

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held at Shand Hall, High Street,
Farningham on Wednesday, 6th July 2022 at 7pm.**

Present: Cllrs Liz Bourne (Chair), Daryl Burns (Vice Chair), Philip McGarvey (District Councillor), Carol Salmon and Krish Shanmuganathan

In attendance: Helen Penney (Clerk) and one member of the public.

1. Chair's welcome and apologies and for absence.

The Chair welcomed five Parish Councillors including Sevenoaks District Councillor Philip McGarvey. Apologies were received and accepted for Cllr's Sam Pointer and Latif Oztosun

2. Declarations of personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda and updates to members' register of interests.

None

3. To consider, and approve if appropriate, which agenda items are sufficiently confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

None

4. A Public Open Session. Members of the public will be welcome to address the Parish Council with any local concerns they have. Please note this item will be limited in time at the discretion of the Chairman.

5. Planning

5.1 Sevenoaks District Council reference 22/00662/FUL

Site: Sidcup & District Motorcycle Club Canada Heights Button Street Swanley Kent

Development: Erection of an extension to storage building.

Comments by 7th July 2022

No objection, expected that the development will be well screened/not visible from Farningham Woods.

5.2 SDC reference 22/01672/FUL

Site: Sidcup & District Motorcycle Club Canada Heights Button Street Swanley Kent

Development: Extension to existing storage building. The existing building measures 24m x 14m; the extension will increase this to 36m x 14m. The extension will comprise 168m².

Comments by 21st July 2022

No objection, expected that the development will be well screened/not visible from Farningham Woods.

5.3 SDC reference 22/01598/HOUSE

Site: Frankscroft, Calfstock Lane Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 9JH

Development: Proposed front porch extension. Alterations to roof.

Comments by 11th July 2022

No objection

5.4 SDC reference 22/01599/HOUSE

Site: Frankscroft, Calfstock Lane Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 9JH

Development: First floor extension above existing garage.

Comments by 11th July 2022

No objection

5.5 SDC reference 22/01603/HOUSE

Site: The Elms

Development: Rear elevation alterations including pitched roof over existing rear extension. Alterations to fenestration.

Comments by 12th July 2022

No objection, however it was noted that the orange planning notice was not visible on the 6th July

5.6 SDC reference 22/01656/HOUSE

Site: 3 The Limes Eynsford Road Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0BL

Development: Demolition of existing rear single storey extension. Erection of a single storey rear extension incorporating roof lights and alterations to existing fenestration.

Comments by 19th July 2022

No objection, however it was noted that the orange planning sign was not visible on the 6th July and that the house the property backs onto, "Homelands" had not been consulted.

5.7 SDC reference 22/00057/ENF

Site: The Old Stables, Maplescombe Lane, Farningham KENT DA4 0LA

Appeal: The appellant has appealed against the notice on the following grounds:

(a) That planning permission should be granted for what is alleged in the notice.

(c) That there has not been a breach of planning control.

(f) The steps required to comply with the requirements of the notice are excessive and lesser steps would overcome the objections.

Comments by: 9th August 2022

The grounds for appeal by the site owners are frankly unbelievable. This is a relatively small paddock area situated within Green Belt and the Kent Downs AONB, at the bottom of a beautiful, secluded valley.

The site was originally farm land and was sold, we believe in the 1950s or 60s for paddocks and stables. We understand from local conversations that when it was sold, the owner of the farm included a covenant restricting the usage to paddocks and stables and that the current farm owners, now hold this covenant.

Farningham Parish Council has been in constant contact with Sevenoaks District Council in relation to unlawful activity on the site for over 2 years. We have accumulated a large quantity of photographic evidence of the activities a selection of which are attached here. Others can be made available if required.

In summary, with timescales shown:

In late 2018/early 2019

A metal security fence and security gates were installed

By May/June 2020

- People were living on the site in temporary accommodation
- Very large open bonfires were burning every single night and at times for 24 hours a day, for weeks with acrid smoke blowing across the valley. This ceased when, one night, the fire brigade were called.
- Shipping containers and 38 tonne lorries were regularly seen unloading rubbish at the site.
- The site was dug up and clearly waste was being buried there, other rubbish in huge quantities was dumped and strewn around. Diggers and dumper trucks were clearly visible from a nearby footpath kept either in the open or in the larger building seen in the photographs.

The site was used for off road/quad bike racing with the 'race track' clearly visible

In November 2020

- A caravan was brought on site followed by a mobile home.

By April 2021

- The piles of rubbish being dumped continued to grow
- An additional blue container arrived
- Skip lorries continued to be seen dumping rubbish
- A yellow mechanical shovel was being used to 'process' the waste.

By June 2021

We had been in contact with SDC by email and phone for very nearly 12 months. Over that time SDC had taken some action, and often we'd been asked not to tell anyone what! We knew that they hoped to catch a gang of criminals who use sites around the M25 area to dump waste from London but there was really no progress with stopping the activity and with rubbish having been tipped on site for over a year it was by this time literally piled high.

- 38 tonne lorries were depositing waste on an almost daily basis – sometimes more than once a day,
- dumper trucks and a mechanical digger were permanently on site used to bury goodness knows what,
- piles of tyres and a notice advertising a tyre dealer were in place at the entrance, and
- it was still being used as an off road motor bike track .

The people allowed to operate there were to say the least brazen, and activity was totally unchecked even the day after the police attended the site.

