

FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FARNHAM ROYAL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 28 APRIL 2025 AT 7.30 P.M. AT FARNHAM ROYAL VILLAGE HALL, FARNHAM LANE, FARNHAM ROYAL, SL2 3AX

Present

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

Buckinghamshire Councillor Dev Dhillon

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.

25/36/PC Apologies for absence

None

25/37/PC Declarations of Interest

None

25/38/PC To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2025

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

25/39/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda - for information only)

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

The content of the report was noted and the Chairman thanked all the volunteers for their efforts. Tony Birkett advised that the new Community Speedwatch signs seem to be having an impact as drivers are breaking as they enter the villages.

39.2 Update on Woodland Management Plan

The content of the report was noted and Bob Milne reiterated that the Plan had been approved and was a good starting point for managing and improving Jubilee Copse, Ingrams Copse and Boundary Copse. He noted that funds had been allocated in the 2025/26 budget and expressed that he hoped this project would be progressed. Katherine Damsell confirmed that £12,500 was included in the budget and she will look at taking this project forward.

Bob Milne advised that he usually carried out a site visit at St Mary's Churchyard in Spring and offered to do the same this year. Those present agreed and thanked him for volunteering. He stressed the importance of initiating the Contract Performance Management framework developed to ensure work is to standard and represents value for money particularly at the Churchyard, Temple Dell and Farnham Common Sports Club. David Moore raised the concerns of a resident in Bishops Orchard regarding trees just inside the boundary of Boundary Copse. Bob Milne advised that these concerns have been raised previously and the arboriculturist has attended several times to assess the trees in addition to the biannual survey and no action has been recommended. He continued that he, the contractor, the arboriculturist and the Clerk had all met with residents in previous years to discuss the trees.

39.3 Update on Kingsway Green Flowerbeds and Rectory Close Flowerbeds & Shrub bed

The content of the report was noted and the Chairman echoed Jenny Quilter's comments at the last meeting about the condition of the Green following the work carried out by Cadent. Katherine Damsell advised that the condition of the Green is being monitored and it is likely that some additional maintenance work will be required each year.

39.4 Update on the Royal British Legion memorial bench

The content of the report was noted.

39.5 Update on Local Plan for Buckinghamshire – 2025 Call for sites

The content of the report was noted.

39.6 Update on consultation for the upgrade of the existing telecommunications base station on Kingsway Green

The content of the report was noted and Tony Birkett advised that he is chasing the Planning Team at EE for their alternative plans.

39.7 Update on Annual Parish Meeting 2025

The content of the report was noted.

39.8 Update on Parish Council Elections

The content of the report was noted.

39.9 Update on Meet Your Local Councillor session on 10 May 2025

The content of the report was noted and the Chairman advised that a new date will be publicised once the Buckinghamshire Council election results have been confirmed.

39.10 Update on transfer to Scribe Accounts

The content of the report was noted and Katherine Damsell advised that inputting the invoices and payments took a little bit longer this month as it was the first month using this system but that this will get quicker and the reports available with the new system will be far easier to produce than previous documents.

25/40/PC Contracts

40.1 To consider Amersham Town Council's contract for Devolved Services

Katherine Damsell advised that she and the Clerk had an encouraging conversation with the Devolved Services Officer at Buckinghamshire Council and then subsequently met with the Facilities Manager at Amersham Town Council both suggested a pragmatic safety based approach to providing Devolved Services. It was agreed that residents would be asked to report issues to the Clerk and then the Clerk would seek advice from the Devolved Services Officer with all required work being reported to the Facilities Manager for completion usually on a weekly basis.

Katherine Damsell proposed a budget of £18,660 based on six scheduled verge cuts and a general fund which would be used for up to two additional cuts, if required, and all other works. It was noted that any underspend at the end of the year would be allocated to a ringfenced reserve.

Bob Milne stated that he did not believe that the parish council should have entered into the Devolved Services Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council but that he felt this proposal was reasonable. Jenny Quilter and Bob Milne suggested that the parish council communicate its decision to take back devolved services to residents on the basis that the contract previously held with Buckinghamshire Council was onerous and therefore far more costly. Katherine Damsell expressed that the impression given by the Devolved Services Officer was that Buckinghamshire Council have a more realistic expectation about what a parish council is expected to do.

