

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham held at Farningham Village Hall on Monday 11 May 2026 at 7pm.

1. Chairman's welcome and Apologies for absence

Present:

Farningham Parish Councillors (FPC):

Daryl Burns (Chair)

Melanie Baker

Liz Bourne (also The Campaign to Protect Rural England)

Philip McGarvey (also Farningham and Eynsford History Society)

Kevin McGeough (also Farningham's Neighbourhood Plan)

Carol Salmon

Cllr Laurence Ball, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC), in part

Cllr Marc Logen, Kent County Council (KCC), in part

Anthony Roper Charity, Lee Mullins, Stephanie Clark and Ray Craddock

Community Police, Joseph Weatherall

Farningham United Charities, Viv Parker

Farningham Village Hall, Viv Parker

Millfield Trust, Dorothy McGarvey

Protect the Greenbelt Together, Su Hewitt

St. Peters and St. Pauls Church, Vikki Saunders and Rev Trudi Oliver

The Darent River Preservation Society, Malcom Dunn

Helen Penney; FPC Clerk and RFO

Approximately 30 residents

Apologies received from:

Cllr Alan White, SDC

2. To receive a report from Kent County Councillor Marc Logen, followed by questions (time permitting).

Cllr Logen introduced himself as he was elected in May 2025 as the County Councillor Sevenoaks North and Darent Valley, nine Parishes, including the Parish of Farningham.

Cllr Logen reported that, since being elected, KCC has had a productive year that includes appointing a new highways contractor, reducing KCCs debt by £142 million to £590 million, from £732 million, saving libraries, Community Wardens, parks and services, not taking out any extra borrowing, cancelling net zero, keeping the council tax increase below 5% at 3.99% and questioning Local Government Reorganisation due in 2028 however, KCCs preferred option is a single Unitary authority for Kent.

Cllr Logen added that the new contractor for highways is Ringway who were due to start that month replacing Amey and encouraged everyone to report jobs via KCCs website so that they can be investigated and actioned as quickly as possible, and that he can support if escalations are required.

Due to time constraints, residents were invited to ask questions before Cllr Logen had to leave:

- 1) Is Ringway responsible for Junction 3 of the M25
No, this is National Highways.

- 2) Parking
- 3) How have KCC been able to provide better services yet reduce debt?
Better thinking and 'easy wins', however there is still a lot of work around efficiency and savings to be made.
- 4) Country lanes and pot holes
The contractor is paid per reported pot hole and will only make a repair once instructed. Residents should see improvements with the newly appointed highways contractor however, all faults must be reported to KCC to make them known.
- 5) Quality of road surfaces
KCC does not have a dedicated team to identify pot holes and worn road surfaces. All faults must be reported.
- 6) How are faults report?
KCCs online reporting tool is the most effective way however residents can call and send email and escalated to Cllr Logen if still not resolved.
- 7) How will an integrated NHS Kent and Medway improve mental health services?
KCC intends to improve accessibility to mental health services.

Cllr Logen left the meeting.

3. Approval of minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28 March 2025.

The electorate approved the minutes of the Annual Parish held on 28 March 2025.

4. To receive a report from Farningham Parish Council.

Cllr Burns read out the following report:

Welcome to the 2025-26 Farningham Annual Parish Meeting.

Firstly just to explain, this meeting is not a Parish Council meeting, in fact it has to be held even if the Parish does not have a Parish Council. The Annual Parish Meeting has to be held each year between 1st March and 1st June and gives parishioners the opportunity to hear from Farningham Parish Council and local organisations and groups who have an interest in the village or associations with local residents.

After the change of format last year, we received positive responses so tonight there will not only be reports from organisations, but there is also an opportunity to view and speak to the representatives of the various organisations who are displaying information. Thank you to everyone for joining us again.

The Minutes from the APM held last year on 28th March 2025 have been displayed on the FPC website. Does anybody have any corrections to the Minutes, if not they will be signed as an accurate record.

This year there have been a number of challenges for us and other local Parish Councils. SDC had to start the Regulation 18 consultations for their Local Plan 2040 again last autumn, with the Regulation 19 (Draft Local Plan) expected to be published this summer. We have been advised that there was a high number of votes for Option C 'None of the Above' to their 2 proposals which included Pedham Place and the Wasps Stadium. We wait to find out what this means for the revised plan.

