

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20th JANUARY 2020 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

PRESENT: Cllrs J Morgan, M Moy, H Swan, H Pritchard, Borough Cllr R Webb and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: Ten parishioners were present.

Public Discussion

There were no points raised during the public discussion.

1. APOLOGIES

Borough Cllr L Parfitt-Reid, PCSO N Morris

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Swan declared an interest in Agenda Item 8.4 (Donations) as she is a member of the WI and Church, who have both submitted donation requests.

The Clerk reminded all present that the Parish Council currently only has two cheque signatories, one of which is Cllr Swan. With this in mind, the Clerk requested the Councillors approve that Cllr Swan can sign any cheques issued for donations to both organisations. This was agreed.

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 18th November 2019

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

4. POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk reported that, since the last meeting, there had not been any crimes reported in the village. There had been 11 crimes in the surrounding villages, East Farleigh (6), Coxheath (3), Hunton (2).

A query was raised regarding an incident that had occurred on Lower Road before the previous meeting. The Clerk reported that she had discussed this with PCSO Chivers, who had confirmed that this had been an isolated incident and no similar reports had been received. At the time, investigations were ongoing.

The Clerk reported that PCSO Chivers had now been replaced by PCSO Nicola Morris.

5. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

5.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh

The Clerk reported that Cllr Morgan had informed her of a damaged signpost on Teston Lane, this has already been reported by two members of the public. Cllr Swan reported on the issue of gardens encroaching onto the highway in Charlton Lane, adding that the same issue is occurring around the green. The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's current contractor could be contacted to see if he could submit a quote for cutting the edge back. Cllr Swan offered to discuss this with him.

ACTION: Cllr Swan

Cllr Swan reported that a stile is damaged on the permissive path between Charlton Lane and Kettle Lane. There is also a tree down in the same area. The Clerk offered to contact Rookery Estates to make them aware of this.

ACTION: Clerk

5.2 Traffic Survey for Lower Road

The Clerk reported that Kent Highways have reviewed the data from the traffic survey and responded to say that the eastbound mean speeds are 39.3mph and westbound 39.9mph along Lower Road. This indicates that, in general, the 40mph speed limit is being well observed. Kent Highways has installed 40mph roundel road markings adjacent to the upright repeater signs which, hopefully, is having some effect at reminding drivers of the prevailing speed limit. Kent Highways has said that, if there are particular days or times that speeding is worse, they can pass this to the Kent and Medway Camera Partnership to carry out speed enforcement spot checks. It was noted that Kent Highways have all of the data from the survey so can see the times that vehicles are speeding! After brief discussion, it was felt that at approximately 8.00am (during the rush hour) is the time that speeding seems to be an issue. It was also noted that people's perception of how fast vehicles are travelling can be affected by the style of road, making it feel as though they are driving at a higher speed than they actually are.

The Clerk reported that she had asked how the Parish Council can progress with having a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) installed, now that the survey has been completed and the response was that an assessment of the area needs to be completed. There is no cost for this and, even if the Parish Council has the funds available for the equipment, the request may still be refused. A query was raised as to whether Lower Road could have a 30mph speed limit from the Tickled Trout (past the Teston Lane junction) towards East Farleigh and the Clerk offered to ask when speaking to Kent Highways on the other related matters.

ACTION: Clerk

6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

6.1 Requested Meeting with the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

The Clerk confirmed that, having spoken to the PCC's secretary, Matthew Scott is able to attend a coffee morning on Saturday 21st March 2020 (10.00am – midday). Councillors offered to add posters to the noticeboard and the Clerk offered to produce some flyers if required.

ACTION: Clerk & Cllrs

6.2 Internet Service in the Village

Cllr Pritchard reported that he has passed the details for 8 residents to one provider so that they can look to see whether they can assist with the scheme. He intends to contact a second company to obtain comparative details. Cllr Pritchard added that he has also now been passed the details of a further 6 people interested in being involved. It was noted that currently, **this is only to express an interest and there is no financial commitment**, it is simply to obtain an indication of feasibility and cost. Cllr Moy commented that, once the costs are known, more people may wish to get involved. It was also noted that fast broadband is likely to be installed in Ewell Lane in the coming years which should improve the speed for residents as the distance requiring copper cabling will be greatly reduced.

6.3 Grounds Maintenance Contract (2020-2023)

The Clerk reported that she had contacted four companies to quote for the ground's maintenance contract in the village, one had declined to quote. This would be a three-year contract running from April 2020 – March 2023.

