

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held virtually on the 'Zoom' platform on Wednesday 1st July 2020 at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllr. L. Bourne (Chair)  
Cllr. D. Burns  
Cllr. R. Hirons  
Cllr. P. McGarvey (District Councillor)  
Cllr. L. Oztosun  
Cllr. C. Salmon  
Cllr. K. Shanmuganathan  
Mrs. J. Gray (Clerk)

### **40. Chairman's Welcome, Apologies for absence:**

The Chair welcomed six Parish Councillors which included the District Councillor P. McGarvey; the County Councillor, Roger Gough and one member of the public who had agreed to give advice on CCTV.

### **41. Appointment of representatives and Declaration of Interests:**

The Chair proposed, and it was agreed, that the appointment of representatives was as per the list attached to these minutes (Appendix 1) Cllr Shanmuganathan asked Councillors to take on the Planning Chair role from September 2020.

The declarations of interest are recorded in the first meeting of the Council each year, i.e. each May, (in 2020 deferred until June) but not repeated every month unless new or change to the declarations of interest become apparent.

### **42. County Councillor:**

The County Councillor, Roger Gough, reported:

1. Emily Kinsella, Highway Engineer, had reported A20 drain clearance works were completed the previous evening, with all reported gullies from the island east of Eglantine Lane to the island north of Eynsford Road successfully cleansed. The only issue reported was a possible blockage in the pipework from a gully at the island east of Eglantine Lane. They will continue to monitor and if it becomes blocked again in the near future, they will pick it back up for CCTV camera survey.
2. Works to try and improve the flooding being experienced in Eynsford Road by South Hall Close will require access via the green at Oliver Crescent which had been organised for Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, weather permitting, and progress is anticipated.
3. It was hoped the CCTV exploration of soakaways at the Button Street junction with the A20 London Road should alleviate the pooling on the right exit.
4. He had requested for help from the Cabinet Member of Environment and of Waste Services in removing the abandoned Skoda car in London Road.
5. A new booking system had been implemented for Household Waste Recycling Centres which would increase capacity from 20,000 slots per week to 23,000; additionally, two slots a month can be booked (rather than one).

### **43. Matters Arising and Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Meeting;**

1. It was agreed the Chair could sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, which had already been agreed, to confirm they are a true record.

2. It was agreed Cllr. Salmon would write the monthly report; Trident would be circulated in electronic form and be available to all on the church website: efl-churches.org
3. The Chair had circulated an information paper on the street lighting maintenance contract to update on the current position. The contract was due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. The Clerk had been in touch with over forty Parish Councils and all used Streetlights as their appointed contractor and they were consistently praised. It was agreed to accept Streetlights quotation of £4,140.00 plus VAT to prepare, prime and top coat all columns and pole brackets with specialist column paint. The Clerk would write to accept the 30%/70% offer to settle £1,242.00 in this year financial year and £2,898.00 in the next. The Chair asked the Clerk to write to Streetlights requesting an up to date Contract for circulating to Councillors as the last 'rolling contract' had been received in 2013.
4. It was agreed additional Wednesday dates for Parish Council meetings (on the third Wednesday) be diarised specifically if planning application comment deadlines need to be met or if urgent business warrants it: these meetings will currently be held via Zoom until meetings can be held in person in either the Jessica Albery Room, Village Hall, or Shand Hall which both have availability. Agreed dates: 15<sup>th</sup> July, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 16<sup>th</sup> December.
5. Sevenoaks District Council's officers had written to Alban Crescent residents asking them not to park with wheels on the crescent's greens. The Clerk reported unfortunately one resident was apparently ignoring SDC's request.
6. The Clerk had received invoices from UK Power Networks for disconnection and reconnection of the streetlight in the Cinder Path following its renovation by Streetlights after the fire at Farningham Oak on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019; invoices had been forwarded to the insurance company for settlement.
7. SL Treecare had confirmed to the Clerk it was their intention to undertake the works on cutting back trees in Irving's Corner, High Street, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, weather permitting. The Clerk had asked them to look at the broken branch on the tree by the cattle screen, sent them illustrative photographs and asked them to contact her on the day to meet and discuss if necessary.
8. Cllr Salmon was organising the removal of dog waste bins from five locations. Cllr McGarvey offered to contact SDC officers to ask permission for the Parish Council to place stickers on their litter bins to inform that general litter and dog waste can both be placed in the bins but no household waste.
9. Sevenoaks District Council had written confirming they were reopening their playgrounds on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Inside the fencing of the play area had been strimmed and the play equipment safety checked.
10. The Chair asked Councillors to read the draft policies for the website and report back within two weeks; Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Future review dates would be inserted on the bottom once reviewed.