38 tonne lorries deposit waste unchecked

By October 2021

SDC were confident that the site was being cleared up and the activities would cease by early 2022

By March 2022

- The 2 huge diggers had been present for some time and continued to work regularly and large banks of soil built up again,
- Additional Heras fencing put up.
- The tyre operation which seemed to have quietened down, with the piles of tyres just left over was in fact still seen operating
- Areas of ground were being excavated
- The ancient mobile home of site was moved further up the site to a more prominent position
- Storage areas were built from scaffold poles and boards

See images below

By July 2022

Although we have no photographs we have had reports from local residents of the land being blocked by trucks and the surface of Maplescombe Lane has now been damaged by the caterpillar tracks of large vehicles accessing the site. The activities continue unchecked.

An aerial photo of the site below shows its position in centre of AONB and MGB.

In conclusion, the appeal is insulting and a manipulation of Planning Process which can have no merit or legal grounds whatsoever. There is no obvious activity there that could ever have a hope of obtaining planning permission in MGB and AONB and Farningham Parish Council would strongly argue against planning permission being granted for ANY change of use from agricultural.

5.8 SDC SE/21/02352/FUL

Site: Stanwell House, Botsom Lane, West Kingsdown TN15 6BN

Development: Change of use of land to allow for the siting of 7 No. static caravans to be occupied by persons over 55 plus associated hardstanding and ecological enhancements in connection with a reduction in the extent of land permitted to store caravans.

Comments by: 18th July 2022

Objection

Reasons:

The proposal would be an inappropriate development in the metropolitan Greenbelt and AONB. The site is highly visible from the surrounding area and will therefore be contrary to the main function of Greenbelt, which is openness. The development would erode the open character of the site to the detriment of the street scene and, as such, would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Kent Downs AONB, contrary Policies LO8 and SP1 of the Sevenoaks District Council Core Strategy.

The development is not sustainable and remote, accessed via a steep, single-track lane with no pavement. Therefore, most journeys would be by private vehicle. It is doubtful whether the lane could cope with traffic from 5 new dwellings in addition to the 14 new caravan/mobile homes on what was the adjacent camp site and the proposal in the pipeline for a further 7 residential caravans. Members note the reference to Stanwell House having been converted in to 9 or 10 self-contained flats. It must be considered that several of these were in fact bedsits that would not generate the same amount of traffic as 5 three-bedroom dwellings.

The proposed landscaping is totally inadequate, especially, considering the number of trees that have, and continue, to be removed from the site. Members object to the use of Juliet balconies as these can be detrimental to neighbours' privacy.

Comments:

Farningham Parish Council request that a TPO is placed on the remaining trees on site. Trees are continuously being removed and structures have appeared amongst what is left of the trees on the outer part of the site.

The Parish Council is concerned that there are already 14 caravan/mobile homes on the site with 5 houses and 7 residential caravans proposed at the rear of this site totalling 26 residences.

Should the application be approved, Farningham Parish Council also request that wooded landscaping is provided as far as down as the existing track and that it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, in the interests of protecting and restoring the landscape.

5.9 SDC reference 22/00376/FUL

Site: Meadowside, Beesfield Lane, Farningham, Dartford, Kent DA4 0BZ

Democratic Control Committee deferred to 21st July 2022

It was noted that the proposal had been deferred to the 21st July 2022 as the invitation for the site visit Cllr McGarvey had requested was sent out too late. Cllr Bourne confirmed that she can speak on behalf of the Parish Council viz zoom on the 21st July but requires the notes and documents prepared by Cllr Oztosun. **Actions: Cllrs Bourne and Oztosun**

6. Ratification of planning applications received but not needing further comment or action

6.1 SDC reference 22/01596/LDCPR

Site: Frankscroft, Calfstock Lane Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 9JH

Development: Single storey rear extension extended 4metres from the original rear existing boundary wall and not to exceed 4m maximum height from natural ground level to the heights point of the slope roof. eaves not to exceed 3metres from the natural ground level to make the above compliant with obtaining permitted development rights for a single storey rear extension. The internal kitchen & dinning space will be more functional but will remain as Class C3 (dwelling)

7. Finance - Invoices for approval before next Full Parish Council meeting to meet payment terms

7.1 Insurance increase

Approved

7.2 Bridge Feasibility Study

Approved

8. CIL

It was agreed that no application would be made for the bid closing on the 19th July as the bridge feasibility study is not valid and flint wall work not eligible. Cllr Shanmuganathan wanted it noted that Highways must give enough notice to allow Members to be present when the bridge feasibility study is carried out.

9. Urgent Business that occurs and requires attention before the next meeting may be reported at the Chairman's discretion.

9.1 Flint wall

Cllr Bourne advised that the Village Hall committee have contacted the Clerk as they do not want the flint wall in front of Market Meadow sprayed with weed killer. The Clerk is to contact Tim Germaney to confirmed that spraying is correct for the long-term integrity and maintenance of the wall. **Action: Clerk.**

9.2 UTB

Cllr Bourne advised that the Village Hall committee have replied to the Clerks email, sent on the 13th May, stating that they are not happy with the deposit account being moved. Members agreed that Cllr Burns could look into alternative deposit accounts with much shorter drawdown periods. If Cllr Burns is able to find an alternative then the rescission of previous resolution must be adhered to. It was noted that the UTB interest rate was 1.05% when it was agreed to move the account which has since risen to 1.30%. Handelsbanken were able to offer 0.25% which would also apply to the Parish Council's deposit account. **Action: Cllr Burns**

9.3 Grass cutting

Cllr Bourne advised that Oliver Crescent is due to be cut by Sevenoaks District Council on the 15th July 2022, depending on weather. It was agreed that if the grass needs cutting between the 8 week period Sevenoaks are able to attend that Cllr Salmon will contact the Clerk to request an interim cut by Lothlorien. **Action: Cllr Salmon and Clerk.**

10. Date of next meeting Wednesday 20th July 2022 at 7.00pm at Shand Hall.