

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held at Shand Hall, High Street, Farningham on Wednesday, 2nd February 2022 at 7pm.

Present:

Cllr L Bourne (Chair), Cllr P McGarvey (District Councillor), Cllr K Shanmuganathan , Cllr L Oztosun, Cllr S Pointer, Cllr C Salmon. In attendance, Helen Penney.

1. Chair's Welcome and Apologies for Absence:

The Chair welcomed six Parish Councillors which included the Sevenoaks District Councillor Philip McGarvey. Apologies were received from Cllr D Burns and Kent County Councillor Roger Gough.

2. Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of interest stood as previously recorded at May 2021 and Councillors were asked to inform the Clerk should there be any changes.

3. Parish Clerk:

The Chair introduced Helen Penney as the preferred candidate for the role of Parish Clerk and Councillors unanimously endorsed and welcomed the appointment. Helen was also appointed the Responsible Finance Officer.

4. To receive report from the County Councillor:

Councillor Gough had sent his apologies.

5. To receive report (verbal) from the District Councillor:

Cllr McGarvey said the developers of the Broke Hill Golf Course site in Halstead, where 800 homes and community facilities were planned, had lost their appeal. The detail of this decision may be useful in any future application for development at Pedham Place.

6. Confidential agenda items:

There were none.

7. Public participation:

There was no public participation.

8. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Cllr McGarvey asked that under Item 4, "No 7" be deleted. It was then agreed the Chair could sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2022 with matters arising included in later Agenda items.

9. Matters Arising:

9.1 Cllr Pointer agreed to write the Trident report and Cllr Salmon to produce draft Minutes.

9.2 Cllr Oztosun reported that the SDC Conservation Officer had agreed to look at the site of the fire damaged Farningham Oak building in the High Street.

9.3 Cllr Salmon asked to book Farningham Village Hall on Friday, 2nd December, for the lighting up of the 2022 Christmas tree in Market Meadow.

Action: Cllr Salmon

10. Consider the following planning applications requiring comments and note the updated planning log:

Ref SE/22/00093/FUL Maplescombe Farm, Maplescombe Lane, F'ham DA4 0JY.

Proposal: Conversion of 6no. agricultural buildings into 10no. dwellings and the demolition of 3no. additional agricultural buildings, in conjunction with associated parking, amenity area and landscaping.

Decision: Objection.

Reasons for objection:

- (a) Ten dwellings is too many as it would alter the character of the surrounding community of 28 dwellings - an inappropriate and unsustainable increase in the community by 35% to 38.
- (b) The site sits in a well-performing area of AONB.
- (c) If granted: movements (size and frequency and operating hours) of construction traffic should be limited, by Condition.
- (d) Maplescombe Lane already struggles with frequency and size of traffic, so we suggest two Conditions: (1) the existing vehicle-passing places in Maplescombe Lane must have their tarmac edges repaired/strengthened/widened; and (2) existing pathways (across/around adjoining fields) should be extended inside the edge of the fields in order to reach this proposed site, for the safety of existing and increased pedestrian use. CIL monies could be used for the latter (the extended pathway). In detail for the pathways: a) To the north of the site: from opposite 5 Maplescombe Farm Cottages to run inside the field boundary parallel to the South West side of Maplescombe Lane to cross SD172 and then continue on the field boundary to meet SD192 (the path would need briefly join the Maplescombe Lane to pass 'Old Stables'); b) To the east of the site: from directly opposite the Maplescombe Farm Yard, to go up the hill past 6 Maplescombe Farm Cottages and join SD172 at the stile.
- (e) The (orange) Planning Application notice was not placed at the roadside for passing residents to spot, but erected some distance (about 20 metres?) up the private drive into the site - and it did not remain in place for the required 21 days.

Ref: SE/22/00127/HOUSE Farningham Hill House, Farningham Hill Road, Farningham DA4 0JR.

Proposal Two storey rear and side extensions with alterations to the roof layout.

Decision: No comment.

