

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2016 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

PRESENT: Cllrs B Scott (Chairman), Cllrs M Merritt, G Martin, L Johnson, J Morgan, H Swan, Mrs A Broadhurst (Clerk) Borough Cllrs B Mortimer and R Webb.

IN ATTENDANCE: Nine parishioners were present.

Cllr Scott requested, if anyone intended to record the meeting, that they inform the Parish Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Borough Cllr E Fermor and PCSO M Day

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 18th July 2016

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

4. POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk informed all present that there had been two crimes reported since the last meeting. Both were thefts by finding.

5. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

5.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh

Cllr Martin reported that a drain cover, 50 yds before Hunt Street, is breaking up.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Merritt informed all present that he has reported a case of flytipping to Kent Highways as it is blocking Kettle Lane. The litter consists of builder's rubbish, rubble, black sacks and garden waste. Kent Highways have added it to their schedule. The Clerk offered to chase this with Maidstone Borough Council.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Scott reported on an issue which had occurred over the summer months which related to signs being erected advertising a development in Coxheath. A letter has been sent to Kent Highways to find out if permission had been granted and, if so, why the Parish Council were not consulted as they are in a Conservation Area. The response has been chased twice and is still outstanding. Borough Cllr Mortimer stated that, if the signs are a standard size, no planning permission is required. They only have to provide MBC (as the Planning Authority) with 14 days notice of their intention to erect signage. The relevant Act changed in 2012 which means that the signs can stay up until 2 years after the last house has been sold.

Cllr Merritt asked if Kent Highways could be contacted to remind them to remove their signage after works have been completed. An example was on Charlton Lane (the slip road that serves Rookery Row, Dawson Cottages and The Good Intent) where work had been completed on the 12th February 2015. The 20mph sign warning of loose chippings had been removed on the 19th September 2016.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Merritt raised concerns that diversion routes are being ignored by drivers resulting in them coming down Charlton Lane. He felt that this should not be allowed but the general view was that there wasn't much that could be done to stop people using different routes.

Cllr Merritt reported on a pothole in Charlton Lane which may have been caused by a drain collapsing.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Swan raised concerns that the Nu-Venture bus had had problems in Charlton Lane for two Saturdays recently due to parking at the Sports Club. A representative explained the recent issues and offered to speak with the organiser to see if anything could be done. All present agreed that they wanted to see the children playing there and so it would be beneficial to everyone if a resolution could be found.

5.2 Teston Lane

Cllr Scott reported that two meetings have been held with 3 other Parishes (East Farleigh, Teston and Barming) to discuss the highways issues relating to both East Farleigh and Teston Bridges, which are ancient monuments. All Chairmen had agreed that this was a good time to try to get some action taken. They have met with Paul Brand and Andrew Westwood from Kent Highways and they have agreed to temporarily install CCTV to monitor the vehicles going over both bridges. The long term aim is to push for cameras that will automatically issue tickets to oversized vehicles. It was noted that one other place in the country is using this technology. Cllr Scott added that the next meeting has been arranged for October.

5.3 Speedwatch

Cllr Scott reminded all present that Chris Stockwell had been looking into equipment available from Staplehurst Parish Council. Cllr Scott had concerns about whether Kent Police are taking any action against people caught speeding. Cllrs Scott and Merritt had recently attended a Police Meeting where it had been announced that a new Speedwatch Co-ordinator has been appointed. It was felt that having a Speedwatch scheme in place may help slow the traffic down. Cllr Scott stated that Speedwatch kit can be borrowed in the first instance. Borough Cllr Webb reported that there is to be a meeting in Coxheath on the 28th September at 7.30pm with the new Co-ordinator and that the Parish Council was welcome to send along a representative.

