

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held virtually on the 'Zoom' platform on Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr. L. Bourne (Chair)
Cllr. D. Burns
Cllr. R. Hirons
Cllr. P. McGarvey (District Councillor)
Cllr. L. Oztosun
Cllr. K. Shanmuganathan

Mrs. J. Gray (Clerk)

72. Chairman's Welcome, Apologies for absence:

The Chair welcomed six Parish Councillors which included the District Councillor P. McGarvey and three members of the public who were interested in the Casual Vacancy. The Chair asked Councillors to introduce themselves and inform of their particular interest and responsibilities. The County Councillor, Roger Gough joined the meeting at 7.10pm. An apology for absence had been received from Cllr. Salmon.

73. Declaration of Interests:

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.

74. County Councillor:

The County Councillor reported he had attended a site meeting with Kent Highways Officer, Emily Kinsella.

1. The problem of flooding had not been resolved after the recent excavation works in Oliver Crescent and South Hall Close, though water does drain away more quickly. It was hoped that kerbing changes to the grass bank in between the A225 Eynsford Road and the slip road opposite the houses would improve the drainage, particularly for the most affected resident. Works to find a remedy would continue.
2. They identified a structural problem with a gulley on the A20 Main Road above and nearest to the cricket pitch and further investigative and cleansing work would be undertaken on the stretch of the A20 London Road from King's Roundabout to Button Street on the M20 motorway side.
3. He reported there had been no formal policy change on speed limits through villages but he felt the 20mph scheme in the High Street might be looked at more favourably now. Highways Officer Bineham would be retiring on 12th October and therefore it was agreed to liaise with his replacement (Whitney Gwillam) in due course. Cllr. Shanmuganathan agreed to review possible points for submission. The Clerk is to circulate data from the speed check undertaken c2years ago.

75. Matters Arising/Action Points List and Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Meeting;

1. The Clerk was asked to recirculate the updated minutes and it was agreed the Chair could sign these minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2020, to confirm they are a true record.
2. It was agreed Cllr. McGarvey would write the monthly report for Trident.

3. SDC had sent an official Notice of a Parish Councillor vacancy posted on 8th October following the resignation of Cllr. R. Hirons. If ten parishioners write to SDC calling for an election by 28th October then one will be held. However, because of Covid-19 restrictions, any such election cannot be held until 6th May 2021. If no election is called, the remaining six Parish Councillors can co-opt.
4. The Clerk had heard back from Tom Fry in SDC's Enforcement team regarding two new caravans which were delivered to Hill Top Farm by the A20 London Road. He reported a site visit had been made and there are some issues that need resolving but the owner of the site seems willing to work with them. There are currently more than 14 mobile homes on site but not all of these are being used residentially as the occupants of the site have had issues in getting materials for the extra buildings (day and utility rooms). The area to the very far east of the site is also being looked into as there are numerous mobile homes 'stored' within that area but this is an issue up for contention that he is discussing with colleagues.
5. The Clerk reported she had left the enforcement items on the Action Points list for Councillors to monitor so they were not forgotten.
6. The PCSO, Lauren Bruce, had sent a report on incidents dealt with in the past month; it was agreed it was not worthy of circulating.
7. As the Clerk had not heard back from The Lion or The Pied Bull regarding listing them as Assets of Community Value it was agreed the establishments should be informed that it was being progressed. It was agreed the Clerk prepare the documents and circulate to Councillors. It was also agreed applications for the Cricket Club, the Butchers shop and the Village Hall may follow.
8. Cllr. McGarvey would follow up with SDC Officer, Trevor Kennett the request for stickers for the village litter bins confirming they are for general litter and dog waste.
9. The Clerk had contacted Jamie Riches of Thames Water to remind of a potential site meeting about the untidy compound site and would follow up again.
10. The Clerk had confirmed with the Village Hall bookings secretary the meeting dates for 2021 in case meetings can be held in person, with a start time of 7.45pm. Cllr. McGarvey reported that Shand Hall would also be available, and he had obtained permission for the Annual Parish meeting to be held in St. Peter and St. Paul church.
11. The Clerk had arranged access for National Grid for painting and maintenance of the pylon on Parish Council owned land in Farningham woods.
12. The Clerk had received a quotation from PAYE Stonework for repair of the flint wall in the High Street in front of the village hall. She was awaiting quotations for two more contractors. The Chair and Cllr. Salmon had agreed to meet contractors on site.
13. It was agreed the Clerk pursue a Five-Day Notice tree application in respect of the two trees on Parish Council owned amenity land in front of Irving's Corner. A site plan was being sought and the necessary photographs taken.