11. Finance:

11.1 Items paid and payable as advised by Cllr Burns duly noted.

11.2 The following were agreed:

Following the transfer of the policy to the new insurer it was agreed that the premium be paid.

Membership of CPRE -lapsed December 2020 (to be paid by clerk) £38.

Zoom fee (paid by Chair) £14.39.

Adobe fee (paid by Chair) £15.17.

Storage boxes (paid by Cllr Burns) £28.

Training for Clerk £180 (when required).

KALC Chairmanship Day £50 (as required).

Telephone rental (paid by previous Clerk) £16.

Streetlight costs for Valley View Terrace (est £2,000 if required see below)

Batteries for Defibrillators (at price needed to expedite installation see below)

Fire Cupboard at Village Hall (to come from Ted Saxton account see below) £680 (ex VAT)

Final Payment for Notice Board (£600 as assume no installation charge. Invoice needs amending. See below)

Payment for Goal posts for Oliver Crescent (see below)

11.3 A £50 cheque from Power Network relating to the substation at the Village Hall was found not to have been presented.

Action: Clerk.

11.4 All KALC payments can be made on-line.

Action: Clerk.

12. Items for decision and allocation of resources if necessary:

12.1 It was agreed to accept a quotation of £510.99 plus delivery and installation from Soccertackle/ITSA Goal for a goal to be installed on the green in Oliver Crescent.

Action: Cllr Salmon.

12.2 Aspen Treecare of Farningham to be asked to quote for the removal of a small tree in front of the Village Hall. Advice on care of the Cedar Tree will also be sought.

Action: Cllr Salmon.

12.3 Cllr Pointer advised the new Noticeboard had arrived and two sections were lockable with a third to be open to the public. Two keys had also been provided and one would be given to the Clerk and the other to Cllr Salmon. Cllr Pointer awaiting a reply from Lothlorien Landscapes as to when the new board will be installed. As the online invoice still appears to include delivery, the Chair asked the Clerk to investigate this but also referenced there may be a charge for delivery that is not included in the £600 estimate referenced above).

Action: Clerk.

12.4 The Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the Village Hall on 27th May 2022 from 7.30pm. The Clerk asked to contact interested parties.

Action: Clerk.

12.5 The Village Hall Committee have asked for the cost of new windows in the main hall to be met from the money available from the Ted Saxton account. The Village Hall Committee was advised that because this was an external renovation the SDC Conservation Officer should be consulted. The preferred quote from Windows and Doors of Swanley was accepted. This is the third payment request in a short space of time following fire prevention work within the hall and the Village Hall Committee need to be aware that the Ted Saxton funds are in a 100 day account and more notice should be given to facilitate withdrawals.

Action : Chair

12.6 Five boxes of Parish records have been deposited in the loft of the Village Hall.

12.7 Work required to be undertaken by Openreach to a pole in Valley View Rise, which has FPC street light No 44 attached to it is preventing a resident installing computer wi-fi on his premises. We have been told by Openreach to remove the street light. The footpath would be too dark to be left without a light and Streetlights, our contractor, is negotiating with UK Power Network to install a metal pole to take the light, but to utilise the road closure etc that will be required organised by Openreach to minimise cost to FPC. The work is estimated to cost £2,000 and it was agreed that the Chair would instruct Streetlights to proceed on that basis. An audit will be carried out to find out the number of lights in place on telegraph poles.

Action: Chair.

12.8 Councillors were very concerned to be told by St John's Ambulance that there had been a breakdown of communication with the previous Clerk and consequently the batteries in the three defibrillators had not been replaced. As a matter of urgency the batteries will be purchased by FPC (details of the batteries and where to buy them awaited from St John's Ambulance) and thanks to the good agency of St John's Ambulance's Mr Terry Hutchings these will be replaced. It would also be preferable if the unit based at Farningham Cricket Club could be sited outside the building. **Action: Clerk.**

Extension of time: As the meeting had been running for over two hours The Chair asked for an extension of time and this was agreed.

13. Highways:

13.1 The Highways Improvement Plan was updated:

Priority 1: Remains 20mph zone.

