

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15th JANUARY 2024
IN BRAMLEY BARN, WEST FARLEIGH

PRESENT: Cllrs M Moy (Chair), J Morgan, B Scott, H Swan and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk
MBC Enforcement Team Leader, Mrs S King
7 members of public

Public Discussion

Mrs King gave an Enforcement presentation and answered questions from both Parish Councillors and members of the public.

Once the presentation had concluded, the following highway issues were raised by Members of the Public:

- The road surface along Lower Road between Church Lane and Charlton Lane has worn off where the road floods and has covered the pavement. **ACTION: Clerk**
- The leaves are still on the path on Charlton Lane, from Dandelion Time to the Lower Road junction. Apparently, the scarab cleaner was full and had to return to the depot but did not come back out to finish the work. **ACTION: Clerk**
- The road surface from Ewell Lane down to Rookery Row has completely eroded and has blocked the drains causing flooding issues for the residents in the close. It was noted that a resident had offered to send photos, but these had not been received to send into KCC Highways. The resident confirmed they would arrange this and requested that the Highways Steward make contact before attending so that they can be present to explain the issue. **ACTION: Resident/Clerk**
- Two potholes have appeared along Smiths Hill and the resident offered to email the Clerk the relevant information to report to KCC Highways. **ACTION: Resident/Clerk**

1. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

2. Councillor Declarations

Cllr H Swan declared an interest in Agenda Item 4.5 (Donation for 2023/2024) as she is a member of the PCC and Leader of The Evergreens.

Cllr J Morgan declared an interest in Agenda Item 4.5 (Donation for 2023/2024) as she is the Treasurer of The Evergreens.

The Clerk stated that, due to the lower Councillor numbers at the meeting, the two declarations for The Evergreens would result in the meeting being inquorate for a donation decision to be reached. With this in mind, the Clerk would give dispensation to Cllr Swan only, as Cllr Morgan is the Treasurer of the group. Cllr Swan completed the required Dispensation Form.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th November 2023

The Minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and Cllr Scott proposed that they were a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour. The Chair signed off the official copy.

4. FINANCE

4.1 Budget Monitoring Report to 31st December 2023

The Budget Monitoring Report was noted.

4.2 Income received since last meeting

MBC – Parish Service Scheme (2nd payment) £394.81

4.3 Payments since last meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Moy to approve the following transactions, this was seconded by Cllr Scott; with all in favour.

Cheques

No cheques

Internet Banking Payments

HMRC – PAYE		£1,003.28
Safeplay PS Ltd – Play Area Monthly Safety Inspection (November)	£	63.00
Safeplay PS Ltd – Play Area Monthly Safety Inspection (December)	£	63.00
KCC – Highways Design Fee		£1,068.00
Dandelion Time – Hall Hire	£	25.00

Standing Order

Mrs A Broadhurst – December Salary	(£126.36 owed)	£760.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – January Salary	(£113.51 owed)	£760.00

Direct Debits:

People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (December)		£171.50
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (January)		£171.50
Waveney IT Support Services – Email Accounts & Remote Support (Dec.)	£	95.40
Waveney IT Support Services – Email Accounts & Remote Support (Jan.)	£	95.40

4.4 **Budget and Precept for 2024/2025**

The Clerk had circulated the budget for the next financial year. It was noted that the tax base has increased for the village (244.6 to 252.8) which means that, if Councillors choose to hold the precept at £27,000, the residents will pay slightly less than their current annual charge per Band D property £106.80 down from £110.38 (decrease of 3.24% which equates to £3.58 a year).

The Clerk reported that the Parish Service Scheme payment is likely to be comparable with this current financial year, so £750 has been budgeted. Along with the cost of the email accounts, the Parish Council will now have to pay annually for the website, so this budget heading in the running costs has been increased to £1,300. Whilst the Clerk’s salary increases annually in line with the pay scales published by NALC, the pay rise for 2023/24 has only just been agreed, so discussions for 2024/2025 have not commenced yet. With this in mind, a 5% increase in staff costs has been included. The Open Spaces budget has been reduced by £1,000 as there aren’t any works planned for the forthcoming year. As this could now also include any highways projects in the future, the Clerk suggested having a ringfenced fund to cover this, with an amount being decided at the beginning of the new financial year. This would then result in the main ‘Open Spaces’ budget only being for the usual maintenance works. Another ringfenced fund should be agreed in the new financial year for the new open space, which is still earmarked to be transferred to the Parish Council, when the new landowner is in place. The training budget has been increased to cover any training that is required for new Councillors joining at the elections in May. The contingency fund this year has been reduced to £400 and a further ringfenced fund should be made for any future election costs.

Councillors were in agreement that 3 new ringfenced funds should be created as detailed by the Clerk and would await a further recommendation on the amounts to be added in due course.

The Clerk concluded by explaining that Councillors could either keep the precept at £27,000 (resulting in a small decrease to the Band D charge), or freeze the Band D charge at £110.38, which would give an additional sum of £904.00, which could be used to create the ringfenced Highways fund.

After brief discussion, Cllr Moy proposed “**that the annual cost to Band D properties be fixed at £110.38 for the forthcoming year, which will generate a precept of £27,904.00.** This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour. (This equates to no change to the annual charge per Band D property.) **ACTION: Clerk**

4.5 Donations for 2023/2024

The Clerk informed all present that two requests had been received for this year:

- The Evergreens asked whether the Parish Council could consider making a donation towards the cost of an outing (suggested amount of £300).
- The Church asked for a donation towards the ground’s maintenance in the churchyard (suggested amount of £525).

The Clerk reported that £2,000 has been set aside, however £870 of this has already been used towards the King’s Coronation; leaving £1,130 towards the requested donations. It was noted that, last year, the Parish Council chose to make the following donations: The Evergreens - £750 All Saints Church - £500.00

Cllr Moy proposed that The Evergreens be given £300 and this was seconded by Cllr Scott; with 3 in favour and 1 abstention. (Bank transfer to be arranged.) **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Scott proposed that the Church be given £300 and this was seconded by Cllr Moy; with 3 in favour and 1 abstention. (Bank transfer to be arranged.) **ACTION: Clerk**

4.6 Renewal of Annual Subscription to CPRE

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription for CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) is due for renewal at a cost of £60.00. However, Parish Councils have been asked to consider paying £84 for the year. Cllr Moy proposed that the annual subscription be renewed at the current amount of £60, as an increase from £36 to £84 in 2 years seemed excessive. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour. (To be paid by bank transfer.)

5. PLANNING MATTERS

5.1 Any applications received before the meeting

23/505776/FULL – Peartree Farm, Ewell Lane

Erection of agricultural barn

The application was discussed at length however, there was confusion as to whether this should be a retrospective application. As the Planning Officer is due to visit the site, it was agreed that a decision should be made over email (to be submitted by the deadline), once further information is available.

5.2 Planning Decisions (To be noted)

5.2.1 Decisions Outstanding with MBC

The outstanding decisions were noted.

5.2.2 Applications Approved by MBC

The approved applications were noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 18th March 2024 at 7.30pm

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.45pm.

The Clerk asked Councillors to note that, due to the forthcoming elections in May, the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Monday 13th May 2024.