

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20th MARCH 2017 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

PRESENT: Cllrs B Scott (Chairman), Cllrs M Merritt, G Martin, L Johnson, J Morgan, H Swan, C Stockwell, County Cllr Stockell and Mrs A Broadhurst (Clerk).

IN ATTENDANCE: Twelve parishioners were present.

Cllr Scott requested, if anyone intended to record the meeting, that they inform the Parish Council.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

There were no points for public discussion at the beginning of the meeting, however Cllr Scott informed all present that he would close the meeting for Agenda Item 5 (Planning) to allow residents the opportunity to speak regarding 17/500880 – The Hollow, Charlton Lane.

1. APOLOGIES

PCSO N Morris, Borough Cllrs B Mortimer and R Webb

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Johnson declared an interest in Agenda Item 7.1 (Grounds Maintenance Contract) as he has submitted a tender.

Cllr Scott declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.8 (Finance – Donations for 2016/17) as his wife is the President of the WI who have submitted a request.

Cllr Swan declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.8 (Finance – Donations for 2016/17) as she is an Evergreen Leader and a member of the WI, both had submitted a request.

Cllr Stockwell declared in interest in Agenda Item 5.1 (Planning Application 17/500880/FULL) as he lives close to the application site.

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 16th January 2017

The Minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and Cllr Martin proposed that the minutes were a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Merritt, with all in favour. The Chairman signed off the official copy.

4. REPORTS FROM THE POLICE & COMMUNITY WARDEN

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, there had been two crimes. One was a burglary other than a dwelling and the other was theft of heating oil; both crimes were committed on the Lower Road. There have also been a few trailer and tractor thefts in surrounding parishes and residents should be vigilant.

5. PLANNING MATTERS

5.1 17/500880/FULL – The Hollow, Charlton Lane

New dwelling on site of existing garages and hardstanding

The Chairman suspended to meeting to allow for the members of public present to speak regarding this application.

Several concerns were raised, which included the following:

- Loss of privacy - dwelling will look into the bathroom and a bedroom of the neighbouring property. The owner of the existing home would be unable to add privacy glass as it is a Grade II listed building.
- Access.
- Septic tank / cess pit – drainage straight into neighbouring garden due to the topography of the surrounding land.
- Listed Building concerns – not a stable building and this could be an issue when the foundations of the new build are dug out.
- Concerns that the single storey garages will be replaced by a two-storey dwelling.
- Garages currently in use.

Cllr Merritt outlined the issues that would need to be addressed in the application responses:

- Noise, disturbance, loss of privacy, nuisance and loss of daylight – need detailed evidence to use these as reasons.
- Over development of the site would be a weak point.
- Out of character with the surrounding properties.
- Highways issues – would need to employ a professional to put a case against any highways issues as Kent Highways very rarely object to applications.

- Personal circumstances, financial gain of applicant, worries of future expansion (speculative) – these points cannot be included as a reason for requesting the application be refused.
- Lack of information on drainage.

The Chairman then reconvened the meeting for Councillors to discuss the application. The following response was agreed with 6 in favour and 1 abstention.

West Farleigh Parish Council recommendation: The Parish Council would request that this application be refused and ask that, if the Planning Officer's view differs, the application be reported to the Planning Committee.

The reasons for refusal are as follows:

- There are serious concerns with the proximity of the proposed development to a Grade II listed building. This house will have been built on a rag stone base with no real foundations. The construction of the new dwelling could have a serious impact on this property.
- The proposed dwelling would be over development of the site and is not a suitable in this area. The current garages are approximately 2.5 metres high (they have a sloping roof which is not shown in the drawing). The height of the proposed building is approximately 6.2 metres high, making this nearly 3 times taller than the original garages on site. If approved, a dwelling of this height will have a detrimental impact on the surrounding homes.
- There is lack of information in the Design and Access Statement – there is no detail of the turning curve for services/emergency vehicles and, having viewed the area, Councillors believe that there will be an issue for vehicles trying to gain access.
- The access road to all properties in The Hollow is a narrow un-made road which would be virtually closed to vehicles during the installation of services to the proposed development. This will cause issues for the existing residents.
- There is no detail supplied with regards to drainage. This site has a clay subsoil which makes it unsuitable for a soakaway to be installed.
- There is no detail supplied for the location of the cess pit.
- Contrary to the information supplied, these garages are currently in use and the vehicles currently parked in them will be forced to park on Charlton Lane (which is a country lane), impeding the bus service.

6. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

6.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh

Cllr Swan reported on several potholes around the village:

- Ewell Lane – 80m from green on the right (600mm x 225mm wide x 200mm deep) and one further down on the same side and of similar size. **ACTION: Clerk**
- Lower Road – where the temporary traffic lights are (on the left coming from Charlton Lane towards Teston Lane). The pothole is one of several along this stretch of road, measuring over a meter long. One is approximately 8" deep. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Swan queried whether the green would be reinstated and the Clerk confirmed that neither MBC or Kent Highways would accept ownership to complete the work. Cllr Scott added that, in that case, it would be down to the Parish Council to reinstate if required.

Cllr Scott reported that the Kent Highways sign by the Tickled Trout for Teston Bridge is incorrect. It reads that the bridge is unsuitable for HGVs, however this should say No vehicles over 6'6". It was noted that it should be the same as the sign on the Teston side of the bridge. **ACTION: Clerk**

6.2 Teston Lane

Cllr Scott reported that there was no update on this matter. Borough Cllr Mortimer had also been trying to assist with this issue, but had also been unable to make any progress.

6.3 Speedwatch

Cllr Stockwell reported that he has completed a course and the booking of equipment etc. must now be arranged on-line. To be an authorised user he also needs to complete on-line training. Cllr Stockwell confirmed that the Speedwatch Co-ordinator will view various possible areas, these include:

- Charlton Lane – by Gaulston Bungalows
- Village Green
- By the Tickled Trout
- The Lower green, in the 40mph zone

The Clerk reported on an email received from Cllr Webb, who is offering support and Cllr Stockwell confirmed that he is in contact with him.

7. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Cllr Johnson left the meeting

7.1 Grounds Maintenance Contract

The Clerk reported that she had contacted three companies to quote for the grounds maintenance contract in the village. This would be a three-year contract running from April 2017 – March 2020.

The main contract covers the following areas:

The Green, Charlton Lane

20 cuts a year including strimming around the posts on every visit

Small verge with seat by Elmscroft House, Charlton Lane

12 cuts a year including strimming around the bench on every visit

Small green with information board opposite Smiths Hall, Lower Road

20 cuts a year including strimming around the bench and information board on every visit

Verge at junction of Kettle Lane and Lower Road (known as St Helen's Corner)

20 cuts a year on the left as you exit Kettle Lane

Verge on Ewell Lane at the junction with the access road from The Good Intent Pub in Charlton Lane

1 cut a year at the beginning of May. Cut 50m to ensure a clear sight line (coming from the pub on the right-hand side along Ewell Lane)

Junction of Ewell Lane and Lower Road triangle of grass at junction

1 cut a year at the beginning of May

The annual cost for this work from each company for the 3-year period:

Contractor 1 – £1,310.00 per annum

Contractor 2 - £3,120.00 per annum

Contractor 3 - £2,600.00 per annum

The Clerk then reported that there were two other areas that the Parish Council had previously felt might need to be completed (if Kent Highways did not complete the work as promised) and the companies had been asked to quote for these as 'one off' individual jobs:

Verge along Lower Road from Teston Lane to Church Lane

1 cut a year at the beginning of May (on left heading towards East Farleigh)

Contractor 1 – £450.00 per occasion

Contractor 2 - £45.00 per occasion

Contractor 3 - £150.00 per occasion

Verge on both sides of Charlton Lane at the junction of Lower Road

1 cut a year at the beginning of May

Contractor 1 – £150.00 per occasion

Contractor 2 - £45.00 per occasion

Contractor 3 - £120.00 per occasion

The Clerk reminded all present that the Financial Regulations did not require the Parish Council to accept the lowest quote. During discussion, Councillors noted the vast difference in price for the first additional 'one-off' job but noted that, even when all three parts of the contract were added together, Contractor 1 was still the cheapest of the three companies. Councillors queried whether the contractors had all quoted for the same work and the Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with all three companies individually to confirm all areas of the contract and she was satisfied that they had all quoted for the same work.

It was then proposed by Cllr Stockwell that Contractor 1 be awarded the contract for a three-year period (April 2017 – March 2020). This was seconded by Cllr Martin, with all in favour.