76. Correspondence:

1. Concern had been expressed to the Clerk from parishioners regarding the condition of the path from Beesfield Lane to the closed gate on By-Way 192 where noisy motorbikes had been using it and churning up the surface. The Clerk was asked to ask the County Councillor if he would consider a review.
2. The Clerk had been in touch with Mark Gallant of the North West Kent Countryside Project and he would inform when the next River Darent walk through would take place.
3. The Clerk had been in touch with Jamie Riches of Thames Water to remind that a date for a site meeting to discuss the untidy site was still awaited.
4. The Clerk had been in touch with Mike Payton at Kent Highways and asked for a tonne bag of salt be delivered to Charton Manor Farm for winter use and storage for the Parish Council
5. It had been reported to the Clerk a homeless man was sleeping on one of the benches in Irving's Corner. It was agreed she contact SDC's Homeless Persons Officer to try to

establish if it was the same person previously sleeping under the A20 bridge and find out whether he had been provided accommodation somewhere.

77. Planning;

1. It was agreed the following comments be sent to Sevenoaks District Council:

SE/20/02378/FUL Trailer 2 Land Adjacent To Broomhill Button Street Swanley KENT BR8 8DX
Material change of use of land for stationing of caravans for residential occupation for Gypsy Traveller site

OBJECTION: FPC objects to potentially allowing more travellers in Button Street when so many have already been given permission both here and just on the other side of the A20; yet more would be even more unsustainable.

Proximity to M25 noise and pollution (behind the bank) makes this site a health risk.

The egress point onto Button Street itself is close to a dangerous/blind bend in a narrow lane where NSL applies (60 mph speed limit) which would be unacceptable.

SE/20/02626/HOUSE Mapledown, Maplescombe Lane Erection of a single storey rear extension, conversion of existing garage to habitable area, extension of front ground floor bay with tiled pitched roof

No Comment

SE/20/02422/HOUSE and SE/02423/LBCALT Owl Cottage, High Street Installation of 2 no. rear roof lights. Removal of internal coverings to original timber members

No Comment

SE/20/02693/HOUSE The Carriage House, Sparepenny Lane Residential extension at ground floor and first floor to the rear, front canopy, replacement of some steps, rail and fence

No Comment

The Clerk had been notified of by Jessica Foley, SDC of application reference no: 20/02312/LAPRE at a site on the A20 London Road by the Teardrop Centre. It was for a license to sell alcohol to be consumed off the premises from the shop on site and online. The shop is already there it just doesn't currently sell alcohol. Only registered customers can use the shop and the website. It is a community only shop and its profits go to Linton Park School, a specialist school and its charities. It has gates and the registered customers would need codes to gain entry. Staff are present at all times. It was agreed there was no objection to this application.

78. District Councillor:

The District Councillor reported:

1. He was forwarding the weekly Covid-19 update reports sent to SDC Cllrs from the SDC Leader and/or CEO to FP Cllrs for their information; the Covid-19 stats are split out by District Council areas rather than by postcode breakdowns used by Track & Trace
2. The anticipated shortfall in SDC income, in view of Covid-19, is still unknown, but while a budget gap of £826,000 was reported to SDC Cabinet on 17th September, steps to remove this gap are being taken.
3. Although not yet approved, SDC's Precept increase in 2021/22 is likely to be the maximum allowed of 2.3%, which would amount to a £4.95 pa increase on a Band D property (less than 10p more per week) bringing it up to £224.91 pa.

4. The recent planning White Paper had suggested replacing CIL fixed amounts per square metre with a national Infrastructure Levy calculated as a fixed (nationally) percentage of house value to standardise throughout the country.
5. Planning Enforcement issues are piling up, but a restructuring of SDC's Environmental Health earlier this month which has separated out the previous Dartford/Sevenoaks joint teams, can only help re-focus Sevenoaks resources into Sevenoaks.

79. CCTV:

Cllr. Oztosun reported he had been recommended three potential contractors and was meeting the first next week; he would be endeavouring to secure value for money quotations. If the project goes ahead, as previously agreed it is the intention that the Parish Council would offer to contribute towards the cost of cameras. Cllr Oztosun would prepare a paper for circulation.

80. Extension of Time:

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

81. Vehicle Charging Point:

Cllr Burns had reviewed Kent County Council's project to increase the number of publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points and it was agreed she would proceed with pursuing a potential grant application. She had discussed with Village Hall representatives the possibility of one (or more) bays being installed at the Hall. It was agreed a survey to parishioners via Mailchimp to establish interest. Cllr McGarvey agreed to find an appropriate map which would be necessary to accompany an application.

82. Social Media/Communication/Website:

The Chair reported all was going well with the new website which was continuing to gain more hits. The Chair asked all to seek out good news stories particularly as Friends of Farningham, which provided local interest, would be stopping over the winter months. It was agreed local societies could possibly be approached for information and stories.

83. The Lion Hotel:

The Manager, Emma Leader, joined the meeting and updated on her efforts over lockdown. She reported the trees overhanging the wall in Dartford Road were due to be cut back on 4th to 6th November; she apologised for the delay, but a traffic management system had to be implemented with Kent Highways. She reported she had a couple of weeks leave coming up and would personally trim the ivy overhanging the wall in the High Street. The Clerk was subsequently asked to write to thank for all her efforts.