It was **agreed** that the parish council would enter into a contract with Amersham Town Council to provide the services required under the Devolved Services Agreement with Buckinghamshire Council. The proposed budget of £18,660 was also **agreed**.

40.2 To consider maintenance contract for the mobile vehicle activated signs

Following a discussion in which Tony Birkett expressed disappointment in Swarco's efforts to resolve the issue currently being experienced with the data downloaded from the new sign it was **agreed** that he would speak to Swarco and subject to the outcome of those discussions, the parish council would purchase the three year silver maintenance package for both signs at a total cost of £1,152.26 plus VAT. The costs for inspecting the old sign of £658 plus parts and VAT were also **agreed**.

40.3 To consider arrangements for cleaning the parish council office

The Clerk advised that she had attempted to obtain three quotes for cleaning the office. At the time of the meeting one cleaner had advised they were unable to help, the village hall cleaners had quoted £95.60 per calendar month, for a weekly clean of the Office including labour and equipment and the third, a private individual recommended by the Chairman, was considering whether to quote. It was **agreed** that the Clerk could arrange cleaning at a maximum cost of £100 per month and those present expressed a preference for using a local business with good references.

25/41/PC Projects/Initiatives:

41.1 To consider CCTV Policy, Complaints Policy, Privacy Notice and Data Protection Impact Assessment

Following a discussion, Tony Birkett agreed to investigate where the signs advising that CCTV is in operation should be placed to comply with data protection regulations. David Moore offered to assist by contacting the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner for advice. Those present felt that it would be appropriate to display three signs at Farnham Common Playground, two signs in Farnham Royal and three/four signs along both sides of The Broadway. The CCTV Policy, Complaints Policy, Privacy Notice and Data Protection Impact Assessment were **agreed**.

In addition, Tony Birkett advised that it had become apparent that the specification of the Clerk's laptop was not sufficient to run the CCTV software so he proposed that a new laptop was purchased. Based on the specification required, a budget of £1,000 plus VAT was **agreed**.

41.2 To ratify a cost of £325 plus VAT for advice regarding the Examiner's initial questions on the Neighbourhood Plan

The cost of £325 plus VAT for O'Neill Homer's advice regarding the Examiner's initial questions was **ratified**. The Clerk advised that O'Neill Homer had confirmed that the cost of preparing their report on the Examiner's Fact Check Report would be £665 plus VAT. This was **agreed**.

The Clerk was asked to discuss with O'Neill Homer whether there would be any future costs associated with the Neighbourhood Plan and report back to the parish council.

25/42/PC Community Events

42.1 To ratify an increase of £615 in the cost of inflatables for the Parish Picnic & VE/VJ Day Celebration to provide additional supervision for insurance purposes

The increase of £615 plus VAT was **ratified** to ensure that all inflatables were supervised by fully trained and insured operatives.

42.2 To consider communication strategy for future events

Katherine Damsell advised that she, together with the Clerk, had prepared a checklist which she proposed was considered as part of the planning process for all events going forward to advertise the event as effectively as possible and ensure the associated costs were budgeted. The checklist circulated to all parish councillors prior to the meeting as **agreed**.

25/43/PC Policy Review

43.1 To consider the Promotional Materials Policy

Katherine Damsell advised that over the last few weeks several unapproved banners, which do not meet the terms of the Promotional Materials Policy, have been installed on the fence of Temple Dell and that this is both unsightly and dangerous as they could distract drivers. Those present reviewed the updated policy and requested additions stating that the parish council will remove banners installed that do not comply with the terms of the policy and that the parish council's decision is final. The updated policy with the amendments requested was **agreed**. The Clerk was asked to contact the owners of banners currently installed that offended the policy requesting removal. It was noted that those banners had already been in place for the two week period allowed under the policy. The Clerk was asked to place 'no advertising without permission' signs on the fence providing contact details for the Clerk so local organisations could request permission. Katherine Damsell advised that the smaller advertising signs that had started to appear in the parish would be dealt with under the guidelines contained in the Devolved Service Agreement.

