

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held at Shand Hall, High Street, Farningham on Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 7pm.

Present: Farningham Parish Council (FPC) Cllrs Daryl Burns (Chair), Liz Bourne, Philip McGarvey, Kevin McGeough and Carol Salmon. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Cllr Laurence Ball and Kent County Councillor Marc Logen (in part).

In attendance: three members of the public and Helen Penney (Clerk).

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received and accepted for FPC Cllr Andie Fitzsimons and SDC Cllr Alan White.

2. Co-option.

None.

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

None.

4. To consider, and approve if appropriate, agenda items 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.

5. Trident.

Action: Cllr Salmon.

6. Report from the County Councillor.

Cllr Logen reported:

- Parking issues on Till Avenue: Cllr Logen is continuing to engage with residents and SDC over inconsiderate parking.
- Illegal right-hand turns at White Post Hill: Cllr Logen is continuing to engage with a resident regarding illegal right turns from White Post Hill on to the A20.
- Highways project delays: Progress on highways improvements is slow. Farningham's KCC highways contact has been on annual leave and the Highways team has limited capacity vs demand.
- School admissions support: Cllr Logen has supported a local family through the secondary school admissions appeals process.
- Bus route consultation: feedback indicates that amending the 414-bus route is unlikely to be commercially viable for the operating company. Cllr Logen will forward relevant information to the Clerk who will provide additional information. **Action: Cllr Logen and the Clerk.**
- Unitary authority timeline: The request from KCC to extend the deadline for moving to Unitary authorities has been rejected by the Government.

- Kent County Council holds its first full council meeting since the election on Thursday 10 July 2025.

7. Report from District Councillors.

Cllr Ball reported that the Government is still being very hasty and rushed with Devolution. SDC Cllr Nigel Williams has recently been appointed as the new Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure Committee and still aims to have a Local Plan adopted in time for the move to Unitary authorities.

In his absence, the Clerk read a report from Cllr White:

Two weekends ago, there was a dispersal order for the ford in Eynsford and Frank's Lane and, due to the anticipated warmer weather this weekend, the police have decided to implement dispersal orders again at both locations. Chief Inspector Jones has requested to meet with District Councillors at both locations on 15 July 2025. Which will be a good opportunity to highlight Anti-Social Behaviour that has been taking place.

On Friday 27 June 2025, representatives from KCC, the Darent River Preservation Society (DRiPS), SDC, Horton Kirby and South Darenth Parish Council and Farningham Parish Council met to discuss the health of the River Darent. Vegetation at the Lion Hotel was raised and that water voles have previously been identified at this location and are a protected species. It was also noted that the overgrown vegetation narrows the river channel, helping to maintain water levels that have dropped due to abstraction.

8. A Public Open Session. Members of the public will be welcome to address the Parish Council with any local concerns they have. Please note that each speaker will be allocated a maximum of three minutes and at the discretion of the Chair.

The public advised that they had attended to observe the meeting.

9. Approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 11th June 2025.

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting on 11 June 2025 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. Clerks report.

The Clerk reported:

- Ticket data from the A20 average speed cameras has been reported for the first six months of installation:

Location Code	Location Address	Number of Offences
289	A20 Farningham West Bound	647
290	A20 Farningham East bound	554

The Clerk has requested how the number of tickets issued spreads across the time period and how much money has been generated in fines. Members asked the Clerk to also ask who receives money from each fine. **Action: Clerk.**

- Jon Draffan is speaking to his solicitors regarding ownership of the flint wall at Market Meadow

after the passing of his brother, Michael, two years ago. The Clerk added that the Parish Council has limited S137 funds and no other power to spend money on the wall.

Members requested that the Clerk advise the conservation officer at SDC that the wall requires maintenance and invite Jon and Mick, the Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee, to liaise with each other and resolve the ownership issue. **Action: Clerk.**

- Adding to Cllr White's comments from the Darent River site meeting on 25th June 2025, the Clerk reported that the river is looking healthy. Mark Gallant, Senior Partnership Officer for North West Kent Countryside Partnership and KCC, advised that it might be beneficial to repeat the water vole survey however, as there is a positive move towards removing non-native mink from the countryside, it is likely that this will have had a positive impact on the population of water voles at the cattle screen.

KCC is targeting the removal of Himalayan Balsam at sites further upstream however, Farningham would benefit from a volunteer day once every two years. Current rates are £300 for one day which can be built into next year's budget.