A huge thank you goes again to Friends of Farningham for their efforts to keep the village looking well maintained during the summer months. After many years of being the organiser, Carol Salmon stepped down and thanks to Barry Everitt for taking over from her. The group now meets on the first Saturday of the month between April to September and anybody can turn up here at the Village Hall for a 9.30am start. Any volunteers who would like to regularly or irregularly join the group are more than

welcome, just come along with strong shoes and gloves and if you would like to bring your own gardening equipment that's fine.

The Farningham Neighbourhood Plan Steering group have been hard at work encouraging residents to become involved in the drafting of the document. They have also held a number of Village Walks which were very well attended and enjoyed, along with fund raising events and further ones during the coming months. Please take a look at the website and come along, its great to meet up with neighbours you know and also those you don't.

Again FPC have been requesting Kent Highways find a way to prevent the illegal right hand turns from Eynsford Road on to the A20. Despite installing the hidden camera and agreeing there was a large number of drivers undertaking this illegal and dangerous manoeuvre, they updated signs and road markings, we have now been advised the cost of installing a permanent camera to issue fines to motorists is too prohibitive unless we will keep on with this on our Highways Improvement Plan in the hope of a different solution being found.

FPC hosted an SDC Family Fun Day during the summer. Helen, our Clerk, did a fantastic job with the organisation and running of the day and another event will be held this summer.

It was great to see so many come along to the Christmas event, with mulled wine and carols. The Christmas tree was lovely in Market Meadow and we have received suggestions of how to make changes to the tree which we will discuss shortly as by now we should be ordering the 2026 tree!

During the 2025-26 year, FPC had two vacancies and it was great to fill these. I would like to thank all the FPC Councillors, Philip McGarvey, Carol Salmon, Liz Bourne, Kevin McGeough, Mike Cooke and Melanie Baker for their tireless work and commitment and our fantastic Clerk, Helen Penney who we rely on so much.

Wishing you all a very pleasant evening.

Daryl Burns
Chair - Farningham Parish Council, May 2026

5. To receive reports, if available, from Sevenoaks District Councillors Laurence Ball and Alan White.
Cllr McGarvey read out the following report on behalf of Cllr White:

For those of you that don't know me, I was elected as District Councillor in May 2023 and currently participate on six committees:

People and Places (Deputy Cabinet Member)
Cleaner and Greener
Development Management Committee
Innovation and Improvement
Development and Infrastructure
Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Board

In addition to the above comments, I have been a substitute for other committee meetings, and I attend as many Parish Council meetings as possible. Regrettably I'm not able to attend this evening's AGM as I as a brief stay in hospital.

Residents are also able to follow me on my Facebook profile -
<https://www.facebook.com/share/18XBSHqEMw/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

I have lived in Horton Kirby for 30 years so I'm fully committed to our community and doing whatever I can to help. I have participated in the Friends of Farningham on a regular basis during the spring and summer months.

You may be aware that Farningham Woods Nature Reserve was opened by Sir David Attenborough in September 1984. This is an incredibly important SSSI location and somewhat of a hidden gem within the parish. I have been working with the Parish Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Rangers, Dog Warden and Eagle Heights to celebrate its 40th anniversary later this year.

I have supported the Parish Council and residents with their concerns over graffiti, litter, fly tipping, potholes etc.

I meet regularly with the Darent River Preservation Society (DRiPS) and I will be participating in the removal of the Himalayan Balsam, along the River Darent at Farningham in June.

I'm very happy to meet and talk to residents about the issues that are concerning them and to help as much as I am able to.

With Local Government Reorganisation coming into effect from May 2027, this will very likely be the last year as your Councillor but I hope to make this coming year and enjoyable one for all. Maybe this year one of the many photos I submit will be selected to grace the cover of the cover of Trident!

Regards, Alan

6. To receive reports from the following groups and organisations in the following order:

b. Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society, Philip McGarvey

2025-2026 Report of Farningham & Eynsford Local History Society

The Society marked its 40th anniversary at the October meeting. Various aspects of our collection were featured, including artefacts from the Second World War. Coincidentally, 2025 also marked the 20th anniversary of our moving into the Centre, off Riverside.

