

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held at the
Village Hall, High Street, Farningham at 7.45pm on
Wednesday 1st March 2017**

Present: Cllr. P. McGarvey, Chair and District Cllr.
Cllr. D. Burns
Cllr. M. Cook
Cllr. A. MacEnroe
Cllr. C. Salmon

Mrs. J. Gray (Clerk)

125. **Chairman's Welcome and Apologies for absence:**

1. The Chairman welcomed four Parish Councillors, the County Councillor, Roger Gough (from 8.10pm) PCSO, Sarah Douse and six members of the public.
2. Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Bergne and Butler.

126. **Declaration of Interests:**

The declarations of interest stood as recorded in the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2016.

127. **Public Participation:**

The Chairman asked the visitors to report if there was a specific reason for their attendance.

1. Mrs Debbie Owen asked if the Parish Council could find out who was responsible for maintaining the fencing at the end of their garden in Tilmans Mead, which backed onto the A225. It was resolved the Clerk would contact Kent Highways to confirm.
2. Mr Gary Mullins reported on the number of vehicles he had witnessed turning right from the A225, Eynsford Road onto the A20 and also from the slip road from White Post Hill. He considered if the central island was extended it could prevent this occurring. It was agreed the Clerk would ask Kelly Webb, the Police Liaison at Sevenoaks District Council to whom parishioners should report these illegal right turns. The best contact would be circulated and reported in Trident.
3. Mr Clive Curtis stated he had come to find out more about the Friends of Farningham. The Clerk circulated a list of 14 contacts who had put themselves forward, and a list of proposed works to be done. Cllr. Cook agreed to try to purchase Hi-Viz jackets in Makro and Cllr. Butler would organise the printing 'Friends of Farningham'. It was agreed the first meet would be on Friday 31st March at 10.00am at the Village Hall. A short

meeting would be held following the introductions and hot drinks purchased at the Friday market and an up to date list of proposed works circulated. The Clerk with Cllr Salmon and Butler would also draw up a list of tools and equipment that need to be purchased. Clive Curtis suggested that the Parish Council consider sending a volunteer onto a chain saw course.

128. **Policing:**

PCSO, Sarah Douse reported:

1. There had been a break in at Gorse Hill Nursery where a significant amount of ski wear was stolen.
 2. The DVLA and KCC have been undertaking a series of lorry searches on the A20 and M20 to search the cargo.
 3. Fly-tipping is an ever increasing problem. It was encouraging that three people have recently been prosecuted. One recent load was found containing personal data, including bank statements, bills etc and the householder will be taken to court, as it is their responsibility to employ a reputable company to dispose of waste.
 4. Sadly a number of dead horses had been dumped. She reported that a ban had been imposed on some local individuals, which prevented them from keeping horses and she is concerned more dead animals may start to appear. Kent Horse Watch had been alerted.
 5. The Police and PSCO patrols are regularly monitoring Farningham Woods car park in the evenings trying to prevent gatherings of those taking legal highs and causing nuisance.
 6. Her leaving date was now 21st March 2017.
- She was thanked and wished well in her future career in the Police.

129. **County Councillor:**

The County Councillor, Roger Gough, reported:

1. Geoff Bineham, Kent Highway Engineer, was currently investigating the ten year history of crash data on the A20 and the Button Street junction. It was understood there had been more significant accidents in the last few years. It was hoped a site meeting would be agreed on completion of his investigative work.
2. The results of a review of the A225 Dartford Road were being considered. The average speed of traffic travelling close to the Franks Lane junction, from the Horton Kirby direction, was 48mph. It had been agreed the signage would be improved, and likely that roundels would be painted on the carriageway, paid for from the Crash Remedial Budget.
3. The proposed Franks Hall development had proposed a temporary access for construction vehicles over the grass verge from the site through a gate onto the A225, Dartford Road. He noted that Malcolm Gale, in attendance, had expressed his extreme concern over this plan. He noted

that a temporary access would require significant signage.

4. Unless the parishioner at 6 Hillside could come up with documentation to prove that the three sycamore trees on her boundary would be maintained by Kent Highways, they would take no further action.

5. Cllr Salmon reported on the amount of rubbish accumulated on land by the roundabout at Swanley/M25. Cllr Gough advised this land is Highways England, not KCC. He reported Kent County Council have this on their radar agreed to try to take it forward and press Highways England for action.

130. **Matters Arising and Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Meeting;**

1. It was agreed the Vice-Chairman, Cllr. D Burns would write the report for Trident.

2. Despite a reminder the Clerk had not heard from 'Dave's Taxi's' regarding the request for £30.04 pence to replace the Pyracantha they trampled when installing an advertising sign on the fence at King's roundabout. The Parish Council were seeking compensation for the destruction of the bushes and their replacements and a cost for their planting. The Clerk was asked to further remind.

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2017 were confirmed as correct, and signed by the Chairman.

