

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held virtually on the 'Zoom' platform on Wednesday 3rd June 2020 at 7.00pm

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

24. Chairman's Welcome, Apologies for absence:

1. The Chair welcomed five Parish Councillors which included the District Councillor P. McGarvey; the County Councillor, Roger Gough and two members of the public who had both expressed interest in the casual vacancy for Councillor.
2. The Chair thanked Cllr Burns for her excellent chairmanship over the last three years.

25. Public Participation:

A member of the public thanked the Parish Council for the support in addressing several anti-social behaviour issues.

26. Appointment of representatives and Declaration of Interests:

1. The Chair proposed, and it was agreed, that the appointment of representatives to organisations would be deferred until the Council had a full complement.

Cllr P. McGarvey declared a personal and prejudicial interest in:

Kent Association of Local Councils (as Sevenoaks Area Branch Secretary), St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Farningham, as a member of its PCC (Parochial Church Council).

He also wished to express his related interest in St Peter & St Paul's Church, since his wife (Dorothy) is now the Associate Rector).

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.

27. Matters Arising and Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Meeting;

1. It was agreed Cllr. Salmon would write the monthly report; Trident would be circulated in electronic form and will be available to all on the church website: efl-churches.org
2. It was agreed the Chair could sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2020, which had already been agreed, to confirm they are a true record.
3. Prime One Maintenance had been asked to move the trial CCTV camera to a pole bracket further down the High Street, closer to shops and businesses. The Clerk was asked to remind and to ask for stills from the camera to be forwarded showing text to establish clarity. In view of anti-social behaviour during the lockdown it was agreed to consider extending the proposed CCTV camera cover from Sparepenny Lane to Farningham Oak; signs would need to be installed informing CCTV was in situ; quotations are to be obtained for this option. The Clerk was asked to circulate to Councillors a summary of the information gathered from the three potential contractors.

4. The Clerk was asked to follow up with the Environment Agency on when the River Darent 'walk through' planned for May 2020 was likely to happen.
5. Farningham Oak site clearance had commenced following the fire on 6th November 2020. The owner had a telephone conversation with the Chair and confirmed plans were currently being drawn up for a replacement building in keeping in the Conservation Area. The Clerk was asked to organise the reinstatement of the lighting column in Cinder Path, damaged by the fire.
6. The Clerk was asked to remind SL Treecare that the works on cutting back trees in Irving's Corner, High Street, needs to be completed. The company confirmed they were in lockdown and would contact the Clerk regarding a start date.
7. The Clerk was trying to source stickers indicating general litter and dog waste can both be placed in Sevenoaks District Council's litter bins. It was agreed the dog waste bins would be removed following receipt of the next invoice, expected in July 2020.
8. Cllr Burns had reported to the Village Hall Chair that it is the Parish Council's plan to get one Contractor to do all grass cutting across the Parish under one contract. This would be reviewed later in the year with the potential inclusion of Market Meadow; for which the Village Hall Chair was still awaiting a price from the current appointed contractor. The Village Hall Committee were happy the Parish Council offered to take responsibility.
9. Sevenoaks District Council's officer had written to the Clerk reassuring he is still routinely checking the playgrounds, even though they are closed. This was backed up by a senior officer who confirmed he was reviewing the UK Government's Our Plan to Rebuild: The COVID-19 recovery strategy. Regarding re-opening public spaces it states 'People may exercise outside as many times each day as they wish. You will still not be able to use areas like playgrounds.'
10. Jamie Riches from Thames Water had responded regarding the thistles and brambles by their treatment works beside the Darent Valley Path. He reported the last time he was on site with the landowner and the Environment Agency they reached agreement that the landowner would mow the land towards the end of July, to allow the ground nesting season to be over; he expressed concern about mowing before this time though would discuss a one-off mow. The Environment Agency were interested in a collaborative approach of managing the land going forward; they did stress this may involve allowing the land to return to a more natural setting. He confirmed he feels personally responsible for the land and will continue to liaise with all interested parties to try and reach a mutually acceptable plan and condition for the land.
11. The gentleman who had been found sleeping rough under the A20 road bridge, beside the river, had been offered accommodation arranged by Sevenoaks District Council's Homeless team, though his bedding was still in situ.
12. At the last meeting it was resolved for Chris Bourne to build the new website on the Hugo Fox platform. New information had been posted on their website two days previously informing they had three new categories for hosting, gold, silver (both with a monthly fee) and bronze (free but with no support or training). In view of the lack of support provided with the bronze package, and the cost of the gold or silver packages it was resolved that the Parish Council would change provider and proceed with the website host, Spectulise who offer a cost effective package.
13. It was agreed that methods of engaging with local residents (including social media, email and website) and the content of such communications will be kept under review

14. The Clerk was investigating provision of two brass plaques to replicate the wording on the engraved stones on the bridge over the river Darent in High Street.

15. A date for the next Speedwatch session would be circulated; new volunteers were being sought.

28. County Councillor:

The County Councillor, R. Gough advised:

1. Drainage improvement works were imminent in the High Street to try to alleviate flooding being experienced at Lion Cottages.

2. A fourth crew investigating the flooding problems in Eynsford Road had located a hidden chamber by South Hall Close; it was hoped a deep cleanse of the chamber would help the problem though pipe excavation works may be necessary which could include digging on the Oliver Crescent green.