43.2 To consider the powers delegated to the Parish Clerk

The schedule of delegated powers circulated to parish councillors prior to the meeting was **agreed**.

25/44/PC Finance:

44.1 To consider 2024/25 management accounts

Katherine Damsell asked those present whether they had reviewed the documents circulated and whether they had any questions. There were no questions. The management accounts were **agreed**. The Clerk/RFO advised that the annual accounts were currently being prepared by the accountants and that the internal audit was due to start on 15 May 2025.

44.2 To consider revised budget for 2025/26

The revised budget prepared by Katherine Damsell and the Clerk/RFO, which was circulated to parish councillors prior to the meeting was **agreed**. Katherine Damsell confirmed that this information would be input to the new Scribe accounting package to provide figures for budget v. actual comparison in the quarterly management accounts.

44.3 To consider a schedule of regular payments for 2025/26 (Para 6.6 Finance Regulations)

The schedule of regular payments prepared by the Clerk/RFO and circulated to parish councillors prior to the meeting was **agreed**.

44.4 To consider payments and note receipts, as per the April 2025 cashbook

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

25/45/PC Planning:

45.1 To ratify comments submitted on recent applications

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

45.1.1 Tony Birkett advised that he had spoken to the architect employed by EE regarding the pre-application consultation for an upgrade to the antennae on Kingsway Green. He continued that the architect had expressed that, to them, Kingsway Green is a telecommunications hub. Tony Birkett advised him of the significance of Kingsway Green to the community including its use as a site for remembrance and celebration. He also highlighted the significant number of services that already run underneath it.

45.1.2 David Moore advised that he had called in the current application regarding 7 Bracken Close, Farnham Common so the application would be considered by the Planning Committee at Buckinghamshire Council.

45.2 To note recent planning decisions

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

25/46/PC Any Other Business (for information only)

46.1 The Clerk advised that the management committee of Ingleglen had asked the parish council to reconsider its decision in July 2024 to refuse permission for the management committee to take an electrical spur from streetlighting to power a heat source for an outdoor cabinet for the defibrillator they would like to install in Ingleglen. Permission was originally refused as the parish council felt there would be limited value to the wider community and agreeing may set a precedent for other residential roads within the parish. Those present considered the additional representations made by the management committee and asked the Clerk to explain to them that the parish council owns 202 streetlights in residential roads around the parish and would not be able to provide electricity for defibrillators in all these roads, if requested. Tony Birkett suggested that the management committee may be able to arrange a supply as he is aware of residents' associations who have arranged supplies for entrance gates.

46.2 The Clerk advised that the residents affected by the antisocial behaviour of footpaths FAR/6 and FAR/7 had asked whether the parish council would agree a cut off date for Buckinghamshire Council to install the agreed kissing gate after which if the installation had not taken place the parish council would take over the purchase and installation. Those present did not agree with this suggestion but asked the Clerk to continue to press Buckinghamshire Council for action.

46.3 David Moore advised that it had become apparent that a section of Park Road had been left off the programme for fibre optics upgrades from City Fibre. He continued that he had spoken to City Fibre and they had extended the programme.

46.4 Bob Milne advised that he would be happy to meet with the parish councillor who takes on responsibility for woodlands and open spaces including The Woodland Management Plan.

46.5 The Chairman noted that Bob Milne, David Moore and Jenny Quilter had decided to stand down as parish councillors and thanked them for all their work as parish councillors.

25/47/PC Next parish council meeting:

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

The details of the next parish council meeting will be confirmed shortly.

OPEN FORUM

Cllr. Dev Dhillon thanked the parish council for the help given to him over the years and he wanted to reassure those present that no matter the outcome of the upcoming election, he would continue to be involved in the parish.

Cllr. Dev Dhillon advised that he had contacted Buckinghamshire Council's Rights of Way Team Leader to stress the importance of resolving the antisocial behaviour on footpaths FAR/6 and FAR/7.

Cllr. Dev Dhillon advised that a group of homeless people had moved into St Mary's Churchyard. Both he and PCSO Angela O'Connell spoke to them and they left but they were followed by a new group. The new group have now also left.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Dev Dhillon for all his work in the parish over the years.