131. **Correspondence:**

1. Robert MacDonald of Wicksteed Leisure had responded, following receipt of the Clerk's order for a medium slide as an addition to the play equipment in Oliver Crescent. The probable start date for the installation was 20th April 2017.

2. It was agreed to settle the invoice from Streetlights for repairs to Column 80 in Button Street for £88.75 plus VAT.

3. Shoreham Parish Council will be hosting the next meeting of the Darent Valley Consortium at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd March 2017. The meeting will take place at Shoreham Village Hall. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman would attend. Any agenda items were requested by 8th March.

4. The Clerk received a report from a parishioner there was a burnt out snack bar in the lay-by on Gorse Hill near the Nursery. On contacting Sevenoaks District Council it was established that it would be removed within two weeks. Apparently it had been recently 'sold on' so there was a problem regarding ownership; the previous owner had moved to Spain. Sevenoaks District Council reported they would have to break it up on site so that is why there is a delay in getting it removed.

5. The Clerk received a phone call stating that the chicken farm site along Maplescombe Lane was a hive of activity with the site being cleared and several bonfires; she had asked Sevenoaks District Council about the status of the last planning application and for any update. Neil Gorham,

Enforcement Officer, had responded that the application no. 17/00139 had been the subject of many enquires. He had established that the owners are in America at present and the site is managed by their agents. They appreciate the site was a target for fly tippers. The agents have now put contractors on site to tidy it up and make it secure. They were assessing the need of putting security on site 24/7. They are considering putting in another planning application; Enforcement were confident that there is no operational development taking place.

6. The Clerk has been trying to get Enforcement Section at Sevenoaks District Council to take action over the posters on the windows at Farningham Village Store.

7. In response to a report from a parishioner the Clerk had contacted the management at the Lion Hotel and subsequently written to Mitchells and Butlers to alert them that parishioners are concerned about the poor state of the building which looks in need of external work. The wisteria at the entrance is just a mass of tangled stems with mounds of rubbish at the base, the flower planters merely contain rubbish, and the ropes need replacement together with the posts. Additionally paint is peeling from the window frames and the box work to the side elevation. Some chairs and tables are in a poor condition and it would be good if the number of tables could be reduced. The kitchen areas which are on view look messy. The iron bollards at the entrance to the pub badly need re-painting, as they look extremely scruffy and detract from the appearance of the Listed Building.

8. The Clerk has met a representative from and sought the advice of Southern Stone on how maintenance of the flint walls at the Village Hall, the church and the Cattle Screen should be progressed. A report has been received (circulated to Councillors) of repair works they considered necessary to the flint wall at the Village Hall. The quotation for the repair works totals £8,803.00. A letter of advice for the Church has been forwarded on. He reported the Ancient Cattle Screen needs annual weed removal and spraying with anti-fungal spray which would have to be undertaken by a licensed Contractor.

9. The Clerk was awaiting a schedule from Streetlights of their programme of switching the Parish lights to LED on a street by street basis.

10. The Clerk had been contacted by Kate Harris of South East in Bloom stating that Pauline Penney had suggested Farningham might wish to join in. It was agreed that for this year we would concentrate on getting the 'Friends of Farningham' to improve the upkeep of the village and the South East in Bloom may be considered again in the future.

132. **Planning;**

1. The following comments had been sent to Sevenoaks District Council

regarding the following planning applications:

SE/17/00083/LBCALT and 00082 ADV Pied Bull, High Street Sign A - One x new fascia sign with applied 10mm individual House name letters. Sign B - one x new double sided pictorial sign to existing bracket. New linolites to illuminate. Sign C - one x new history board. Sign D - one x new amenity boards. Sign one x new landscape A0 lockable poster case. Sign F- one x new A3 lockable poster case. Sign G - two x new sets of sign written logos and secondary text. Sign H - one x new car park disclaimer. Sign I - one x new Beer Garden transom sign. Sign J - refurbish five x existing lanterns in gold. Sign K - seven x new led floodlights.

The Clerk had reported to the Planning Department that the site plan showed the wrong site, as did an accompanying document (the Heritage Statement), and was told this would invalidate the application.

The Clerk was asked to send response stating the Parish Council has No Objection but also to comment that the signs are not very different from existing but the Parish Council requests a Condition that the lights go off by midnight.

133. **District Councillor:**

The Chairman, Cllr. McGarvey reported:

1. There was a new limit of spend on Section 137 monies for 2017/2018; it was increasing from £7.42 per elector to £7.57 per elector. Farningham currently had 1,105 electors therefore up to £8,364.00 could be allocated in next year's budget to something of benefit to electors over and above the Parish Council's Statutory Duties; historically this had been spent on grants to local organisations and churchyard grass cutting.

2. There will be one Syrian refugee family coming to live in Sevenoaks District, and they would be housed in a West Kent Housing property in Eynsford. The government would be covering the rent.