Bjorn Ramell is a welcome addition to the Committee. However, there is a desperate need for more Committee members to share responsibilities, especially as Susan Pittman is planning to retire next year. Committee members ensure the Society runs smoothly, but more help is needed if it is to continue serving the communities of Eynsford and Farningham for decades to come.

During 2025-2026 an increasing number of members and guests have enjoyed a full programme of talks, and an interesting and varied programme has been finalised for 2027.

Apart from talks and access to the vast collection of local items at the Centre, members receive The Bulletin 3 times a year. It covers Society updates as well as a random selection of snippets, which often relate to various queries sent in via the website and Facebook. Both website and Facebook help the Society to reach more people.

With the help of a few dedicated volunteers the Centre is open on Monday mornings from March to October. It has received a steady trickle of visitors, who are astounded by the resource available and how well it is organised.

The Society thanked Farningham Parish Council and Eynsford Parish Council for donations made during the year.

Committee members work well together, and we are indebted to all of them for their commitment. However, as has already been stressed, there is a pressing need for more members to join the Committee. We do want people to come forward to help our Society continue to flourish - succession is vital for its success and long term future.

c. Farningham's Neighbourhood Plan, Kevin McGeough

Kevin reported that a Neighbourhood Plan is a community led, positive planning document to embrace what is good about a place and to set out a future vision. Neighbourhood Plans sit alongside Local Plans and give a local voice to planning decisions especially with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon.

Farningham has a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group made up of local volunteers who have been engaging with residents to understand the priorities, opportunities and things that residents might like to see changed in the parish. Activities have included parish walks, coffee mornings, fundraising events and wine tasting with an Elvis event and quiz organised for later in the year.

At the moment, the emerging priorities for Farningham are the natural environment, built environment and village life.

Once the plan has been drafted, there will be a consultation and referendum.

All Farningham residents are welcome to attend the Steering Group meetings and join the group, working group and/or the events committee to help prepare the plan for Farningham.

d. Farningham United Charities, Viv Parker

Viv reported that this year, the committee, Gary Mullins, Carol Salmon, Ian Macknelly, Viv Parker (Secretary) agreed that their donations should be shared equally between the same recipients as last year. Namely;

Ellenor Hospice £200

Demelza Hospice £200

The Cottage Community £200

Community Cupboard West Kingsdown £200

The charity provides financial and practical support, focusing specifically on grants for education, training and welfare to help local children, young people and elderly residents in need. Viv is happy for grants to be requested which are all treated confidentially.

e. Farningham Village Hall Committee, Viv Parker

Viv reported that the Village Hall is run by a committee made up of the Chair, Treasurer, bookings secretary and caretaker, all of whom do a fantastic job for the village, however the hall is owned by the Parish Council who have two representatives on the committee. The hall is very busy with regular bookings from the WI, Axstane Players and the guitar club. Due to its popularity, the maintenance and

running costs of the hall and very important. In recent years, the committee have replaced windows and doors at the hall and flint wall at Market Meadow. Market Meadow is maintained and owned by the Village Hall Committee.

Viv noted that the Village Hall Committee is looking for a Secretary and thanked the Parish Council for writing the minutes whilst the role is being filled.

a. Community Policing, PC Joseph Weatherall

PC Weatherall acknowledged the fatal accident on the A20 in Farningham that sadly resulted in the death of PC Bradley Cork, that investigations into the accident are still ongoing and the second officer that was injured is still in recovery.

PC Weatherall reported that he replaced PC Guest in December 2025 and works with PC Elenor Collins and that their patrols include Farningham which they tend to cover at night in unmarked Police vehicles.

PC Weatherall added that all incidents need to be reported to the Police in the first instance and that he can follow up with residents, if required, after reports have been made. Everything from Anti-social behaviour, nuisance vehicles and electric bikes must be reported for the reports to be logged and so that trends can be acted upon. Farningham has low crime numbers and the reporting of incidents is critical for all communities.

PC Weatherall will attend car and bike meets at the A20 layby this summer and has been working with the organisers.

PC Weatherall also encouraged residents to sign up to "My Community Voice".

