



FARNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL www.farninghamparishcouncil.org
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Farningham Parish Council met online on 7th October, with 6 Parish Councillors present including Cllr Philip McGarvey, District Councillor. Also there were County Cllr Roger Gough - plus 3 residents who indicated that they could be interested in making themselves available to fill the vacancy left upon the resignation of Cllr Ruth Hirons.

SDC's official notice of a Parish Councillor vacancy was posted on 8th October, so if 10 (ten) parishioners write in to SDC to call an election (and they have until 28th October to do so), then an election will be held – but because of Covid-19 restrictions, any such election cannot be held until 6th May 2021. So if no election is called, the remaining 6 Parish Councillors would co-opt one (there is still time to apply) to join them (current term is until May 2023).

Cllr Roger Gough gave updates from KCC, including ongoing but limited progress on work on flooding caused by blocked drains – in Eynsford Road and on the A20. These drains still need looking into.

Working with Cllr Gough we want to consider again the possibility of introducing a 20mph speed limit in central Farningham (High Street & London Road etc). But if introducing traffic calming, we recognise that no-one wants a sleeping policeman (a road bump rather than a kipping cop) outside their house or bedroom window, so other measures would be needed.

District Cllr McGarvey's report included advising Parish Cllrs that when he forwards to them the SDC Members' weekly updates, the Covid-19 stats are split out by District Council areas rather than by postcode breakdowns used by Track & Trace. (7oaks figures are still low.) The reduction in SDC income (because of CV19) is still a moving target, but while a large dent was reported to SDC Cabinet, steps are afoot to remove this gap. And contrary to a report in the Sevenoaks Chronicle, SDC is suffering a shortfall in income, but is not "in debt".

We had a quick zoom visit from Emma Leader, the Lion Hotel Manager, and this was very welcome and appreciated – so it may become a recurring feature. (Book your tables now!)

Planning Enforcement issues are piling up, but a restructuring of SDC's Environmental Health earlier this month (separating out the previous Dartford/Sevenoaks joint teams) can only help re-focus Sevenoaks resources into Sevenoaks. We need it.

Potential candidates for listing Assets of Community Value will be considered – including for our Public Houses and some business premises and others. We will post what this would mean on the website, and summarise here when we start identifying relevant assets.

CCTV is proving hard to progress because after lots of discussion (and I do mean lots) we still need to finalise the needs; desirability; costings; logistics; locations; internet connections; data controllers and quality of kit. (I may have missed something...)

Charging Points for electric vehicles: We are surveying parishioners to determine the potential need / desirability of our installing 2 charging points in the vicinity (or grounds) of Farningham Village Hall. We want to know if you are positive or negative...

The lovely new FPC website www.farninghamparishcouncil.org is encouragingly attracting more hits month on month, and we also have a growing number of followers on Facebook and Twitter. So, many thanks to Chris Bourne for enabling this.

Remembrance observations will still go ahead this year but somewhat scaled back. Check the church website www.efl-churches.org nearer the time (8th Nov).

We are in regular contact with SDC in relation to the management of Farningham Woods. Coppicing remains critical to the woodland management, and is currently underway in areas that will explicitly benefit the nationally rare Deptford Pink (this plant is one of the main reason that Farningham Woods are designated an Site of Significant Scientific Interest (SSSI)) and will also open up views across Farningham Village and the valley. Some of the timber, together with timber from previous coppicing, will be removed as part of this (weather permitting) and some will have to remain on site to allow the leaves to drop before it can be chipped and removed to go to be used as biomass fuel. Hopefully this will 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 longer. Generally, larger coppice poles are sold for use in timber products such as chestnut fencing with the smaller material going to commercial biomass fuel. Whilst this helps towards the cost of the woodland management in most years' operations run at a deficit.

While setting our 2021/22 budget next month, we are already part way through having our lamp-posts repainted (green) – and of those already done, don't they look good? We are impressed by the contractor's high standard of preparation, in sanding down and applying undercoat – some of you might have been worried that grey was going to be the final colour!

Farninghamsters should know that Shoreham Parish Council is asking Kent Highways to introduce a 40mph speed limit through the wooded bit of the A225 from the 30mph edge of Otford right up to the layby opposite Shoreham railway station (which we and Kent Highways agree with) but we don't agree with their request to extend this 40mph to the next railway bridge chicane (at Preston's Farm). Do you?

Friends of Farningham are still doing superb work tidying up around the village. Thank you!

As Jane Grey is retiring as Parish Council Clerk (December) the deadline for applications is/was 24th October – the "is/was" depends on how quickly you receive Trident and read it.

Next FPC meeting is on Wed. 4th November at 7pm on Zoom – contact the Clerk to join in.

Cllr Philip McGarvey