Cllr Shanmuganathan outlined the progress for this proposal. We ran a similar survey on introducing a 20mph in the centre of the village in 2017. At that time, we received 41 responses (c.80%) clearly in support of the proposal. Enforcement questions and ensuring minimal signage to avoid spoiling the look of the village cropped up regularly.

Our 2022 survey produced similar results - 44 responses: 33 respondents in favour (75%), 6 against and 5 who did not express equivocal support or opposition but had comments to make. As before, most comments were about enforcement questions and the need for minimal signage and maintaining the character and conservation of the village. Indeed, opposition primarily concerned the lack of enforcement making it pointless and the opposition to additional signage. There were also a few comments on whether the funds should be better put to use elsewhere.

We agreed that the Clerk will now send the following email to survey respondents and other parishioners with copies to KCC's Whitney Gwillam and Roger Gough. If KCC agree we can now move onto a formal consultation.

Action: Clerk

"Thank you all for your responses to the 20mph proposal. Three-quarters of the respondents were in clear support for its introduction. There were also plenty of comments on the scheme in general, particularly around enforcement and signage.

Following the successful introduction of a Speedwatch group to monitor speeds in the village (and we would urge residents to join this village group), the 20mph proposal is a further step in making the village safer and more enjoyable for pedestrians whilst ensuring the character of the village is maintained. We have agreed with KCC that signage will be minimal with, as some respondents has requested, a preference for roundels on the road rather than fixed signposts. At this stage, enforcement will come through law-abiding citizens driving to the new limits, slowing down any would-be speeders behind them. Any additional traffic calming measures are either not allowed and/or wouldn't be fitting with the character of the village.

The FPC has built up reserves over previous years to improve the safety of the village for residents. The FPC has lobbied KCC on a number of occasions over many years for safety improvements around both the A225/White Post Hill/A20 and A20/London/Button Street junctions - and each attempt has been dashed by KCC regulations. But we will persevere on your behalf. The same is true of seeking safety improvements elsewhere in the village, such as along Beesfield Lane and Maplescombe Lane, and making it more pedestrian-friendly, for example lobbying for improvements to the pavement on the bridge opposite the Lion. If you feel there is a local need, we encourage you to write to the Clerk to make us aware of the issue.

Sadly we can't win every fight against the myriad of local government rules and regulations but where we can make positive changes, with the support of residents, we will."

Priority 2: Remains improvements to the bridge in the High Street.

Priority 3: Seek an extension to the 40mph zone on A20 Farningham Hill to cover area between Button Street and London Road and to ask for improved lighting/cats eyes and regular refreshing of the white lines. There have been a number of accidents recently, including another fatality, and it was agreed night vision was particularly poor in this area.

Priority 4: We will again ask for the provision of a pedestrian crossing across the A225 Eynsford Road (next to the top of the High Street). This has previously been refused by KCC because of poor visibility but residents continue to complain about the difficulty and danger in crossing this road.

All remaining items would remain unprioritised.

14. Eynsford/Farningham Joint Event:

We are concerned this Platinum Jubilee Event on Saturday 4th June has not been sufficiently publicised. Eynsford Parish Council will be asked to include it on their website and we will produce posters for inclusion on our noticeboard and on our website. Our next Newsletter with up-to-date details will be circulated in early April.

Action: Cllrs Burns/Oztosun and Chair.

15. Trident

To be written by Cllr Pointer.

16. Action List Up-date

For discussion at March meeting.

17. Dates for Meetings 2021/22

See below.

18. Urgent business:

CllrMcGarvey has received complaints from residents after they received a letter from a local farmer advising there was no public right of way to his fields. We agreed this is the farmer's prerogative.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm. Date of next meeting Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 7pm at Shand Hall.

Signed:

Date:

Future dates for meetings:

All meetings to be held at 7pm at Shand Hall:

Wednesday 6 April 2022

Wednesday 4 May 2022

Wednesday 1 June 2022

Wednesday 6 July 2022

Wednesday 7 September 2022

Wednesday 5 October 2022

Wednesday 2 November 2022

Wednesday 7 December 2022