

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21st MARCH 2016 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

PRESENT: Cllrs B Scott (Chairman), Cllrs M Merritt, G Martin (7.35pm), L Johnson, J Morgan, C Stockwell, Mrs A Broadhurst (Clerk), Borough Cllr J Wilson and Community Warden Adam McKinley

IN ATTENDANCE: Fourteen parishioners were present.

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

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

There was discussion regarding the 30mph sign which is repeatedly being removed in Charlton Lane. The Clerk confirmed that this has been reported to Kent Highways again, urging them to report the issue to Kent Police. Cllr Scott stated that it was very disappointing as everyone had fought so hard to get the speed limit lowered.

Dog fouling in the village was raised as a concern, especially as a resident has seen a fellow parishioner not clearing up after their dog. The Community Warden stated that he would be able to help tackle this issue and can also assist with reporting the matter to MBC.

A resident raised concerns at the amount of litter in the village, in particular around Teston Lane, Ewell Lane (around the bus stop at the bottom), Hunt Street and from the junction of Teston Lane/Lower Road through to Kettle Lane. The Clerk informed all that she would report these areas to MBC and find out when the village is next due its litter pick.

ACTION: Clerk

A resident asked whether there was any update on a meeting room for the Parish Council. Cllr Scott stated that there had been discussion with the Sports Club and it may be possible to build a small meeting room, mainly to be used for Parish Council meetings. He added that approximately £15,000 has been saved and so the Parish Council is looking at the cheapest option for putting the money to good use. It was noted that the Police have historically stated that they could have more visibility in the village if there was a room to meet with residents in and the Community Warden added that he would be able to have surgeries with residents. Cllr Scott confirmed that this plan would in no way impact on the hiring of the Church as the room was much smaller than the space available there.

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr H Swan and PCSO M Judges

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Scott declared an interest in Agenda Item 8.9 (Donations for 2015/16) as his wife is the President of the Woman's Institute, who have submitted a request.

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 18th January 2016

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 Stockwell, with all in favour. The Chairman signed off the official copy.

4. POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk reported that there had been one crime since the meeting in January and that was theft of a vehicle on Lower Road.

The Community Warden, Adam McKinley, reported that he has attended WI and Evergreen meetings to introduce himself. He has also met with Golding Homes so that he is able to assist with any homecare issues in the village.

5. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

5.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh

The Clerk reported that she has still not received any response from County Cllr Stockell, who she has been trying to contact since October, regarding the various highways related concerns in the village. Borough Cllr Wilson stated that HGV issues in Kent need to be discussed and that another bridge is required in the area, through transport infrastructure improvements. He added that there is a lobbying day in Parliament soon and he is hoping that this can be raised. After further discussion it was noted that weight limits are put in place by KCC but enforced by Kent Police.

Cllr Johnson stated that the potholes in Ewell Lane from Charlton Lane down have not been rectified. The ones closer to the bottom of the road have been marked, however these are now fading. The ones at the top of the road have not been marked at all and are getting worse. The Clerk offered to chase Kent Highways.

ACTION: Clerk

It was noted that there is a large boulder sticking out from the verge in Ewell Lane- approximately 300m from the green (Charlton Lane). This is extremely dangerous and a vehicle was witnessed hitting the boulder and it forced the car out into the middle of the road with the force of the impact.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Martin reminded all present of the forthcoming road closure at Smiths Hill, on the 18th April, for up to 7 days. This is to reinstate the edge of the carriageway.

6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

6.1 Roundabout in the Play Area

Cllr Scott reported that Councillors have spent some time dismantling the roundabout to see whether the bearing issue can easily be resolved. After investigation, and subsequent discussion with the supplier, it is likely that the repair will be in the region of £2,300. It was noted that there seems to be a design fault with this particular unit as there have been other reports in the Borough of the same issues. The Clerk reported that she has contacted various suppliers to investigate the cost of a new roundabout, which is more like the 'old fashioned' type (with easier to maintain parts) and the costs range between £3,000 and £6,000, but added that a site visit would be required to get an accurate price. After brief discussion Councillors felt that HAGS SMP should be approached to obtain a quotation, but Cllr Martin asked that the Parish Council be informed of play areas where the roundabout has been installed approximately 2 years ago, so that Councillors can go and view before committing any money to the replacement. **ACTION: Clerk**

6.2 Parish Council Marquee

Cllr Scott reported that the marquee had been used at Cllr Martin's Lambing Day last Sunday and it was noted that it could do with being professionally cleaned. Cllr Johnson has contacted a local Company in Barming who is able to complete this for approximately £50.00. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Scott that this be completed, this was seconded by Cllr Martin; with all in favour. **ACTION: Cllr Johnson**

7 MATTERS OF REPORT

7.1 County Councillor's Report

No report provided.

