

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held virtually on the 'Zoom' platform on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 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)

**56. Chairman's Welcome, Apologies for absence:**

The Chair welcomed six Parish Councillors which included the District Councillor P. McGarvey. The County Councillor, Roger Gough joined the meeting at 7.20pm.

**57. Appointment of representatives and 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.

**58. 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 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, which had already been agreed, to confirm they are a true record.
2. It was agreed Cllr. Salmon would write the monthly report for Trident.
3. A parishioner had written to complain about the temporary plastic barriers erected between the three planters that run along High Street at the Lion Hotel. He also reported the table nearest to the High Street and the Lion building had been used at night and he found the noise intrusive. The Chair had visited the Lion's Manager who had been very helpful. She confirmed the barriers had been erected to help with social distancing to stop their customers walking in from the High Street. She had also agreed the table mentioned would not be used during the evening. Cllr Oztosun referenced that 'routers' had been installed in their frontage presumably to assist with outdoor service
4. The PCSO, Lauren Bruce, had sent a report on incidents dealt with in the past month; she had agreed this could be circulated to those on the parishioners list.
5. The Clerk had not heard back from SDC's Enforcement team whether the two new caravans delivered to Hill Top Farm were within the agreed number for the site and would remind.
6. The Chair reported she was keeping a watch on the Old Stables site in Maplescombe Lane; she believed the rubbish tipping had reduced and thought the last tip was ten days ago but the amount of rubbish on the site was unacceptable. SDC's Enforcement team were monitoring.
7. Cllr Shanmuganathan reported the Butchers, the Palace of India and the Chequers would be happy to host a CCTV camera. The Clerk was asked to organise a Zoom meeting with Eynsford Parish Council to share ideas. The Clerk would try to get recommendations on reputable companies.
8. The Clerk had asked Dr Susan Pittman of FEHLS for advice on preserving the engraved stone panels on the bridge over the River Darent in the High Street. As Kent County Council and Historic England would have to agree on any action and all FPC can do is to be the enabling body it was agreed to drop this as an agenda item.

## **59. County Councillor:**

The County Councillor, Roger Gough, reported:

1. Ground investigation works undertaken in early July in Eynsford Road and Oliver Crescent to try and improve the flooding experienced by residents by South Hall Close had not solved the problem as predicted; this was the third unsuccessful attempt. He gave assurance that Kent Highways would continue to work to resolve the flooding.
2. A lot of work had been done by the Public Transport team in preparation for children returning to schools; buses were operating with far reduced capacity.
3. Cllr McGarvey reported many of the drains on the A20 between Eynsford Road and King's roundabout were again/still blocked with soil and debris with weeds growing from them, and Cllr Salmon reported the A20 drains from Button Street to King's Roundabout also had grass and weeds growing from them. It was agreed that the Clerk would note on the Highways Portal and Cllr Gough would report to the Highways team responsible.

## **60. Correspondence:**

1. A resident had reported the visibility on the road in Sparepenny Lane is very restricted for walkers climbing the steps when exiting from the field which is even more difficult with a dog on a lead. The Clerk was asked to ask Kent Highways if they could move 30mph speed limit sign further long the lane so the exit would be in the 30mph zone and the Clerk to contact Kent Highways to ask for the hedge to be cut back.
2. The Clerk had reported that Action with Communities in Rural Kent would be undertaking a Rural Housing Survey in May 2021 in conjunction with Sevenoaks District Council. Questionnaires would be posted via Royal Mail to all Farningham's households and a Freepost stamped addressed envelope would be enclosed for their return.
3. Mark Gallant of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership had written to the Chair to update since their August meeting, reporting there had been a flurry of activity on the River Darent. He had identified trees that he wanted to cut back in order to relight the river and would be meeting a representative from Down to Earth, the appointed contractor. It was agreed to 'round up' a group of volunteers who could be shown how to remove the Himalayan Balsam safely and at the appropriate time next year. He had advised the Lion's manager to remove the Hemlock Water Dropwort as it was growing close to where their customers were eating and children playing and it is one of the most poisonous plants in Europe. The Clerk was asked to follow up on the annual 'walk through' the River Darent which had been due to take place in May.
4. The Clerk had learned from Terry Hutchings of St. John Ambulance that the Ambulance Station in Horton Way was for sale; the local team are putting up a strong defence as there is a Deed of Covenant on the site.
5. It was agreed the Clerk could purchase defibrillator pads for the three units in the village from SP Services at a cost of £101.97 plus VAT.
6. It was agreed the Clerk register the Parish Council's interest in Kent County Council's project to increase the number of publicly accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. Cllr. Burns to review the application criteria and process.
7. The Village Hall Bookings Secretary had written stating that due to their updated policy regarding the coronavirus they require an hour between bookings for cleaning and therefore for the time being the Village Hall would not be free until 8.30pm for Parish Council meetings.
8. The following dates were agreed for 2021 meetings: 13<sup>th</sup> January, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> December. It was agreed that when the Council could return to a Hall for meetings that Shand Hall be sought as an 8.30pm start for Council meetings is too late. It was suggested that the next Annual Parish Meeting could potentially be held in St. Peter and St. Paul Church.