#### **44. Public Participation:**

A member of the public who worked in the industry had been invited to offer advice on the possible installation of CCTV in the High Street between Sparepenny Lane and the Pied Bull/Farningham Oak. He suggested two types of cameras be considered, to be placed on High Street buildings; one type would capture images of people's faces and the other to record registration numbers of moving vehicles, and at night. Data Privacy and Data Management and GDPR would need to be in place. In the first instance it was agreed Cllr Shanmuganathan to liaise with The Chequers, Butchers, Book Shop, Palace of India and Pied Bull to ask if they would host cameras possibly via an FPC grant which would enhance their own security and could reduce their insurance premiums; the Parish Council could be a facilitator and co-ordinate. Once interest was established the Clerk to ask for help in identifying potential contractors to advise on the actual type and positioning of cameras.

#### **45. Correspondence:**

1. The Clerk had asked Dr Susan Pittman for advice on preserving the engraved stone panels on the bridge over the River Darent in the High Street. Dr Pittman had written to members of the Kent Historic Buildings Committee for their input and they were all responding independently. Dr Pittman had confirmed that any decision about what to do about them is out of the Parish Council's hands; Kent County Council and Historic England would have to agree on any action so all FPC can do is to be the enabling body and ask both bodies to see what is possible.

2. A resident had written expressing concern about the tree management works at Farningham Woods being carried out by Sevenoaks District Council. She reported the steep steps are in urgent need of repair and observed the works in the woods continue to include felling of trees during the nesting season. She had sent an image of a bare patch of ground along a main path in the wood where a sizeable holly tree was removed and attached two images of trees in full leaf that were cut down. She had understood coppicing work is traditionally carried out in winter when trees are dormant, allowing regrowth of shoots that will form new trees during subsequent seasons. She alluded trees were felled but then left with fallen wood not cleared in any way; thus new growth occurred which is being damaged by the action of heavy plant trundling over the stumps during the summer. She queried if these damaged shoots will be so deformed they will fail to grow into tall, useable timber in the future. She asked if branches and brushwood, bulldozed to the edges of the wood, could be cleared away. She states she appreciates the woodland needs to be managed and considers one of the main problems is past neglect. However, she believes the works carried out recently was not conducted in a manner sympathetic to a 'Nature Reserve' whilst the whole character of the wood had changed, with ancient tracks with steep mossy banks being obliterated. She contends the wood is no longer the delightful place it once was and there is a marked decline in the presence of wildlife. Lastly, she asked why it was necessary to remove the mature oaks beside the viewing point that overlooks the village. The Clerk had referred the questions to Sevenoaks District Council. The Clerk was asked to confirm a date for Councillors to meet Ashley Walmsley in Farningham Woods for an explanation on the coppicing programme. Cllrs Bourne and Hirons expressed interest in attending.

3. Mark Gallant of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership had met the Clerk and the new manager at the Lion Hotel and was going to offer advice on the removal of Hemlock Water Dropwort in the Lion's riverbank. He wanted to ensure more light filtered through to the River Darent and therefore was proposing the cutting back of some trees on the banks and would soon agree a date to revisit to identify the trees and undertake a water vole survey.

4. The Clerk had been in touch with the new manager at the Lion and had reported the signs stating the 'Bridle path' were incorrect, it should state Darent Valley Path; she said the signs were to be removed on 3<sup>rd</sup> July in time for reopening on 4<sup>th</sup>. She had agreed to ask their gardeners to cut back hanging vegetation over the wall to Dartford Road.

5. The Clerk was asked to confirm with an Oliver Crescent resident that the free Pilates classes she had offered could go ahead.

#### **46. Planning;**

1. Following the Parish Council meeting on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June comments on two planning applications had been sent to Sevenoaks District Council as they were due in that day.