6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

6.1 Play Area

Roundabout in the Play Area: Cllr Scott reminded all present that the roundabout has seized up and that the Parish Council has been looking into alternative equipment. The Clerk reported on some alternative quotes that had been received and showed all present pictures of a Funk Slide and Rota Bounce, both supplied by Playdale. Quotes had been received for both 'supply only' and 'full installation with associated rubber mulch flooring. All Councillors were in agreement that the equipment would need to be installed. The Clerk added that the costs required the Parish Council to remove the roundabout. The installed cost for the Funk Slide was £7,635.75 and the Rota Bounce was £5,835.75. The Clerk reported that she has submitted a grant application to County Cllr Stockell however the available funds could be limited. The Clerk suggested that a decision be made this evening but that the equipment not be ordered until after the grant application had been decided, as retrospective applications would automatically be declined by KCC. All Councillors were in agreement with this. The Clerk also reported that next year MBC may be offering match funded grants to Parishes of up to £10,000 if their play area is classed as a strategic site. To be a strategic site it has to be the only one in a 12 minutes walking distance for residents. The Clerk added that she has queried the West Farleigh play area and they have agreed that it will probably fall into this category. This funding will be for either repairs or new equipment, however the Clerk did not feel that this particular work could wait until this possible funding is finally decided. Cllr Merritt stated that he would like to see the Parish Council purchase some adult gym equipment as this seems to be very popular in other areas. Councillors felt that maybe the Parish Council could look towards using the possible funding stream next year for this purpose. It was also noted that the Parish Council may be able to get further funding from Sports For All or Lottery funding.

After further brief discussion, the Clerk reminded all present that £5,000 had been set aside in the reserves towards the play area so the grant from Paulina should cover the shortfall. It was then proposed by Cllr Martin that the Parish Council purchase a Rota Bounce to install in place of the roundabout. This was seconded by Cllr Merritt, with all in favour.

Maintenance in Play Area

- Floor Repair Required: The Clerk reported that she had contacted ARD, who completed the last flooring repair, to quote for the minor repair required by the net climber. The crack in the wet pour is approximately 30cm in length and ARD had quoted £110 (+ vat) for the repair. However, to keep the price this low would require the work to be completed when the Company is in the Maidstone area completing other work. It was noted that this is not a high risk item which requires urgent attention so all Councillors were in agreement that the work could wait. It was proposed by Cllr Scott for ARD to complete the repair. This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour.
- Picnic Benches: Cllr Merritt reported that two of the benches can probably be repaired, however, the other three need to be replaced. He has spoken with a company who have reduced the cost from £500 to £395 each as we are a Parish Council. They also said that, if the Parish Council purchases two or more, the price for each bench will be reduced to £375. They are 5'6" diameter and can seat 8 rather than 6. They are made from a heavier duty material, are pressure treated and come with a 15-year guarantee. They have also offered to deliver them free of charge.
It was proposed by Cllr Swan to purchase three new benches and this was seconded by Cllr Martin; with all in favour.
- Posts on the Green: Cllr Merritt reported that 20 posts are required for the green at a cost of £153.60 (+vat). Cllr Martin asked if the wood will have been treated and Cllr Merritt reported that, as they are Oak, they would not be treated. There was brief discussion about whether they should be creosoted and it was agreed that a drum would be purchased to protect the posts before installing. The Clerk queried whether wood would be required for the bench repairs and Cllr Merritt confirmed that it would. Cllr Scott proposed that £350 be set aside to purchase the posts, creosote and wood required for the repairs. This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour.

6.2 Maintenance of Verges around the Village

Cllr Scott reported that he and Cllr Martin have met with a representative from Kent Highways to discuss the verge maintenance in West Farleigh. A walk about had taken place and it was apparent that there are issues with the grounds maintenance company as the lay-by at the bottom of Charlton Lane should be receiving 8 cuts a year, however only one has been completed so far this year. Cllr Martin felt that an emergency fund is required so that the Parish Council can pay for additional grounds maintenance work as required around the village as it does not look as tidy as it has in the past. All Councillors were in agreement with this. Some extra areas had been identified as needing to be added to the grounds maintenance contract, which the clerk will need to put out to tender again in the near future, these were:

- The Lower Road from Teston Lane to Church Lane – one cut at the beginning of May
- Ewell Lane, coming up from the Good Intent Pub, on the right of the junction for approx. 50m.
- The triangle by Ewell Lane and Smiths Hill – one cut at the beginning of May
- Charlton Lane, opposite Elmscroft, needs clearing back to the wall line for approx.

