

# WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018 AT THE GOOD INTENT, WEST FARLEIGH

**PRESENT:** Cllr B Scott (Chairman), Cllrs M Merritt, G Martin, J Morgan, H Swan, M Moy, H Pritchard, Borough Cllr R Webb, County Cllr P Stockell (from 8.05pm) and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Eight parishioners were present.

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

### Public Discussion:

A resident queried whether the Parish Council could make a donation towards litter picking equipment. It was noted that an amount had been agreed at the beginning of the financial year, if receipts were submitted to the Clerk. The Clerk reminded all present that grants would be discussed at the next meeting and could be included if required. All Councillors were in agreement that the Parish Council would assist in anyway required as the volunteers were doing an excellent job around the village.

A resident raised concerns at the standard of resurfacing repair in Ewell Lane. There was discussion on the state of the surface that has already started to break up leaving new potholes. It was noted that this was the same contractor who had had to come back to carry out remedial work to Teston Lane after the poor standard of resurfacing there. Highways have confirmed that this will need further investigation. The Clerk also reported on the issue of potholes along the edge of the carriageway. A call had been received and it had been confirmed that the potholes are outside of the highway boundary and all that Highways can do is to add white lines to show where the carriage way ends. Highways had stated that the boundary line is being eroded by HGVs.

A resident reported that the hole that had appeared following the South-East Water repairs has still not been filled, they have chased this up.

A resident queried what the rules are in the village regarding signage. It was noted that The Tickled Trout still has Christmas advertising boards up around the village and the one on the Ewell Lane triangle is causing sight line issues. Cllr Scott stated that the Parish Council are more lenient with regards to signs promoting village activities and have not followed East Farleigh by having a strict signage policy. It was however felt that the signs for the Tickled Trout are unacceptable and should be removed as soon as the advertised event has concluded. The Clerk offered to write to the pub to ask them to remove the signs. **ACTION: Clerk**

It was noted that there is limited action that can be taken if the signs have been placed on private property.

### 1. APOLOGIES

Borough Cllrs E Fermor and B Mortimer

### 2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

### 3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

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

Cllr Merritt reported that he had read in the press that there was an increase in crime in the area, with many of the incidents being break ins to outbuildings and sheds. The volunteer PCSO role was briefly discussed and the Clerk informed all present that residents can now report any crimes or incidents on-line through the Kent Police website. This will reduce the amount of time that is spent on hold to 101.

### 5. HIGHWAYS AND FOOTPATH MATTERS

#### 5.1 Highways Issues in West Farleigh

Cllr Merritt reported on a recent Highways meeting where Ewell Lane and the junction at Teston Lane/Lower Road were discussed.

Ewell Lane: Highways have agreed to remove the 20mph sign at the Thatched House, which is causing confusion, and replace it with a "Reduce speed now" sign. They are also going to have "SLOW" markings painted on the carriageway. This work will be completed in the new financial year.

Junction of Teston Lane/Lower Road: Highways had reported that the current crash data does not justify any further measures at this time. However, whilst completing a site visit, during the meeting, it was noted how dangerous the junction is. It was suggested that a mini roundabout may be a feasible option but that the Parish Council would need support and a contribution towards the cost from County Cllr Stockell. Jennie Watson (from Highways) will then put forward a bid 2019/20 Local Transport Plan funding. Following the meeting Jennie had sought advice and a roundabout was not deemed practical due to visibility issues. A "STOP" line rather than a "Give Way" sign was then suggested however, it was felt that all possibilities should be investigated. The "SLOW" markings are to be refreshed on the carriageway (either side of the junction) as they have worn away.

During the meeting, it was noted how bad the camber is along Lower Road, close to where the wall has been repeatedly damaged. There had been discussion regarding reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. Jennie suggested that County Cllr Stockell should be approached to see if she could fund this project separately. The cost would be approximately £750 for a speed survey, a minimum of £1,200 for a Traffic Regulation Order and then the cost of the actual works and traffic management. Highways would anticipate a ball park figure for this to be no more than £5000.

County Cllr Stockell stated that she is due to meet with Jennie Watson in the near future and will discuss these issues, along with the state of Ewell Lane, and will report back to the Parish Council.

**ACTION: County Cllr Stockell**

Cllr Martin added that an Engineer is supposed to be reviewing the surface in the Spring, adding that there won't be a surface left by then! County Cllr Stockell stated that she would discuss this issue with Paul Carter.

**ACTION: County Cllr Stockell**

Cllr Martin raised concerns regarding the state of Hunt Street and informed all present that the weight restriction signs by Bow Hill Lane have both been damaged (one has been flattened and the other is in a nearby hedge). Highways had confirmed that a sign can be placed on private land and Cllr Martin stated that, as he owns some of the verge, a sign could be erected there. There was discussion about the wording of the sign, possibly "Unsuitable for HGV lorries". It was agreed that this should be looked into further and if a suitable sign could be found that this be progressed.

