

# WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2014 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

**PRESENT:** Cllrs B Scott (Chairman), Cllrs B Merritt, G Martin, J King, H Swan, Borough Cllr J Wilson, Kent County Cllr P Stockell and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ten parishioners were present.

### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION:**

Concerns were raised by members of the public regarding the junction of Teston Lane and Lower Road, especially as one resident had nearly had an accident there recently. Cllr Martin reported that historically he had, with Cllr Merritt, met Kent Highways at this junction to discuss changing the priority, but this had been refused as it was too dangerous and not feasible. Signs have been authorised to warn of pedestrians in the road, and it is hoped that this may slow traffic down slightly. Cllr Merritt added that the possibility of installing a roundabout had also been discussed as some land had been offered to assist with the project; this too had been turned down. The speed of vehicles along Lower Road and the dangerous camber were also discussed and Cllr Merritt stated that a Highways meeting needed to take place at 8.30am and 5.30pm when the traffic is at its heaviest. He added that the only problem with this is that everyone wears high visibility jackets which immediately slows the traffic down – this had been noted at a previous meeting outside The Thatched House. County Cllr Stockell suggested that Andy Padgham be contacted at Kent Highways as he is the engineer for the area, along with Amanda Murdock. Flashing warning signs were discussed but Cllr Merritt responded that these are generally ignored as people know that they are not enforceable.

A resident reported that the 'No parking on grass' signs had disappeared on Lower Road again. Cllr Merritt informed all present that the Parish Council is aware of this and the signs are to be concreted in this time. Grass cutting in the village was discussed and it was noted that several small areas have had to be added to the grounds maintenance contract recently as KCC and MBC have stopped cutting some sections. Others are to be monitored over this summer and further work may need to be undertaken by the Parish Council to ensure that the village looks presentable.

A resident spoke with regards to a new fish and chip business that he is hoping to start up and asked for the Parish Council's view on having a stall once a week in the pub car park. After brief discussion, the general view was that this was a good idea.

A member of the public spoke with regards to the leaf fall on the pavement in Charlton Lane and it was also noted that this was also a problem on Lower Road towards Church Lane. The Clerk offered to report this to MBC. **ACTION: Clerk**

### **1. APOLOGIES**

L Johnson, C Stockwell and Borough Cllr D Collins

### **2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest

### **3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

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

### **4. POLICE MATTERS**

The Clerk confirmed that no report had been received from the Police and Cllr Scott asked that a letter be sent with regards to their continual non attendance at Parish Council meetings. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Martin informed all present that he has seen a Police Officer in a Land Rover patrolling on three separate occasions in the village. Cllr Merritt suggested that the matter of Police attending Parish Council meetings should be mentioned at the next Police Forum. This was agreed by all present. **ACTION: Cllr Merritt**

Cllr King informed all present that the Neighbourhood Watch group had not been informed of any issues in the area.

### **5. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS**

#### **5.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh**

The main concerns with regards to Lower Road had previously been discussed in the public part of the meeting.

Cllr Scott asked that the two gates that are required (for KM16 and KM21) be chased as the Public Rights of Way department are not progressing with these.

The Clerk added that the Police had been unable to find any trace of attendance at KM16 even though they had covered the opening with police tape.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Martin reported that the flooding issue on Smiths Hill has worsened since the new drainage scheme has been introduced. The kerb is now so high that the water is given the opportunity to become even deeper; even after two days of no rain, there is still water in the area. Cllr Merritt reported that, with Cllr Martin, they had managed to rod the drain to get some of the water flowing. Cllr Martin reported that he was prepared to offer a piece of the field in order to create soak away gullies to alleviate the problem. It was noted that this requires a site visit urgently as the 'wave' caused by the vehicles going through the water is causing the hedge roots to be eroded.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## **5.2 Parking in Charlton Lane**