Cllr Johnson returned to the meeting

7.2 Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk reported the the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on the 15th May at 8.00pm and Councillors agreed that it should follow the usual format, with the bi-monthly Parish Council meeting being at the earlier time of 6.30pm. After brief discussion, it was agreed to have a booklet again this year which will include the Council and village organisation's reports and that refreshments to the value of £40.00 will be served at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

7.3 Representative to attend the Parish/Police Liaison Meeting

The Clerk reported that the Chairman of KALC had stated that linking the Parish/Police Liaison and Neighbourhood Watch meetings had not been a success. Therefore, a Parish/Police Liaison meeting is arranged for Wednesday 24th May at 7pm at Maidstone Police Station. The Clerk reported that only one Councillor can attend and Cllrs Merritt and Scott stated that one of them would be present. (To be confirmed via email so that the Clerk can inform KALC) **ACTION: Clerk**

8 MATTERS OF REPORT

8.1 County Councillor's Report

County Cllr Stockell reported that Kent County Council were doing well with regards to education, Kent is above the national average. It was noted that the budget for Social Care is a real issue. LED lights are being installed around the County and Paulina was pleased to be able to confirm that the Member's Grants will continue. Cllr Stockwell asked whether a grant could be applied for to purchase gym equipment for the green and Cllr Stockwell confirmed that she would be happy to support this.

8.2 Borough Councillor's Report

No reports provided.

8.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Swan wanted to congratulate the villagers who have planted bulbs on the kerb side, they look lovely.

Cllr Swan raised concerns with litter bin issues. A further short discussion took place regarding the removal of dog bins and the fact that the Parish Council may need to look at reinstating some and paying a private company to empty them if there becomes an issue in the future.

Cllr Morgan reported that the coffee morning, held at the recent Lambing Day had been hugely successful. On behalf of the other Councillors she thanked Geoff, Candy and Ollie for arranging the day and thanked all who donated cakes. Cllr Scott then thanked Cllrs Swan and Morgan for making cakes for the day too.

Cllr Morgan then reported that the next Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 10th June 10.00am – 12.00pm.

Cllr Morgan reported that the bulbs by Kettle Lane had not done well this year and it was noted that the ground is very shallow in this area. Cllr Morgan suggested that crocuses be planted along there as they have much smaller bulbs and all Councillors were in agreement with this. Cllr Johnson proposed that £60 be set aside to purchase bulbs later in the year. This was seconded by Cllr Martin, with all in favour.

Cllr Morgan reported that, during a recent power cut, the new UK Power Networks system of contacting vulnerable residents had worked well.

Cllr Martin reported that the picnic tables need to be installed and it was noted that some posts also need to be replaced. The Clerk reported that money has been set aside for the posts and Cllr Scott stated that a working party needed to be arranged to spend a couple of days working on the green. Cllr Merritt added that some thought needs to be given to the type of base that is going to be required for the picnic benches.

Cllr Stockwell raised concerns at the children crossing the road from the car park to the Sports Club. He stated that he was concerned that there was going to be an accident. He asked whether there could be a sign warning of children crossing the road. Cllr Merritt stated that it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children are safe. County Cllr Stockell offered to look into whether there is a solution to this issue and added that she would be able to fund a sign, if it was decided that that was the best course of action. **ACTION: County Cllr Stockell**

Cllr Stockwell queried whether Councillors want him to continue with the gym equipment project and the Clerk stated that she had further information on this point that she wished to raise under her report.

8.4 Clerk's Reports

- Play Area: The Clerk reported that the saga of having the Rota Bounce installed has now drawn to a close. The general view of all present was that the Parish Council would not look to have Playdale Playgrounds installing equipment in the future, due to their unprofessional attitude. The Clerk reported that, if the Parish Council wishes to install gym equipment, it must not be sited near the play area, as the lower age limit for using gym equipment is 14 years old; the equipment would need to be on the far side of the green. The Clerk reported that the Safety Inspector has said that she is prepared to oversee any project from design through to completion so that she is the point of contact in future (as she knows all the regulations). There would be a charge for this service, but it would stop any issues that could arise, as seen recently with Playdale.

The Clerk informed all present that Maria from Craigdene Ltd has recently overseen the installation of some gym equipment in Loose (King George V Playing Field, Walnut Tree Avenue, Loose ME15 9RN). She is also involved with a fitness area for Halling Parish Council and this will cost £8000 for three items (5 users) seat, bin, sign and installed on a rubber mulch surface. This will be installed early April.