The contract covers the following areas:

The Green, Charlton Lane – two smaller sections towards Rookery Row only (Area 1)

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

Small verge with seat by Elmscroft House, Charlton Lane (Area 2)

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

Small green with information board opposite Smiths Hall, Lower Road (Area 3)

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) (Area 4)

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

** After daffodils/crocuses have died back*

Verge on both sides of Charlton Lane, at the junction with Lower Road (Area 5)

3 cuts a year (April, June, August)

Junction of Ewell Lane and Lower Road triangle of grass at junction (Area 6)

A total of 3 cuts a year. 2 cuts a year in April and July around the outside of the triangle, **to a depth of 50cm only**, to avoid the wildflowers. Then a further full cut in September.

Verge on Ewell Lane at the junction with the access road from The Good Intent Pub in Charlton Lane (Area 7)

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)

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

Company	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total 3 years
1	£1,238.20	£1,262.96	£1,288.22	£3,789.38
2	£1,616.00	£1,664.48	£1,714.41	£4,994.89
3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	£1,370.00	£1,370.00	£1,370.00	£4,110.00

The Clerk reported that £1,600 had been set aside in this year's budget for donations and £30 of this had recently been given to The Royal British Legion for the poppy wreath.

Due to Cllr Swan having declared an interest, the Clerk asked that the Hospice request be discussed first. Borough Cllr Webb informed all present that The Heart of Kent Hospice had also given end of life care to Borough Cllr Brian Mortimer. The Clerk reported that it costs around £110 for one to the Community Team nurses to make a detailed assessments of a patient's needs during a home visit, which lasts approximately an hour and a half. After brief discussion it was proposed by Cllr Morgan that a donation of £250 be made. This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour.

Cllr Swan then reported that she would take no part in the discussions for the other two requests received. Cllr Moy proposed that both the Church and the WI be given a donation of £400 each. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with three in favour and one abstention.

101264 – All Saints Church - £400.00

101265 – The Farleighs WI - £400.00

101266 – Heart of Kent Hospice - £250.00

8.5 Budget and Precept for 2020/2021

The Clerk had previously circulated the budget paperwork to all councillors explaining the effect any increase in precept will have on the annual charge per Band D household. The number of Band D properties had reduced from 237.5 to 232.2, which will result in the current precept of £25,500 being reduced to £24,931.31.

The Salary/PAYE heading had been increased to reflect the rise in pension contributions and the clerk's pay rise in April. Last year, an extra £1,500 was agreed for the contingencies fund towards the cost of a SID. This money has now been ringfenced towards whatever equipment would be most suitable for Lower Road (likely to be a Vehicle Activated Device (VAS) rather than a Speed Indicator Device (SID)). This would decrease the contingency requirements, however, the Parish Council will now require a new website in place by the end of August, which will require a large sum of money to be spent in the first instance. Councillors had allowed £3,500 in the contingency fund last year. With approximately £2,000 being required for the website, the Clerk felt that this fund could still be reduced to £3,000 – leaving £1,000 for anything unexpected in the forthcoming year. The Clerk reminded all present that a new grounds maintenance contract commences in April, which will raise the annual cost. However, this would not be a vast increase, therefore the open space fund could be frozen at £2,500. The training fund had been increased from £400 to £500 to take into account that there will be new Councillors after the elections, who will wish to attend KALC training.

The Clerk reported that it has been confirmed by central government that there will be no council tax referendum principles for local councils in the next financial year. However, "the government remains concerned about the pressure placed on taxpayers by parish and town councils across England and continues to expect them to exercise restraint in 2020-21." and that "The government will keep this matter under active review for future years".

When preparing the budget, the Clerk had removed the predicted income from the Parish Service Scheme, due to the annual reduction in the money available to smaller Parishes. Since doing this, it had been confirmed that the Parish Council will receive just over £300 for the next financial year. This leaves an overall current budget deficit of around £100 for the forthcoming year.

The Clerk concluded her report by commenting that, as there would need to be an increase in the annual charge to Band D properties of £2.45 to remain at the current precept level, her recommendation to Councillors is to hold the precept at £25,500 for the forthcoming year.

Councillors asked whether the Clerk had any reservations with this recommendation and the Clerk responded that, unless there was a project that Councillors had failed to mention, this level would be acceptable. It was noted that there are general reserves available if anything unexpected were to occur during the year.

Taking all points raised into consideration, Cllr Moy proposed "**that the precept for the forthcoming year be held at £25,500, an annual increase of £2.45 per Band D household per year**". This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour.

9. PLANNING MATTERS

9.1 Any planning applications received before the meeting

No applications had been received for discussion.

The Clerk reported that River Barn, Tutsham Farm (19/500452) has been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting will be held on **Monday 16th March 2020** at 7.30pm at The Good Intent.

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.44pm.