Cllr Scott reported that the Sports Club have been contacted regarding the parking issues discussed at the last meeting. Having chased them again, the Clerk had been informed that the matter was to be discussed and they would be in contact before the end of last week, this has not happened. Cllr Merritt reiterated that it is illegal for buses to reverse with passengers on and informed all present that the contract for the route is due for tender soon. Cllr Merritt reported that he has been in contact with the manager of NuVenture who, in a recent email, has stated that, unless the issue of parking in Charlton Lane on a Saturday is resolved, they may consider not retendering for the contract. It had also been noted that some drivers are now refusing to come up Charlton Lane which is effectively cutting off part of the village from having a bus service. Cllr Merritt then read out a letter of complaint which had been received from a resident who had counted 45 vehicles parked along Charlton Lane with no passing gap left between any of them. Cllr Martin added that the improvements made to the facilities had made the club more popular and this is adding to the problem as most people attending do not live in West Farleigh. A resident added that there is also an issue with litter when the matches have finished at the weekend. Cllr Merritt stated that drivers are breaking the law if they park up on the path and the police have stated that they can put stickers on the cars and record the vehicle registration numbers. If they then have to come out to the same cars a second time they will be issued a £60 fine, which increases to £100 if not paid within 14 days. The Editor of Lifeline offered to put a piece in the next edition asking that people visiting the club car share as much as possible. Borough Cllr Wilson asked whether the Parish Council had contacted Geoff Kitson, who is the Parking Services Manager at MBC. The Clerk offered to discuss this issue with him and circulate his comments to all Councillors before the next meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## **6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERS**

### **6.1 Annual Parish Meeting**

The Clerk informed all present that the Annual Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May. It was agreed to keep the same format as last year, where groups have the opportunity to give a brief report at the meeting, with the main reports being submitted for the booklet. The Clerk was asked to arrange for light refreshments to be available. The usual Parish Council meeting will be from 7.00pm to 7.45pm and the Annual Parish Meeting will commence at 8.00pm.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## **7. MATTERS OF REPORT**

### **7.1 County Councillor's Report**

County Cllr Stockell stated that she would chase the highways issues that had been discussed earlier in the meeting. MBC are to hold a budget meeting in February and it is likely that an increase of 1.9% will be agreed. It was noted that huge savings are still to be made and the Member's grants have now been set at £25,000.

Cllr Scott stated that the lack of response and action when there are issues in the village are becoming more noticeable with the cutbacks. Cllr Stockell responded that Kent Highways still have engineers and Cllr Martin added that the engineers simply say that there is no money available for work to be completed and when work is being carried out, it is to a poor standard. Cllr Merritt stated that there have been numerous meetings with regards to the road surface in Teston Lane, where KHS had to admit that the wrong glue had been used which had meant that the new road surface had been washed away. Cllr Martin added that no one is listening to the people that have knowledge of the area when they come out to complete site visits. County Cllr Stockell informed Councillors that, if they are unhappy with the service that they are receiving, the matter should be discussed with John Burr. Cllr Stockell asked that the Clerk forward her a list of the issues within West Farleigh.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Merritt reported that the 9 posts that were to be fitted outside The Thatched House are still outstanding; Cllr Stockell suggested that this be highlighted to Andy Padgham.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **7.2 Borough Councillor's Report**

Borough Cllr Wilson reported that KALC had been looking into whether Parish Clerks could be put in charge of signing off highways work completed in villages. If the work is not completed to the required standard, the contractor would then not be paid. It was generally felt that this could help with ensuring work is completed satisfactorily in the future.

### 7.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr King reported that some advertising banners have been put up outside The Ticked Trout, which is in a Conservation Area. It was noted that these are only temporary, but Councillors agreed that, if more permanent signs were to appear, this would have to be revisited.

Cllr Swan raised concerns with regards to lorries in the area and queried what the situation was with the lorry scheme in Yalding. Borough Cllr Wilson confirmed that this is to be discussed at the next Joint Transportation Board meeting and it has been recommended that the scheme be made permanent following a public consultation.