132. **Open Spaces:**

1. The Clerk has had a meeting with Eynsford and Horton Kirby & South Darenth Parish Councils to discuss KCC devolving urban grass cutting and had decided to approach seven contractors to tender for the work, firstly as standalone contracts and secondly for doing the three parishes. It was agreed the tenders be sent out on Thursday 2nd March for return by Friday 24th March. The Contractors chosen:

Barge, OGS Garden Services, Lothlorien Landscapes, Mr G Bint, Richard Abel Landscapes, Network Maintenance South Limited, Valley Landscape Management. Robin Hadley at KCC had agreed to monitor any Contracts taken on by Parish Councils for the first year.

2. The Clerk had sought the advice of Mr Vic Clarke regarding the condition of the fencing around the perimeter of the play equipment in Oliver Crescent. He advised that in his opinion it does not need treating with preservative. Often the preservative will mean the wood inside rots and the preservative sometimes peels, which looks unattractive. The Clerk has reported to David Boorman at Sevenoaks District Council that 9 pales need attention and a couple of the bottom boards need replacement. He

had replied that he would get his fencing contractor to do any necessary work.

3. Julian Cook, Area Manager, Kent Highways had replied regarding the issue of the ownership of the trees on the boundary of the property, 6 Hillside, which backs onto the A20. Aubrey Furner, the Officer in Charge, currently working along the A20 had also undertaken a site visit to look at the issue. He had sent photographs, which show the alignment of the trees and the fence, and he believes it shows that the trees formed part of the original boundary line. They are in line with the original concrete posts and wire fencing, and in the photograph named 'Hillside 2' he believes you can actually see where the tree growth has moved this original concrete post.

As agreed, Aubrey has also undertaken an inspection of these trees and he identified that the 3 sycamore trees have previously had tree surgery work undertaken to them. It appears that the trees were pollarded at a height of approximately 10 metres and this work is likely to have occurred over 20 years ago. They were then left to grow and the crown reduced approximately 5 to 10 years ago, and can find no evidence that KCC have carried out this work.

With regards to ownership of these trees, Aubrey's opinion is also that they were boundary trees and would have been part of the original boundary line to the private land prior to the construction of the properties.

Given that we have now undertaken two separate investigations, both of which have reached the same conclusion, this is the position of KCC, in addition, we can find no evidence of KCC undertaking any works to the trees, however, if the house owner can find the letter from KCC regarding these trees, they will of course be happy to review this.

On the other issue of the ivy that is growing on the trees that KCC do own on the verge with A20, Aubrey has also inspected these and will be arranging for the ivy to be severed.

133. **Highways, Footpaths and Street Lighting:**

1. Denise Roffey of Kent County Council had confirmed to the Clerk that the further representation regarding By-Way 192, from Beesfield Lane, Farningham to Priory Lane, Eynsford and following the formal consultation which ended on the 15th December 2016, had been received before the deadline. The Clerk had written reporting recent incidents, and stating although the closure for six months annually was a step in the right direction, a permanent closure should be imposed.

2. Cllr. MacEnroe reported the gully at the junction of Button Street with the A20 still blocks. It was noted there is a lot of mud on the carriageway from Watts Farm in Farningham Hill Road. It was agreed the Clerk write to Richard Wilson to ask what steps need to be taken to ensure that roads are cleared of mud.

3. The Clerk was asked to enquire of Kent Highways if the lights on the A20 could be switched back on overnight if fitted with LED bulbs which are far cheaper to run.

4. It was noted that cars leaving Auntie Carol's Kennels on the A20, London Road often turn right which is prohibited and dangerous. The Clerk to contact Kent Highways to ask if the Kennels could remind clients to turn left when leaving the premises.

5. Cllr. McEnroe had reported to the Clerk there was new lighting in a compound in Button Street which had impacted on Wadard Terrace. New fencing had been erected which had improved the situation.

134. **Kent Volunteer Warden Scheme:**

The Clerk reported that KALC were currently advertising for Volunteer Wardens.

135. **School Safety Campaign:**

Cllr. MacEnroe reported:

1. The parking restrictions imposed in the A225 Eynsford Road between the school and Mill Lane had displaced cars further afield. Two site meetings were planned regarding strategic placement of bollards.

2. A Farningham parishioner had complained that since the traffic was flowing more freely outside the school following the parking restrictions cars were now travelling faster and she was concerned about speeding traffic and the lack of protection of children on pavements.

136. **Reports from representatives on other bodies:**

Cllr. Burns reported she had attended a meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee on Monday evening. They had agreed that the lease for the sub-station in the Village Hall Car Park could be signed and returned to Bishop Akers solicitors in Swanley. The Treasurer had resigned and there had been a change of fundraiser on the Committee.

137. **AOB:**

The Chairman confirmed his intention to step down as Chairman of the Parish Council, a post he had held for six years. He thanked the Councillors for all their support.

138. **Finance:**

Members resolved to authorise the Schedule of Payments.

Signed **Wednesday 5th April 2017**

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm. The next meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham will be held at 7.00 pm. on Wednesday 5th April 2017 and may continue after the Annual Parish Meeting which commences at 8.00pm.