**ACTION: Cllrs & Clerk**

## **6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

### **6.1 Work Required on the Village Green**

It was noted that the replacement posts have been ordered and the Parish council's ground maintenance contractor has agreed to install them at a cost of £15 per post. Other items to be completed included:

- Picnic bench to be installed
- Fingerpost sign to be refurbished
- Bench to be repaired
- Stone and verge damage to be reinstated – possibly with a tractor

It was agreed that most of the work would need to be completed in the Spring, however the contractor is hoping to start on the posts in the next week or so. Cllr Merritt reported that he had spoken to the contractor and it had been agreed that the posts will have a loose concrete infill, rather than set concrete, so that the posts won't rot. Also, if they are hit, they may be able to be saved rather than them snapping off.

Cllr Swan queried whether there was any progress with the vegetation clearance in Charlton Lane and Cllr Martin stated that this had still not been completed, even though the work had been chased several times. He offered to chase the work one more time before the Parish Council has to look for another contractor to complete the work.

**ACTION: Cllr Martin**

### **6.2 Lambing Day 2018**

Cllr Martin reminded all present that the Lambing Day will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The Young Farmers will only be promoting their group now and Candy (Cllr Martin's wife) has offered to complete the food hygiene certificate and Larry Johnson will run the bbq. Candy has also offered to run a tombola stall and Cllr Martin asked for any suitable donations. A lady in the village has asked to have a bread stall and Cllr Martin has suggested that a donation be made to the Parish Council for the stall. Cllr Moy suggested that donation buckets also be arranged, and this was agreed by all present.

### **6.3 South East in Bloom (Village of the Year Competition)**

A resident spoke about the Village in Bloom competition and suggested that West Farleigh could enter the "Best Village" category. Cllr Martin agreed that, anything that brings the community together, can only be a good thing for the village. After brief discussion it was agreed that an article would be added to the Farleigh's website and in Life-line to see if there is any interest from within the village. The resident offered to move the project forward, if there was enough interest and the Councillors were all in favour with this course of action.

### **6.4 Tree Warden Required for Village**

The Clerk reported that Chris Stockwell had taken on the role of Tree Warden in recent years and a replacement needs to be found to be able to carry on with being involved in the Kent Men of the Trees competition. As no volunteers were forthcoming it was agreed to add an article to Life-line explaining that Cllr Merritt will be able to offer some support to whoever takes over.

## 6.5 Representative to Attend KALC Meetings

The Clerk reported that Chris Stockwell was the Parish Council's representative for KALC and a replacement needs to be agreed so that the Parish doesn't miss too many meetings. The meetings are a chance for Parishes to discuss any issues that are affecting Parish Councils in the Maidstone area. They are usually held in the Town Hall at 7pm. The next meeting is scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> February. Cllr Moy offered to take on this role with Cllr Swan become the substitute representative.

## 7. MATTERS OF REPORT

### 7.1 County Councillor Report

County Cllr Stockell reported that she would be able to assist with some funding for the village competition, if required.

### 7.2 Borough Councillor Reports

Borough Cllr Webb apologised for being unable to attend the November meeting. He went on to give a brief report about a recent meeting regarding the Parish Service Scheme payment. Any decision has been deferred until the February meeting, however there will be cuts to the Parish funding. The Clerk stated that it was unfair to Parishes, that need to set their budget and precept in January, to have to complete this task without all of the relevant information required. As MBC give the Parishes a January deadline, this issue should have been discussed by MBC earlier. The Clerk informed all present that the Parish is likely to lose the small parishes funding and noticeboard allowance. It was also noted that the payment would probably cease entirely in the next couple of years.

Borough Cllr Webb reported on the health of Borough Cllr Mortimer and all Councillors wished him well.

### 7.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr Merritt reported on BT Infinity's leaflet promising faster broadband speeds, on checking, he had download speeds of between 0.3 and 1.3mbps. On discussing this with BT he has been informed that the feeder box on the boundary with East Farleigh will not serve West Farleigh. Cllr Merritt is linked to the Wateringbury exchange rather than the Barming one. There are no plans for high speed broadband from Wateringbury as it is an old exchange. Cllr Merritt wrote to Helen Grant MP in October and her response stated that she was contacting her liaison within BT regarding the concerns raised and, apart from a holding email, there has still not been any response. It was noted that everyone should be able to get a respectable download speed of 4.5mps by 2020, so action will be required at the Wateringbury exchange. There was further discussion with Councillors explaining about the upgrades they have undertaken to obtain a faster broadband speed and Cllr Moy added that a box needs to be on the village side of the river rather than by the Country Park and that BT should be pushed to act.

Cllr Merritt asked that, if notices are placed in the noticeboards, they be removed as soon as the event has finished, as the boards are becoming cluttered. He also added that the Parish Council notices have to take priority.

Cllr Scott asked all Councillors to respond to emails as some have quite tight deadlines. Cllr Moy queried whether any planning training is to be provided. The Clerk confirmed that MBC have finished their current training sessions but would book any that become available. There was also brief discussion regarding any planning documents that might be available.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Scott reported on the current situation relating to the Community Centre Fund. The Parish Council has been looking into building a room to the side of the Sports Club and is currently in negotiations with the Landlord. Cllr Scott explained that it would not be a huge space (measuring approximately 8m x 9m externally) with a walkway between both buildings. The Sports Club have indicated that they are happy with the plan so far. Cllr Scott reminded all present that a lot of time and money has been spend historically trying to progress with this project with no result at the end. There has been little need to progress with finding land for a community room before now, but it is becoming increasingly necessary. Cllr Martin added that it is a good step for the Parish Council and Sports Club to be working together in the community. At this point, members of the public took the opportunity to voice their support for this project.