Cllr Scott raised concerns with regards to the ongoing issues of access at Tutsham Farm. After brief discussion the Clerk offered to contact Borough Cllr Mortimer, who had been trying to assist with this issue, to see whether there was any further information. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Scott reported on a recent meeting with the Chief Executive of MBC where a Planning Committee meeting had been discussed. It was noted that Cllr Scott had spoken at the Committee meeting for 3 minutes but felt as though none of the Members had taken any notice of his comments. He added that there didn't seem much point in attending. Further discussion took place with regards to the Planning Department and Committee; Cllr Scott concluded that it is very frustrating to live near properties which are an issue as Councillors end up bearing the brunt of resident's anger.

Cllr Martin reported that a resident had informed him of damage to the railings at the junction of Teston Lane and Lower Road. He asked that the Clerk report this to Rookery Estates. **ACTION: Clerk**

### 7.4 Clerk's Reports

The Clerk had nothing to report.

## 8. FINANCE

### 8.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 was **Noted**.

### 8.2 Income received since the last meeting

Actual payments received since the last meeting were:

Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (November)	£ 3.40
Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (December)	£ 2.87
HMRC – VAT Refund	£ 85.31

### 8.3 Cheques for signature

It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Swan "that the Council approve the following payments".

101026 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary January	£491.16
101027 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Mileage and Land Searches)	£ 79.20
101028 – KALC – Training Course for Cllr Stockwell	£ 72.00
101029 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary February (Post-dated cheque)	£490.96

### 8.4 Budget & Precept 2014/15

The Clerk had previously circulated the budget paperwork to all councillors explaining the effect any increase in precept will have and it was noted that the tax base will now increase slightly for 2014/15. The Clerk added that there was still the possibility of the Parish Service Scheme funding being reduced by 20%, although there had been no further update from MBC to date. With this in mind, the budget had been worked out including the decrease to ensure that the Parish Council had sufficient income to operate for the forthcoming year. The Clerk reminded all present that the Parish Council had taken on extra grounds maintenance work and other areas, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting, will also have to be monitored. Taking this into account, Cllr Scott proposed "that the precept for the forthcoming year be set at **£13,750, an increase of £1.90 per Band D household per year**". This was seconded by Cllr Martin, with all in favour.

## 9. PLANNING MATTERS

### 9.1 MA/13/2166 – 6 Mill Cottages, Tutsham Farm

An application for listed buildings consent for a single storey rear extension.

**Parish Council Recommendation:** West Farleigh Parish Council wish to see the above planning applications **approved** and do not request that it is reported to the Planning Committee.

### 9.2 MA/13/2103 – Grooms Cottage, Court Lodge Park, Lower Road

Change of use from residential to office use for a temporary period of two years

CLLr Merritt reported that the following inconsistencies had been noted in the application:

- Section 10: A total of 16 cars are now anticipated but the drawing only shows room for 8 cars. Where are the additional 8 to be parked?
- Section 12: It states that the surface water is to be disposed of in a soak away. The surface water goes into a pond in the grounds of the property.
- Section 15: The application states that there are no trees on the proposed development site. This is incorrect as there is a Tulip tree approximate 5ft away.
- Section 19: The application states that there are no existing employees and that, after development, there will be 8. Historically, there have been 8 full time employees on the premises.
- Section 29: The application states that the site can not be seen from public land. This is incorrect as the proposed development can be seen from Church lane and Lower Road.

It was also noted that the drawing showed two proposed garages which were not mentioned anywhere in the application. Councillors requested that the Clerk contact the Planning Officer to raise the above points and ask for clarification as to whether a separate application is to be submitted for the garages. **ACTION: Clerk**

The Clerk stated that the comments received from the Planning Officer will be circulated to all Councillors so that a formal response to the application can be agreed.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next full Council meeting will be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 7.30pm at The Good Intent.

*With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.55pm*