3. A deep cleanse and CCTV exploration of the drain on the right exit to Button Street should alleviate the flooding there.

4. It appeared that Thames Water has solved the problem of the foul chamber by Bridge Cottage, High Street. Cllr Shanmuganathan had thanked both Thames Water and Kent Highways teams for their expertise and geniality in getting the problem sorted.

5. The Household Waste and Recycling Centres had reopened with an on-line booking system in place. Although beset by difficulties on the first day with long waiting times this was resolved. They hoped to increase the capacity of slots soon. The Clerk had passed him feedback from two residents

29. Correspondence:

Acer House Practice owner had written stating they had looked seriously into the possibility of keeping the existing oak tree at Acer House but had been advised by several quarters the only realistic option is to comply with the instructions from Sevenoaks District Council to remove it and replace it with a new tree in a more favourable position. Concern was expressed regarding the large expanse of tarmac with no planting yet carried out. Cllr McGarvey agreed to ask what is going into the frontage and where.

30. Planning;

1. It was agreed the following comments be sent regarding planning applications received from Sevenoaks District Council:

SE/20/01319/FUL Little Thyme, Calfstock Lane Replacement of existing forestry building with new building to be used for storage associated with existing forestry yard. OBJECTION: (i) There is no requirement and little justification for a building this size. A double-height building with rooflight is not required for the storage of tools and equipment. (ii) The design is too bulky and too large.

SE/20/01023/HOUSE 48 Oliver Crescent Part 1 storey/ part 2 storey rear extension and new porch No Comment

Cllr Shanmuganathan recused himself at this point and was invited back after discussion of this item:

SE/20/01300/DETAIL The Manor House, High Street Details pursuant to condition 3 (doors and windows) of 19/03401/LBCALT. No Comment

SE/20/01468/AGRNOT Chinhams Farm, London Road Steel Framed Agricultural Barn No Comment

SE/20/01466/HOUSE Kuling, Old Dartford Road Remove chimney and roof, raise roof with new dormer windows, front canopy roof, Juliet balcony and alterations to fenestration No Comment

2. Planning Decisions:

SE/20/00778/HOUSE Potager, High street Conversion of existing integral domestic garage to habitable room with alterations to existing fenestration GRANTED

SE/20/00613/DETAIL Acer House Practice, High Street Details pursuant to Condition 7 of (landscaping) of 19/03228/CONVAR GRANTED

SE/20/00901 and 00902/DETAIL The Manor House, High Street Details pursuant to Condition 4 (Ecological) GRANTED

SE/20/00762/FUL Land adjoining Dunbrae, Sparepenny Lane Removal of existing swimming pool and pool room and the construction of a new detached house with associated car parking, cycle and bin storage and landscaping REFUSED

20/01144/AGRNOT Land west of Gabrielspring Road Steel Framed Barn Prior Approval Not Required.

SE/20/00990/HOUSE Morning Glory, Eynsford Road Raising of existing roof to allow better use of existing room. New window to South elevation GRANTED

3. Tree applications:

SE/20/01232/WTCA The Manor House, High Street Various works to trees

SE/20/01186/WTCA Old Parsonage House, High Street 3 Sycamore trees - fell 2 Sycamore trees - reduce crown by approx 30%

31. District Councillor:

Cllr McGarvey reported:

1. Many shops will be reopening in Sevenoaks on 15th June. Free car parking has continued in SDC owned car parks but this decision will be reviewed on 22nd June.

2. Sevenoaks District Council has been granted permission to bring a judicial review against the Planning Inspector's decision to reject their draft Local Plan.

32. Extension of Time:

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

33. Highways, Footpaths and Street Lighting:

It was agreed to send to the County Councillor, Roger Gough the Clerk's photos of blocked drains on the A20. The Clerk was advised these would be cleared on 13th May but had not happened.

34. Friends of Farningham:

Cllr Salmon proposed that Friends of Farningham resume on Saturday 4th July adhering to social distancing requirements currently in place. The Clerk was asked to put appropriate notices on the board and to email volunteers.

35. 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.

36. Open Spaces:

It was agreed Cllr Burns would contact Aspen Treecare, the contractor appointed to maintain the amenity areas to remind that Irving's Corner and the land by the river needed attention.

37. Co-option:

It was agreed to co-opt Latif Oztosun to fill the vacancy. The Clerk would give him the necessary forms for completion, and inform Sevenoaks District Council.

38. Finance:

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

Kent County Council	Pension contributions (PC: £360.57 Clerk: £56.66)	£417.23
EON	Electricity charges	191.72
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
Scribe	Annual Accounts Software and Licence	£271.68
Lothlorien Landscapes	First and second cuts of the Churchyard	£624.00

2.Cllr Burns had signed the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements of the Parish Council's accounts from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 which the Clerk had prepared and Mrs. J Chamberlain, internal auditor, had completed the internal audit. The Clerk would submit the necessary AGAR documents to PKF Littlejohn for the external audit.

3.It was agreed there would be no increase to the Clerk's salary following the annual review.

4.It was resolved that an external agency would be sought to manage payroll.

Signed **Wednesday 1st July 2020**

The meeting closed at 10.30pm. The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st July 2020.