9. The Clerk had been in touch with two contractors to ask for a quotation for repairs deemed necessary at the flint wall in the High Street in front of the Village Hall and Market Meadow.
10. The Clerk had asked two contractors for a price to trim the trees on the amenity land by the river. Only Lothlorien Landscapes had given a price to date, which was £75.00 plus VAT. The Clerk was asked to contact the Tree Officer with a view to gaining permission to lop.

## **61. 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 Material change of use of land for stationing of caravans for residential occupation for Gypsy Traveller site  
OBJECTION:

- 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.

Cllr Shanmuganathan recused himself and left the meeting for the following item:

SE/02372/HOUSE The Manor House, High Street Removal of existing ancillary building. Construction of new ancillary garden building together with formation of walled garden around existing formal planting No Comment

2. Tree application:

SE/20/02142/WTCA 1 Old Parsonage Mews High Street Mature Sycamore Fell  
No Objection Lodged

## **62. Extension of Time:**

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

## **63. Social Media/Communication/Website:**

The Chair reported the new website was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> August and has received an impressive number of hits. Councillors agreed they were indebted to Chris Bourne who dedicated so many hours in building the site and asked for him to be congratulated on its content. In the past month the hits on social media had increased rapidly with The Friends of Farningham and other local interest posts attracting the greatest number of hits. Three newsletters had successfully been circulated via 'Mailchimp'.

## **64. Highways, Footpaths and Street Lighting:**

1. Cllr Salmon reported the white lines and 'Slow' signage on the carriageway of the A225 around Beesfield Lane and the top of the High Street needed repainting. The Clerk was asked to contact Kent Highways.
2. Cllr McGarvey reported the weeds in the kerbsides had today (2 September) been sprayed with weed killer by Kent Highways.

## **65. Friends of Farningham:**

Friends of Farningham had met in July and August with between 3 and 10 volunteers. The flint wall at the rear of Four Winds, along the A225 Eynsford Road looked much improved and had been mostly been cleared of ivy, though the task would be tackled again at the next meet on 5<sup>th</sup> September.

## **66. Open Spaces:**

1. The Chair reported she, with Cllr Hirons and Mr Bourne had a very useful and informative tour of the Farningham Woods and the coppicing programme explained by Sevenoaks District Council officers. A summary of the information gleaned had had been posted on Facebook and in the Trident.
2. It was agreed to defer car parking until the next meeting.

## **67. Update of Policies:**

The Clerk will update the Council policies with changes flagged earlier in the summer and would incorporate slight additional changes necessary to the Financial Regulations.

## **68. Parishioners complaints and protocol for discussion:**

It was agreed to ask any parishioners who complain to the Parish Council with neighbourly issues that where possible, in the first instance, they have a conversation with their neighbours with FPC advising where parishioners can take their complaints if they are unable to be resolved.

## **69. Reports from representatives on other bodies:**

1. Cllr McGarvey reported a long serving churchwarden, Gerald Roome, would be retiring.
2. Cllr McGarvey reported a tree by the new houses behind Shand Hall was leaning on the church wall; Sevenoaks District Council officers had agreed it could be taken down.

## **70. IT and Email:**

1. It was agreed the Clerk's email address is moved away from Gmail and a new email address is set up, aligned to the new Farningham Parish Council.org website. That email account can be accessed or diverted if necessary, to ensure that it remains accessible in any emergency situation. It was understood the cost would be about £100.00 per annum which could include setting up email addresses for Councillors.
2. The Chair proposed that back up of email and documents should be cloud based and happen automatically rather than the clerk needing to 'send' documents to back up on an external hard drive. The cost of this is likely to be around £7pm for unlimited cloud storage. This was agreed. Consideration is also to be given to a new, separate hard drive with automatic back up for around £70 for the box.
3. The Clerk was asked to write to KALC to ask for advice on whether Parish Councils should be expected to spend £15.00 per month on the necessary Adobe Acrobat programme to make documents accessible for their websites.

## **71. Finance:**

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

Kent County Council	Pension contributions	£435.77
	(PC: £360.57 Clerk: £56.66)	

