with the additions detailed above by the Committee.

12.2 Discussion on precept setting

The Chair noted that the precept figure in the draft 2025/26 budget represented a 5% increase on the total figure claimed for 2024/25. The impact on a Band D property is not yet known as the tax base and calculator has not yet been released by Buckinghamshire Council. These should be available before the next Finance Committee meeting, when the final recommendation will be put together. It was felt by those present that household finances are still under pressure and therefore the precept should not be raised by more than needed.

The draft 2025/26 budget, as amended was then **agreed** by the committee for presentation to the wider parish council at the November 2024 parish council meeting.

12.3 Discussion on other income streams specifically Grants, Donations, Crowdfunding and Advertising

It was acknowledged by those present that identifying additional income streams would enable the parish council to take on more projects and implement more initiatives to improve the lives of residents and opportunities for local businesses, organisations and clubs. It was **agreed** that this would be discussed at a future meeting.

24/13/FC Any other business

Bob Milne queried the difference between the Balances carried forward as per the Accounting Statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 (-£20,107) and the Balance brought forward on the draft budget 2025/26 (£112,516). The Clerk advised that the figure provided on the Accounting Statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 was incorrect as it did not include the loan received from the Public Works Loan Board and that the External Auditor had confirmed that the figure should have been £84,858. The Clerk agreed to send a copy of the External Auditor's report to Bob Milne.

24/14/FC Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting:

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

The next meeting is on 13 January 2025 at 7.30pm at Farnham Royal Village Hall