

**WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025 IN BRAMLEY BARN**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs M Moy (Chair), J Morgan, H Kirk-Brown, G Underdown and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk  
Borough Cllr C Kehily  
2 members of public

**Public Discussion**

There was discussion regarding the amount of fly tipping and general litter around the village. It was felt that the only way to tackle this would be to keep reporting the areas to MBC, in the hope that they would eventually carry out a litter pick. Borough Cllr Kehily offered to assist the resident where possible and offered her email address.

**1. Apologies**

County Cllr S Webb

**2. Councillor Declarations**

Cllr G Underdown - Finance (5.3) as he has submitted an invoice for ground's maintenance work.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**

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

**4. CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR**

Mr John Wilson was invited to speak with Councillors regarding his wish to be co-opted on to the Parish Council. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Morgan, seconded by Cllr Moy that Mr Wilson be co-opted as a Parish Councillor; 3 in favour and 1 against. The Acceptance of Office and Declaration of Pecuniary Interest forms were duly completed and signed. Cllr Wilson then joined the meeting.

**5. FINANCE**

**5.1 Budget Monitoring Report to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

The Budget Monitoring Report was noted.

**5.2 Income received since last meeting**

No income received.

**5.3 Payments since last meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Moy to approve the following transactions, this was seconded by Cllr Kirk-Brown; with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.

Cheques

No cheques

Internet Banking Payments

Safeplay PS Ltd – Play Area Monthly Safety Inspection (January)	£ 63.00
Safeplay PS Ltd – Play Area Monthly Safety Inspection (February)	£ 63.00
Safeplay PS Ltd – Play Area Monthly Safety Inspection (March)	£ 63.00*
Harrietsham Parish Council – Share of training costs	£ 95.20
HMRC – PAYE	£872.81**

\* Hopefully this invoice will be received before the end of this financial year.

\*\* HMRC payment due in April

Mrs A Broadhurst – Salary Owed (Dec 2024 – March 2025)	£574.64
Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Mileage, Postage, Training)	£236.60
Dandelion Time – Hall Hire	£ 25.00
Mr G Underdown – Ground Maintenance (2024-2025)	£1,807.00

Standing Order

Mrs A Broadhurst – February Salary	(£143.76 owed)	£760.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – March Salary	(£143.56 owed)	£760.00

Direct Debits:

People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (February)	£185.60
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (March)	£185.60
Waveney IT Support Services – Email Accounts & Remote Support (Feb.)	£ 95.40
Waveney IT Support Services – Email Accounts & Remote Support (Mar.)	£ 95.40

**5.4 Review of Standing Orders**

Cllr Moy proposed that the reviewed Standing Orders be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.

**5.5 Review of Financial Regulations**

The Clerk reported that, having reviewed the Financial Regulations, NALC have announced a further update, however there had not been time to assess the changes ahead of the meeting. The Clerk suggested that the current reviewed set be adopted, ahead of the annual audit, with revisions being made ready to approve at either the May or July meeting. Cllr Moy proposed that the circulated set of reviewed Financial Regulations be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.

**5.6 Statement of Internal Control 2024/2025**

Cllr Morgan proposed that the Internal Control Statement for 2024/2025 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Kirk-Brown, with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.

**5.7 Review of Risk Assessments**

Cllr Morgan proposed that the reviewed Risk Assessments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Underdown, with 4 in favour and 1 abstention.

**5.8 Change of Signatories for the Co-operative Bank Account**

The Clerk reported that the text received from the Co-operative Bank was the only correspondence received to confirm the changes to the bank signatories, no letter had been received. Whilst this was surprising, as no queries had been raised, the Parish Council would assume that the matter is concluded.

**6. PLANNING MATTERS**

**6.1 Any applications received before the meeting**

There were no applications to discuss.

**6.2 Planning Decisions (To be noted)**

**6.2.1 Decisions Outstanding with MBC**

25/500172/FULL – Court Lodge Park, Lower Road

Erection of 2no. 3-bay garages for estate management and private vehicles

It was noted that this had been approved since the agenda had been posted, this would be reflected in the May’s agenda.

Cllr Moy reported that an appeal for application 24/503988/FULL (Land At Riverdale, St Helens Lane) has been lodged with the Planning Inspector.

## **7. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

### **7.1 Devolution**

Cllr Moy and the Clerk updated all present on the current situation regarding Kent's restructure.

At the MBC Democracy & General Purposes meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> January a report had been discussed relating to a Community Governance Review, which listed several Wards which could be affected; with Coxheath & Farleigh being named. A working group was to be formed to investigate the formation of a Town Council and how this would affect the surrounding Parishes. A vote was taken and the Committee members agreed to not include a representative from the affected Parishes. It was then announced on the 5<sup>th</sup> February that Kent was not included in the fast tracked Devolution process and would have to submit draft plans, by the 21<sup>st</sup> March, for a restructure to create unitary authorities across Kent, with the full proposals being sent to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by 28<sup>th</sup> November. A press article then detailed the abolition of Maidstone Parish Councils, which resulted in the Clerk sending a strongly worded letter to Cllr English. Discussion had then been ongoing between affected Parishes, KALC and various Ward Councillors. Cllr English had stated that MBC could not abolish parishes, which the Clerk had disputed, as a Community Governance Review would facilitate this. The report author, Ryan O'Connell, had been invited to speak at the February KALC area meeting, where he had confirmed that this would be the process for abolishing or creating Parishes and a Town Council in the Maidstone area.

KCC elections will now be held as planned in May, so it is likely that nothing will progress beforehand, however there is a further Democracy & General Purposes meeting scheduled for the 26<sup>th</sup> March.

The Clerk reported that, with a new unitary authority, some services may become more remote, and it is likely that the new Councillors will have a higher number of electorates to oversee. This could result in them being less accessible to residents, increasing the workload of the Parish Council. KALC has emailed to say that Parish Councils need to think about any services that they may consider taking over in the future, however the Clerk highlighted that this would have an additional cost implication for residents, which would need careful consideration. Parishes also need to look at the assets they hold, including those shared with either the local Borough or Kent County Councils. It was noted that this would include the Village Green in Charlton Lane.

The Clerk outlined the importance of engaging with residents ahead of the Community Governance Review, to ensure that they respond to the consultation, especially if anything included in the review would have a negative impact on the village. It was agreed that an article in Life-Line in the coming months along with a newsletter might be an appropriate way to explain the current situation to residents.

It was noted that, when Devolution had first been discussed, it was felt that this process would empower communities however, to date, there had been little reference to residents and the importance of Parish/Town Councils.

Due to the speed in which the situation had evolved during February, the Clerk was asked to monitor the situation closely and to act accordingly to ensure that MBC is clear on the Parish Council's position.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at 7.30pm**

*With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 8.46pm.*