The Clerk stated that, with the money recently set aside and the MBC match funding which is promised for this year, this project was achievable. Councillors raised concerns with the gym equipment being so far away from main play area, as parents may wish to use the gym equipment whilst their children are playing. The Clerk suggested that Councillors meet with Maria to discuss this matter further, possibly when she completes the main annual safety inspection during the Summer. The Clerk offered to speak with Maria about this. **ACTION: Clerk**

- **Website:** The Clerk reported that the website has now gone live, residents can simply google West Farleigh Parish Council (<http://www.westfarleighpc.kentparishes.gov.uk>). It was noted that, to work on the website, it is not as simple to use as the old website and the servers are very slow when trying to upload documents. The website is further down the search engines but will move up as more people view it. The Clerk also reported on a website which is set up by a company called HugoFox, this is free for Parish Council's and has a planning tracker which will immediately inform you of any applications in your chosen area. If Councillors wanted to move to this in the future, a domain name would be required at an approximate cost of £20 a year.

9 FINANCE

9.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2017 was **Noted**.

9.2 Income received since the last meeting

Money from Sale of Roundabout	£200.00
-------------------------------	---------

9.3 Cheques for signature

It was proposed by Cllr Stockwell, seconded by Cllr Johnson **"that the Council approve the following payments"**.

101149 – Playdale Playgrounds Ltd – Balance for Rotabounce	£3,039.46
101150 - Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary for March	£654.79
101151 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Mileage)	£ 28.80
101152 – Craigdene Ltd – Safety Inspection for Rota Bounce	£150.00
101153 – Post Office Ltd – PAYE	£547.60

Subsequent cheques written during the meeting:

101154 - CPRE – Annual Subscription	£ 36.00
101155 - The Evergreens - Donation	£600.00
101156 - All Saints Church – Donation	£400.00
101157 - The Farleighs WI – Donation	£250.00
101158 – Mrs A Broadhurst – April Salary (Post-dated)	£650.00

Direct Debits from the Account

People's Pension Joining Fee (inc. vat)	£600.00
People's Pension January Contribution	£ 15.00
People's Pension February Contribution	£ 20.00

9.4 Reviewed Standing Orders – To approve

Cllr Martin proposed that the reviewed Standing Orders be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan; with all in favour.

9.5 Reviewed Financial Regulations – To approve

Cllr Martin proposed that the reviewed Financial Regulations be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

9.6 Reviewed Risk Assessments – To approve

Cllr Martin proposed that the reviewed Risk Assessments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

9.7 Reviewed Internal Control Statement 2016/2017 – To approve

Cllr Martin proposed that the reviewed Internal Control Statement for 2016/17 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

9.8 Donations for 2016/17 – To discuss and approve

The Clerk reported that three requests had been received for this year:

1. The Church has asked for a donation towards the grounds maintenance in the churchyard again this year
2. The Evergreens has requested some financial support (their letter states that we are the only group now making a donation towards their running costs).
3. The WI have submitted a request towards their next planned phase of refurbishment includes updating the kitchen and toilet facilities, external painting and continuing with the internal decoration

The Clerk reminded all present that the Parish Council had award three grants last year, £600 to The Evergreens, £400 to the Church and £510.39 to the Sports Club (this had been a one off donation for the purchase of the defibrillator case). It was also noted that £1,000 had been set aside in the budget for grants and that any additional money awarded would need to come out of the general reserves.

Cllr Martin stated that he wanted to be able to support The Evergreens and proposed that a donation of £600 be made, this was seconded by Cllr Johnson, with 6 in favour and 1 abstention.

Cllr Merritt stated that he wanted a donation to be made to the Church as the churchyard always receives positive comments when completing the walkabout for the Kent Men of the Trees competition. He proposed that a donation of £400 be made, this was seconded by Cllr Martin; with all in favour.

Cllr Martin suggested that a small donation be made to the WI, as the Parish Council had been unable to support them the previous year. He proposed £250, this was seconded by Cllr Stockwell, with 5 in favour and 2 abstentions.

West Farleigh Evergreens	£600.00 – cheque no. 101155
All Saints Church	£400.00 – cheque no. 101156
The Farleighs WI	£250.00 – cheque no. 101157

9.9 Renewal of Annual Subscription to CPRE – To approve

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription for CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) is due for renewal at a cost of £36.00. Cllr Martin proposed that the subscription be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Stockwell, with all in favour.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting will be held on **Monday 15th May 2017 at 6.30pm**, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 8.00pm at The Good Intent.

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.40pm