7.2 Borough Councillor's Report

Borough Cllr Wilson reported that MBC's Local Plan will go before the Inspector with a housing figure of over 18,500. He also reported that there is bad feeling relating to the Planning Department and decisions being made by the Officers and Planning Committee. Cllr Merritt queried what qualifications the Planning Committee Members have and Cllr Wilson responded that they are given basic training on planning regulations, however this training is supplied by MBC. Officers make the recommendations that go forward to the Planning Committee and because the Members of the Committee have less knowledge than the Officers, they do not like to go against the recommendations made. Cllr Wilson said that it was very disturbing to see the extreme pressure placed on Members of the Planning Committee by the Chairman. Cllr Scott added that the Parish Council would support any action taken against the Planning Department.

Borough Cllr Wilson reported that this would be his last meeting as he is standing down at the elections in May. Cllr Scott thanked Cllr Wilson for the support he has given the Parish Council over the years.

7.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Martin thanked all who came to the Lambing Day, numbers were in the region of 230-240, which was a great turn out. Cllr Scott thanked Cllrs Martin and Morgan and also Cllr Martin's wife (Candy) and son (Ollie) for making the day such a success. He added that it was lovely for approximately 70 children to be able to stand and watch a birth!

Cllr Merritt queried when the Freighter Service is due to end as a resident had raised concerns that this has already been discontinued. The Clerk stated that the MBC website has explained that the next visit to each village will be the last.

7.4 Clerk's Reports

- Annual Meeting Booklet: The annual booklet will start to be created shortly and the Clerk reported that she will be writing to the organisations in the village to ask them to contribute.
- Pension Arrangements: Unfortunately, having sat through the two pension sessions offered, no real help was given. One of the days was purely to tell Parishes about the Local Government Pension Scheme and the second spoke about who is automatically enrolled – information which is readily available on-line. The Clerk added that, later this year, the Parish Council will need to get a working group together to decide on the pension arrangements to be agreed for next April.
- Local Needs Housing Survey: The Local Needs housing survey has been distributed by ACRK to all households in the village. These must be returned in the freepost envelope by 6th April. It was noted that the bungalows in the village, which were once controlled by the Parish Council and were for the older people of the village, have been taken over by Golding Homes and the residents are now much younger and have no association with West Farleigh. Councillors stated that, if there was a need identified, any scheme would have to be able to be protected for people with a connection to the village.
- MBC's Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation: The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's response was submitted before the deadline last Friday.

8 FINANCE

8.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 29th February 2016 was **Noted**.

8.2 Income received since the last meeting

Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (January)	£ 1.55
Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (February)	£ 1.48

8.3 Cheques for signature

It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Scott **“that the Council approve the following payments”**.

101108 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Purchase of laptop, Office, McAfee Security, laptop case, set up inc. Windows backup and 3 yrs warranty contract	£768.96
101109 - Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary March	£640.84
101110 – Post Office Ltd – PAYE	£641.51
101111 – SLCC Enterprises Ltd – Clerk’s Conference	£ 41.40
101112 - ABA (Construction) Ltd (ARD Playgrounds) – flooring in play area	£1,625.40
101113 – Mr B Merritt – Expenses (Allen key for roundabout & materials for defib. signs)	£ 56.07
101114 – KALC – Planning Conference	£ 72.00

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Subsequent cheques written during the meeting:

101115 – CPRE – Annual Subscription	£ 36.00
101116 – Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Annual Subscription	£ 50.00
101117 – All Saints Church – Donation	£400.00
101118 – West Farleigh Sports Club – Donation	£510.39
101119 – West Farleigh Evergreens – Donation	£600.00
101120 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Salary for April (Post-dated)	£640.00