The group also visited Horton Kirby and South Darent where a retrospective planning application along the river was discussed and KCC have recently installed gates between Westminster Field and Station Road to try and prevent quadbikes from driving along the river bed.

- The Chequers Public House has closed.
- St Peters and St Pauls church have received correspondence that SDC are cancelling the provision of a commercial waste service from September 2025. The Clerk has suggested to St Peters and St Pauls church that they contact Countrystyle to discuss taking over the service as they visit other commercial properties in the village and that St Martins in Eynsford and the Diocese might also be able to provide advice.
- Npower have not issued any invoices this financial year as unmetered supplies are being switched over to collecting half hourly data. Npower do not know when this will be resolved.
- Is on one week's annual leave in August.
- A resident has made contact regarding the new fence at the Lion Hotel suggesting that the river bank be registered as a Village Green under Section 15(1) of the Commons Act 2006. The Clerk advised that the legislation only applies to dry land and that the river bank has been used to access the river rather than as a Village Green. The Clerk added that the Lion Hotel should have applied for planning permission and have been issued with a 28 day notice to apply for planning by 28th July 2025. Members requested that the Clerk contact the Kent Association of Local Councils for advice and that the planning application will be considered once it is open for comments. **Action: Clerk.**

11. Planning.

11.1 Planning log circulated by the Clerk on 4th July 2025.

Members noted the log.

11.2 Planning Applications. To consider any planning applications and to include any received by the Clerk after the agenda has been served to Councillors.

11.2.1 Reference: 25/01623/HOUSE

Site: 15 Oliver Crescent Farningham Kent DA4 0BE

Proposal: Demolition of existing sheds and erection of new single-storey rear extension with roof lights.

Comments by: 23rd July 2025.

No objection, provided the proposed extension does not encroach upon any land not owned by the applicant. Also note that the orange site notice has not been displayed for the required three weeks.

11.3 Updates on enforcement cases and to highlight new activities or sites causing concern.

Members noted waste that has accumulated on a field at Hill Top Farm that was visible from a photograph provided by a resident, and that it has been reported to SDC and the Environment Agency.

11.4 To note and discuss updates to on-going work with Tibbalds and SDCs Local Plan.

Members noted that the report discussed at last month's meeting fundamentally rejects Pedham Place as a sustainable location for development. Now the report has reached its final stages, it was agreed that the Clerk should send a statement to SDC to reinforce this comment and to request a copy of any work SDC has completed regarding the grey belt. **Action: Clerk.**

Members further agreed that the report must not be shared with any parties other than Crockenhill Parish Council and Eynsford Parish Council prior to the next Regulation 18 consultation.

11.5 To note and discuss any Neighbourhood Plan updates and adopt the Terms of Reference.

Members resolved to adopt the Terms of Reference provided by the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced that, as a result of the spending review, they cannot proceed with commissioning new neighbourhood planning support services for 2025 onwards. So, currently, Farningham's Neighbourhood Plan cannot apply for a Locality grant or technical support.

Cllrs Bourne and McGeough added, that as a result of the withdrawal of grants, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will request additional financial support from FPC which is anticipated to be up to £25,000 for consultancy fees plus additional costs to include items such as hall hire and printing. After discussing, Members resolved to provide the additional financial support through budgeting, increasing the precept, reserves, reducing spend on other items and spreading the cost over three financial years. Members also noted that fundraising events might be organised to provide additional support and that it is possible £12,500 will be needed for this financial year where only £5,000 has been budgeted. Reserves and reduced spend on other items can be considered for the shortfall.

Cllr Bourne reported that the Steering Group had their first meeting on 25th June 2025 and early discussions indicate the policies that may be considered for the plan are:

- Climate, natural environment, health and wellbeing
- Employment, infrastructure and transport
- Housing, design and historic environment

Cllr Bourne added that a document is being prepared for a consultant tender to be sent to four identified consultants, a short householder's questionnaire is being prepared, the webpage and logo are being set up and that the Steering Group will meet every fourth Wednesday 6:30 to 8pm in Shand Hall, dates for the rest of 2025 are 23 July, 27 Aug, 24 Sept, 22 Oct, 26 Nov.

12. Finance Items for noting and decision.

12.1 To approve items payable and note items paid and receipts.

Members noted items paid and receipts and approved items payable.

12.2 Flexed budget June 2025.

Members noted the flexed budget and requested that a new Cost Centre be set up for the Neighbourhood Plan to allow expenditure to be split out by Cost Code. **Action: Clerk.**

12.3 .gov.uk domain.