84. Highways, Footpaths and Street Lighting:

1. Cllr. McGarvey reported that Shoreham Parish Council were asking Kent Highways to introduce a 40mph speed limit through the wooded area along the A225 from the 30mph edge of Otford right up to the layby opposite Shoreham railway station and on to the next railway bridge at Prestons Farm. It was agreed to support a 40mph limit from Otford to Shoreham Station only and the national speed limit from Shoreham Station to Prestons Farm (and on to Eynsford) should remain. Cllr. McGarvey offered to give the Clerk a form of words in this respect.
2. The Chair reported the street lighting columns had been repainted and Streetlights had invoiced for a part payment of £1242.00 plus VAT.
3. The Cinder Path street lighting column was the subject of an insurance claim. The Clerk had been asked to settle two invoices for the disconnection and reconnection of the column with UK

Power Networks for the sum of £2473.00 plus VAT, and the invoice for refurbishing the column by Streetlights for the sum of £915.00 plus VAT and then the insurers would reimburse, less the excess.

4. The Chair reminded all that the street lighting maintenance contract was due for renewal in April 2022.

85. Friends of Farningham:

Friends of Farningham had met the previous Saturday and much tidying work had been completed, particularly at the Village Hall, by ten volunteers. The last meet of 2020 was due on Wednesday 14th October, weather permitting.

86. Open Spaces:

1. Cllr Bourne reported on Farningham Woods confirming that the coppicing currently being undertaken remains critical to the woodland management, in areas that will explicitly benefit the nationally rare Deptford Pink and will also open up views across Farningham Village and the valley. Some of the timber, together with wood from previous coppicing, will be removed as part of this work, weather dependent, and some will have to remain on site to allow the leaves to drop before it can be chipped and removed. This should be done over the winter, but if the site is too wet, or the timber hasn't dried sufficiently, it may have to be left in situ. Generally, larger coppice poles are sold for use in timber products such as chestnut paling, with the smaller material going for commercial biomass fuel. Whilst this helps towards the cost of the woodland management, in most years operations do run at a deficit.

87. Councillor Vacancy:

The three visitors were interested in filling the vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr R Hirons and were invited to introduce themselves as to their aspirations for the role and what they hoped to offer. Assuming that an election is not called, it was agreed that the decision on the co-option be made at the November meeting.

88. Clerk Vacancy:

The Chair reported that three applications had been received to date but the closing date was not until 24th October. It was agreed that the Chair, Vice-Chair, Cllr Shanmuganathan and Cllr. McGarvey conduct the interviews aiming to make a recommendation at the next council meeting.

89. Update of Policies:

The Clerk would pass the latest version of NALC Financial Regulations to the Chair with a view to using it to update FPC's policy.

90. Reports from representatives on other bodies:

1. Cllr. Oztosun announced his intention to attend the Environment Agency and Kent Resilience Forum's Flood Warden training via Zoom; the Clerk would pass him the relevant details.

2. Cllr McGarvey reported Remembrance observations will still go ahead this year but somewhat scaled down; the church website www.efl-churches.org will confirm the relevant details. The long serving churchwarden, Gerald Roome, would be retiring at the end of October and he had previously organised Poppy wreaths. It was agreed Cllr. Burns organise a knitted Poppy wreath via the Brownies leader.

91. IT and Email:

It was agreed to defer considering the purchase of the necessary Adobe Acrobat programme for £15.00 per month to make documents accessible for the new website until the new clerk is appointed.

92. Finance:

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

Kent County Council	Pension contributions (PC: £360.57 Clerk: £56.66)	£435.77
British Telecom	Telephone and Broadband	£40.06
HMRC	Tax and NI	£264.33
Mrs J Gray	Clerk's Salary	£741.40
Mrs J Gray	Parish Council Expenses	£30.00
	Use of House (£20) Mobile Phone contribution (£10)	
EON	Electricity Charges	£185.54
Spectulise	New email set up costs	£100.00
Lothlorien Landscapes	Amenity land grass cutting	£72.00
Streetlights	Part payment for repainting columns	£1242.00
UK Power Networks	Disconnection/Reconnection of Cinder Path column	£2473.00
Streetlights	Refurbishment of Cinder Path column following fire	£915.00
PKF Littlejohn	Annual Audit fee	£360.00

2. The Clerk had obtained forms for Cllr McGarvey become a bank signatory at Handelsbanken which she and the Vice-Chair needed to countersign.
3. Cllr. McGarvey would be working on the budget for 2021 to 2022 and intended to add 2% to all categories for ease.
4. The Clerk confirmed following the completion of the annual review by PKF Littlejohn, the auditors, the documents had been signed and returned with a completion letter, a Notice of Conclusion of Audit template and fee invoice totalling £300.00 plus VAT.

Signed **Wednesday 4th November 2020**

The meeting closed at 10.45pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th November 2020 at 7.00pm via Zoom.