8.4 Decision to remain in the Sector Led Body for Appointing an Auditor

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council will come under a new audit regime next year, as a smaller Parish covered by the Transparency Code. However, all Councils must decide whether they wish to opt out of the current Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointment arrangements. Whilst, from 2017, West Farleigh will not be required to undertake a full external audit, the Parish Council will still need to have an external auditor in place in case there were any issues raised by a resident. If the decision is made to remain a member of the current arrangements, the Parish Council would pay a ‘holding fee’ to use their services (if an issue arose). If the Parish Council decided to opt out of these arrangements, the following would need to put into action immediately:

- Appoint an appropriate External Independent Auditor Panel which meets the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.
- Develop our own specification for external audit control.
- Negotiate the cost of this work.
- Failure to complete the above would result in an External Auditor being appointed by the Secretary of State through the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointment scheme at additional cost to the Parish Council.

Having read all of the corresponding documents, the Clerk recommended that the Parish Council continue with the current arrangements. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Scott that the Parish Council remain in the Sector Led Body for Appointing an Auditor. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

8.5 Reviewed Standing Orders – To approve

The Clerk reported that the Standing Orders have been amended to reflect the changes in the rules for Parish Council procurement. If tenders are to be arranged for work, and they are of a value above £25,000, the tender must be advertised on the Contract Finders website. The clerk added that this was more relevant to the Financial Regulations and the Standing Orders only required a slight wording change. Cllr Scott proposed that the reviewed Standing Orders be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

8.6 Reviewed Financial Regulations – To approve

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

8.7 Reviewed Risk Assessments – To approve

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

8.8 Reviewed Internal Control Statement 2015/2016 – To approve

Cllr Scott proposed that the reviewed Internal Control Statement for 2015/16 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

8.5 Donations for 2015/16 – To discuss and approve

The Clerk reported that four requests had been received for this year, one of which was for the WI. Mrs Broadhurst added that, as Cllr Scott had declared an interest in this item, this particular grant should be dealt with separately. All Councillors were in agreement with this.

The Clerk informed all present that the requests were as follows:

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 Sports Club have forwarded the receipt for the defibrillator case (discussed briefly at the last meeting) - £414.95 + vat (£510.39)
4. The WI have submitted a request towards the updating of their hall, they are about to embark on a long term project to update and improve the hall and have prioritised the following work required: deep cleaning, decorating, removal of urinals, new boiler, replacement windows, new toilets, kitchen, additional storage.

The Clerk reminded all present that the Parish Council had award two grants last year, £600 to The Evergreens and £400 to the Church. 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. All Councillors agreed that the defibrillator case was a 'one off grant', as the Sports Club had purchased the unit and the Parish Council had offered support with future costs (batteries and insurance). After brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Martin to award the following:

West Farleigh Evergreens	£600.00
All Saints Church	£400.00
Sports Club	£510.39

This was seconded by Cllr Stockwell, with all in favour.

Councillors then discussed the WI's application for a donation and Cllr Merritt raised some concerns over the amount of work which is required at the hall. After brief discussion it was felt that no further money could be awarded this year, however, if money is still required next year (2016/17), then a further request should be made for the Parish Council to consider. This was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Johnson with 6 in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr Scott).

8.10 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 Stockwell proposed that the subscription be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Martin, with all in favour.

8.11 Subscription to Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) – To approve

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription for ACRK is due for renewal and reminded all present that the Local Needs Housing Survey is currently underway (realistically, the subscription needs to be renewed in order to obtain the results). Cllr Scott proposed that the annual subscription be renewed at a cost of £50.00. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

9. PLANNING MATTERS

9.1 16/501364/FULL – The Old Stable, Lower Road

Erection of a detached garage

Parish Council recommendation: *West Farleigh Parish Council wish to see the application **approved**.*

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting will be held on **Monday 16th May 2016 at 6.30pm**, followed by the **Annual Parish Meeting at 8.00pm** at The Good Intent.

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.06pm

During public discussion a resident queried gates that have been removed from the footpath from St Helen's Lane, across the river, into South Street (Barming). The Clerk offered to contact the Barming Parish Clerk to discuss further.

ACTION: Clerk