It was noted that the hedges by Paynes are very overgrown.

ACTION: Clerk

Also hedgerow in Charlton Lane is overgrown bringing the lane down to a single carriage way. It was noted that this is owned by Rookery Estates and Cllr Martin would deal with this.

ACTION: Cllr Martin

7 MATTERS OF REPORT

7.1 County Councillor's Report

No report provided.

7.2 Borough Councillor's Report

Borough Cllr Webb reported that there had been a by election in Shepway North.

Borough Cllr Mortimer stated that some of the points he wished to mention had already been covered. He thanked the Parish Council for all of the work completed on behalf of the Borough Council. He added that he is always there to assist Parishes.

7.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Swan reported that the next coffee morning will be held on the 8th October (10am – 12pm). It was noted that some families had asked whether the morning could be held in the pavilion, as more families would be able to attend then. Cllr Scott commented that, maybe, a couple of coffee mornings in the summer months could be held in the marquee at the Sports Club. Cllr Martin stated that there is also the Lambing Day and added that maybe a coffee morning could be held out on the green in the summer.

Cllr Swan queried whether bulbs should be planted around the newly planted trees. All Councillors were in favour of this.

Cllr Morgan reported that the writing on one of the defibrillator signs has faded. Cllr Morgan added that people from outside the Parish may not know where the Good Intent pub is and asked whether the postcode could be included. Cllr Merritt offered to look at this.

ACTION: Cllr Merritt

Cllr Morgan commented that LifeLine is a good interesting read since the change of Editor, especially reporting on just the main points from the Parish Council meetings rather than printing the majority of the minutes.

Cllr Merritt reported on the recent visit by the judge of the Kent Men of the Trees village competition. She had been amazed at the changes to Court Lodge but was very glad that the trees have remained. Cllr Merritt commented that the churchyard looks brilliant but it was disappointing that the ivy has started to return. Cllr Merritt hopes that the village has done well in the competition this year, following the disappointment of the judge walking around on their own last year (resulting in them missing many of the beautiful trees in the village).

Cllr Merritt spoke about a 'West Farleigh's Got Talent' style competition that had been held many years ago by Stephen Norman's Grandfather. He added that he would like to be able to arrange another event like this next summer using the village marquee. All Councillors thought that this would be a good idea.

7.4 Clerk's Reports

- Conclusion of External Audit: The Clerk reported that the external audit documents have been received back with no issues found. The conclusion of audit notice and audit sections 1-3 have been uploaded on to the website for information.
- Budget 2017-2018: The Clerk reminded Councillors that they will need to start thinking about the budget in November in preparation for setting the precept for the forthcoming financial year at January meeting. Councillors will need to think about any work/projects that the Parish Council may need to complete next year.

8 FINANCE

8.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31st August 2016 was **Noted**.

8.2 Income received since the last meeting

Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (July)	£ 2.46
Co-operative Interest – Direct Plus Account (August)	£ 2.31

8.3 Cheques for signature

It was proposed by Cllr Merritt, seconded by Cllr Martin “**that the Council approve the following payments**”.

101134 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary for September	£662.79
101135 – PKF Littlejohn LLP – Annual Audit	£120.00
101136 – Craigdene Ltd – Playground Annual Safety Inspection	£114.00
101137 – Post Office Ltd – PAYE	£564.39
101138 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Nett Salary for October (Post-dated)	£662.99

8.4 Pension for Clerk

It was noted that the Clerk has circulated a confidential report relating to the options for a work place pension. A scheme needs to be put in place before the 1st April 2017.

9. PLANNING MATTERS

9.1 Any planning applications received before the meeting

No applications had been received.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting will be held on **Monday 21st November 2016 at 7.30pm** at The Good Intent.

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.30pm