Cllr Martin spoke briefly about the Speedwatch scheme that the village wishes to start up. He asked that Mags Zak lead a working party to progress this and all Councillors were in agreement.

### 7.4 Clerk's Reports

- Changes to the Data Protection Rules: The Clerk reported that she has now attended a training session which outlined the changes that are coming into force from the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 relating to the General Data Protection Regulations. In order to meet the requirements of the new legislation, the Parish Council will be required to have a Data Protection Officer (DPO). Clerks had assumed that they would take on the role, but it has become apparent that there could be a conflict of interest with any member of the Parish Council taking on this role. A provider of this service will be an additional annual charge to the Parish Council, however one Company has offered to take on this role at a very competitive price. There is a sliding scale of fees with West Farleigh being the lowest at an annual cost of approximately £150. They will be able to offer advice, be the point of contact to liaise with the Information Commissioners Officer and take immediate action to shut down any data breach.

The new regulations are going to require Data Protection Impact Assessments to be completed and the legislation covers every possible item of data that the Parish Council holds – it also covers all historic data. The Clerk will need to discuss the finer detail of this with Councillors to ensure that they are also following the regulations with regards to data. Once the impact assessments have been completed, there will be a large amount of ‘house-keeping’ required with regards to the paperwork that the Parish Council currently holds (both electronically and in paper form). New policies and privacy notices may also be required. It is hoped that there is going to be templates made available by NALC at some point in the near future and KALC should be able to provide a list of alternative companies that will act as the DPO. Encryption of data will be the main focus point in the next 18 months to ensure that the Parish Council is secure against any data breaches. This will be an agenda item at a future meeting to approve the DPO, to meet the requirements of the legislation. It was also noted that this new legislation covers all companies that store personal data.

- Annual Parish Meeting: The Clerk reminded all present that the Annual Meeting will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. Councillors agreed that the usual refreshments be arranged and that a booklet be produced. The Clerk commented that this may need to be in a different format to usual years but that something could be produced. There was then further discussion about getting the booklet circulated to all residents with Life-line and the Clerk suggested that she look into how this could be produced. It was thought that approximately 200 copies would be required.

**ACTION: Clerk**

## 8. FINANCE

### 8.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 was **Noted**.

### 8.2 Income received since the last meeting

MBC – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Installment of Parish Service Scheme (PSS) Payment	£728.00
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### 8.3 Cheques/Payments for approval

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

101182 – Mrs A Broadhurst – January Salary	£ 678.86
101183 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Word 365, McAfee, Mileage)	£ 128.21
101184 – Kent Men of the Trees Annual Subscription (2017-18)	£ 25.00
101185 – James Vann – 15 Posts for Village Green	£ 165.00
101186 – Mrs A Broadhurst – February Salary (post-dated)	£ 678.86

#### Direct Debits:

People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (January)	£20.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (February)	£20.00

#### Telephone Bank Transfers:

(January) HMRC – PAYE (Oct-Dec)	£589.78
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(Cheque No: 101181 to HM Revenue & Customs – Cancelled)

### 8.4 Budget and Precept for 2017/18

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 household. It was noted that Councillors had approved last year to ring fence £5,000 for play equipment (possibly gym equipment) and £1,000 for work on the green. The Clerk commented that there are several highways projects which Councillors may decide that they want to put some money towards to get things moving quicker (signage issues close to the Thatched House and the costs relating to highways improvements at the junction with Teston Lane). Following the earlier discussion relating to the Community Centre, Councillors may also wish to put money aside for that project. The Clerk reported that she will require a new A3 heavy duty printer with scanner for planning applications next year and the budget allows £350 for this. The budget also takes into account the rise in Pension contributions, any rise that NALC offer Clerk's, along with the implications that will have on Employer NI contributions. It was noted that Parish Councils will not face an increase (in the short term) in precepts being capped, after being reviewed by Central Government. The Parish Service Scheme funding will be reduced this year, but MBC have been unable to confirm how much each Parish will be affected by this (the proposals need to be approved at a Borough Council meeting before being circulated to Parishes). The smaller village additional payment is being removed (which will affect West Farleigh) and the payment towards noticeboards has also been withdrawn. After a long discussion regarding the effect on residents of any increases to the precept, it was noted that, like last year, the Parish Council wants to further increase the work completed around the village and requested that the open spaces budget be increased by £2,000. Councillors also asked that £500 be ringfenced for the Community Centre. This money would pay for the planning application costs.

Taking all points raised into consideration, Cllr Martin proposed “**that the precept for the forthcoming year be set at £23,000, an annual increase of £5.49 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.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next full Council meeting will be held on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 7.30pm** at The Good Intent.

*With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 10.08pm*