PC Weatherall left the meeting. Cllr Ball had arrived during the report.

f. Millfield Trust, Dorothy McGarvey

As many of you will know it is just over 20 years since Millfield was acquired. The object of Eynsford Millfield Trust is "to preserve in perpetuity the green space between Eynsford & Farningham". To this end, a charity was established, and the ownership of the land is with the Charity Commission. There are currently seven trustees, and I am the Farningham Trustee.

The trustees' initial focus was on improving pedestrian safety. The roadside path was so narrow that two could not walk side-by-side, so the footpath was widened and the barbed wire fence was replaced with a wooden handrail.

Kent County Council, covered the cost of the gravel footpath further into in the field which runs parallel to the roadside pavement, enabling walkers and children and parents on the school run to walk in safety away from the traffic. Over the years this pathway has been used by thousands of walkers.

The trustees continue to work to improve the appearance of the field and to this end entered into an agreement with "Hedgerow Heroes" to plant between approx. 120 to 150 native (and naturalised) cell grown trees in the areas along the existing hedgerow to fill in gaps. The Trustees were most grateful for the many volunteers who came along on 17 February to help with the planting. In addition, the teak bench has been relocated to near the orchard, providing beautiful views for those taking a break in their walk.

We continue with our work parties to keep the pathways clean and tidy from overhanging branches, weeds and nettles. The next work party is scheduled for the end of June, and we are always grateful for volunteers to help with tidying up.

Our major fund-raising event is the quiz night. Always entertaining and of course with the added bonus of pudding halfway through! So, a date for your diaries, this year's quiz will be on Friday 30 October, here in the village hall. Look out for the posters nearer the time.

g. Protect our Greenbelt Together, Su Hewitt

Su provided an update on Sevenoaks Local Plan and Pedham Place saying that Option C was the most popular option for residents across the district at Regulation 18 however, SDC still appear to be working towards Regulation 19 this summer and that all indications show that Pedham Place and the Wasps stadium will remain in the plan with transport, infrastructure, harm to the green belt and the cumulative impact of all sites still not confirmed.

The next meeting at SDC is when the Infrastructure and Development Committee are scheduled to meet on 30 June when we can expect the next update.

Next steps will be to test the emerging local plan at Regulation 19 to ensure it meets the legal requirements. Protect the Greenbelt Together is looking for more support from local residents.

h. The Campaign to Protect Rural England, CPRE, Liz Bourne

Liz reported that CRPE, a national charity, started in 1926, and has a Sevenoaks Branch who meet every two months and of which Liz is Secretary.

CPRE have adopted a brownfield first approach to new developments and have reported that there are enough sites for over one million new houses nationally. CPRE are also promoting the campaign 'On the Edge' to ensure that all towns and cities have green spaces, farmland is protected, food security for the future and that developments should be well designed, energy efficient and where infrastructure already exists.

Liz added that individuals can join CPRE.

i. The Darent River Preservation Society, Malcom Dunn

Malcom reported that there are ongoing discussions around removing weirs along the river Darent that DRIPs do not support but remain part of the discussion and that DRIPs regularly meet with South East Rivers Trust and CPRE with other organisations to help support the river.

Nationally, problems with waterways are becoming more prominent and gaining traction in the media which is positive for the Darent and all rivers.

DRIPs are following developments of a potential sewage treatment plant in Sevenoaks and abstraction from the river.

j. Anthony Roper Charity, Ray Craddock

Ray reported that the Charity is over 400 years old after being formed in 1597 to help the young and old of Farningham, Eynsford, Crockenhill and Horton Kirby. Recent donations have been towards the Scouts,

Brownies, Farningham Cricket Club and Tiny Tots. The charity welcomes applications all of which are handled confidentially.

k. SDC, Councillor Laurence Ball.

Cllr Ball reported that SDC are working on the Local Plan and Regulation 19 expected that summer and that the waste and recycling services are going to move to a wheelie bin service as dictated by Government legislation.

7. Matters raised, questions from residents – for discussion only.

None.

Light refreshments followed, with stands from the following groups and organisations, and an opportunity for residents to speak with the presenters and local councillors.

Anthony Roper Charity
Darent River Preservation Society
Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society
Farningham's Neighbourhood Plan
Protect our Greenbelt Together
St Peters and St Paul's Church
The Campaign to Protect Rural England