2. Planning Decisions:

SE/20/01468/AGRNOT Chinhams Farm, Steel framed Agricultural Barn PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

SE/20/01094/HOUSE 1 Alban Crescent Proposed first floor side extension, floor plan redesign and all associated works GRANTED

Tree applications:

SE/20/01597/WTCA Pinehurst, High Street Proposal Trim an Oak tree by 50%

**47. District Councillor:**

Cllr McGarvey reported:

1. The planning application Ref. No: SE/20/01491/FUL at Meadowside, Beesfield Lane for Erection of detached bungalow on plot to rear and extensions/alterations to existing house had been recommended for approval by the Planning Officer. The Clerk was asked to contact the neighbour to alert.

2. The Licensing application at The Chequers Public House, High Street had been granted the same licensing hours as applied back in 2007:

(Tuesday to Thursday: 10.00am to 11.30pm, Monday, Friday and Saturday: 10.00am to 12.30am, Sunday: 10.00am to 11.30pm.)

**48. Extension of Time:**

As the meeting had been running for two and a quarter hours, an extension of time was granted by Councillors.

**49. Highways, Footpaths and Street Lighting:**

Damage to street lighting column no. 47 had been reported to Streetlights. Their operative had hammered the crease in the column aperture flat and fitted a second hand door so the column is now secure at the base. The column is firm in the ground and upright. The door was provided free of charge and invoice to settle will be for the callout only of £41.25.

**50. Friends of Farningham:**

Friends of Farningham recommence on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July adhering to social distancing requirements currently in place. The Clerk was asked to put appropriate notices on the board and email volunteers.

**51. Social Media and Communication:**

Cllr Oztosun asked Councillors to consider what they want to communicate to parishioners and explained his vision for engaging more with the community via the new website, which it was hoped would be launched within the next few weeks; it was mainly being held up by documents not being 'accessible' and he offered to assist the Clerk and Cllr Burns with this task. We will create a time line of events that we can then publish on social media and described how the Council could send creative newsletters via Mailchimp. He reported opinions could be sought from parishioners via Survey Monkey' which other local Parish Councils successfully use.

**52. Update of Policies:**

The Clerk had circulated updated policies: FOI Publication Scheme, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment, Code of Conduct, Protocol on Filming and Recording at Meetings, Information Available under the Freedom of Information Act, Complaints Procedure, and GDPR Policy. It was agreed these be placed on the new website once accessibility regulations had been met.

**53. Open Spaces:**

In view of the time it was agreed to defer car parking until the next meeting.

**54. AOB:**

The Clerk was asked to circulate the list of Councillors details.

**55. Finance:**

1. Members resolved to authorise the Schedule of Payments for July:

Kent County Council	Pension contributions (PC: £360.57 Clerk: £56.66)	£417.23
British Telecom	Telephone and Broadband	£47.83
HMRC	Tax and NI	£264.33
Mrs J Gray	Clerk's Salary	£741.14
Mrs J Gray	Parish Council Expenses Use of House (£20) Mobile Phone contribution (£10)	£30.00
Sevenoaks District Council	Emptying dog waste bins	£112.32

2. The Chair reported three quotations had been received from external payroll agencies and the cheapest, DM Accounting had been contracted to manage payroll at £10.00 per month, plus an additional £10.00 to check the last two years figures.

**Signed .....** **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020**

The meeting closed at 10.46pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.

## Appendix 1

### Appointment of Parish Council Representatives on Local Organisations for Farningham Parish Council Year 2020 to 2021

(a) Chair: Cllr L Bourne (b) Vice-Chair: Cllr D Burns

Planning: Chair:	Cllr K Shanmuganathan (until September 2020)
Finance Member:	Cllr McGarvey
Footpaths, Highways and Lighting:	All Cllrs
Darent River Protection Society:	Cllr R Hirons
Kent Association of Local Councils - Sevenoaks Branch:	Cllr. P. McGarvey/Cllr L Bourne
Correspondent for Trident:	Cllr C Salmon
Farningham Village Hall Management Committee:	Cllr Mrs D Burns and Cllr C Salmon
Tree Warden:	Cllr L Bourne
Brands Hatch Liaison Group:	Cllr Mrs D Burns/Cllr P McGarvey
Responsibility for website:	Mr C Bourne
Social Media:	Cllr L Oztosun/Mr C Bourne
Darent Valley Consortium:	Cllr L Bourne/Cllr P McGarvey
Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme:	Cllr L Oztosun/Cllr R Hirons