Members noted the provider, Parish Online, identified by the Clerk and requested that the domain and email address be moved to .gov.uk **Action: Clerk.**

The Chair requested an extension that was granted.

12.4 Extra activities for the Family Fun Day 20th August 2025, Market Meadow.

Members resolved to provide two additional activities to be booked by the Clerk and for additional posters to be put around the village. **Action: Clerk.**

13. Darenth River Preservation Society 40th anniversary, Sunday August 17th from 3pm to 7pm.

Cllr Bourne confirmed that she could attend. **Action: Cllr Bourne.**

14. Request for a memorial tree in Farningham.

Members noted the request and requested that the suggestion for Market Meadow be pursued as FPC does not have any suitable location. **Action: Clerk.**

15. Committee changes at CRPE.

Cllr Bourne advised that Susan Pittman and Nigel Britten are stepping down as Secretary and Chair for the Sevenoaks branch of CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Members requested that the Clerk send Susan and Nigel a letter of thanks for their years of support and dedication. **Action: Clerk.**

16. Urgent business that occurs and requires, attention before the next meeting that may be reported at the Chairman's discretion.

The Clerk reported that a new development of affordable homes, 7 rented and 3 shared ownership, is coming to West Kingsdown and, as Farningham is a neighbouring parish, residents have the opportunity to apply.

Date of next meeting Wednesday 10th September, 7pm.

Requests from Councillors for the next agenda due by 29th August 2025.

Items Paid

Farningham Parish Council PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher	Code	Date	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
40	Telephone /Broadband	09/06/2025	Talk Mobile	S	4.12	0.83	4.95
43	Computer	11/06/2025	Adobe Acrobat	S	16.64	3.33	19.97
28	Electricity Charges	11/06/2025	npower	L			
39	Pension (PC & Clerk's contributions)	11/06/2025	Nest Pensions	X	101.46		101.46
36	Bank charges	13/06/2025	Handelsbanken	X	12.30		12.30
17	Audit fees	19/06/2025	Miss H Penney	X	47.00		47.00
34	Audit fees	19/06/2025	Mrs Julia Chamberlain	X	185.00		185.00
41	Postage/Stationery/Print	19/06/2025	Miss H Penney	X	5.00		5.00
33	Scribe	19/06/2025	Scribe Accounts	S	345.60	69.12	414.72
32	Grass cutting	19/06/2025	Lothlorien Landscapes	S	90.00	18.00	108.00
35	Neighbourhood Plan	19/06/2025	Arc-cs Ltd	S	320.00	64.00	384.00
38	Salary On Costs (Tax, NI etc)	19/06/2025	HM Revenue and Customs	X	139.85		139.85
37	Clerk's salary (net)	23/06/2025	Miss H Penney	X	1,104.72		1,104.72
42	Computer	30/06/2025	Adobe Acrobat	S	16.64	3.33	19.97
52	Bank Interest	30/06/2025	Farningham Parish Council	X			
			Total		2,388.33	158.61	2,546.94

Receipts

Farningham Parish Council RECEIPTS LIST

Voucher	Code	Date	Bank	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
5	Bank Interest	30/06/2025	FPC Deposit (HB)	Bank Interest	Farningham Parish Council	X	71.40		71.40
					Total		71.40		71.40

Items Payable

Farningham Parish Council PAYMENTS (AWAITING AUTHORISATION) LIST

Vouche	Code	Method	Date	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
50	Postage/Stationery/Print	BACs	09/07/2025	Miss H Penney	X	5.00		5.00
48	Computer	BACs	09/07/2025	Spectulise Limited	X	200.00		200.00
51	Projects	BACs	09/07/2025	Tibbalds Ltd	S	7,110.24	1,422.05	8,532.29
47	Salary On Costs (Tax, NI etc)	BACs	09/07/2025	HM Revenue and Customs	X	139.85		139.85
44	Farningham Woods	BACs	11/07/2025	Sevenoaks District Council	S	1,750.00	350.00	2,100.00
49	Telephone /Broadband	DD	09/07/2025	Talk Mobile	S	4.12	0.83	4.95
45	Bank charges	DD	09/07/2025	Handelsbanken	X			
46	Clerk's salary (net)	DD	09/07/2025	Miss H Penney	X	1,104.72		1,104.72
53	Pension	DD	09/07/2025	Helen Penney	X	101.46		101.46
				Total		10,415.39	1,772.88	12,188.27