Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham, held at Shand Hall, High Street, Farningham on Wednesday 11th January 2023 at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Liz Bourne (Chairman), Daryl Burns (Vice Chair), Sam Pointer, Carol Salmon, Krishna Shanmuganathan and Roger Gough (Kent County Council, in part).

In attendance: Five members of the public and Helen Penney (Clerk)

1. **Chair's welcome and apologies and for absence.**
   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Philip McGarvey (Sevenoaks District Council) and Latif Oztosun.

2. **Declarations of personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda and updates to members' register of interests.**
   None

Members agreed to discuss the Agenda in the following order.

4. **Written report from the District Councillor.**
   The Clerk read Cllr McGarvey's report advising that locally, the Book of Condolences have been replaced at each Anglican church. The costs of the folder and printed pages were covered by the (Shoreham) Deanery Synod and that the church will continue to liaise with the Diocese of Rochester with regards to procedures.

   Some residents did not have their refuse collected on the iced-up Tuesday 13th December due to snowy and icy conditions and a mixture of crews considering it unsafe to tackle the ungritted roads and pavements, but also because some of the crew members were snowed in at home and unable to get to work at the Dunbrik depot that morning. There was a distinct lack of communication and a missed double-collection the following week were poor reflections on the normally excellent service. Cllr McGarvey advised that he has taken this up directly with the SDC Leader.

   The report added that at the 7oaks KALC meeting (and AGM) on 27th January Sevenoaks District Council will update members on the progress of the Local Plan.

5. To consider, and approve if appropriate, which agenda items are sufficiently confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960
   None

6. Public Open Session. Members of the public will be welcome to address the Parish Council with any local concerns they have. Please note this item will be limited in time at the discretion of the Chairman.
   Five members of the public were in attendance. Two to oversee proceedings due to local interest and the remaining three to hear discussions for planning applications.

7. Report on General Data Protection Regulations
   The Clerk reported no breaches of General Data Protection Regulations.

8. Approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings on 7th December 2022.

8.1 Cllrs queried the wording for agenda point 11.3 as the Village Hall is not obliged to use Lothlorien to cut the grass at Market Meadow, requested that the Clerk correct the minutes and contact the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

8.2 An error under agenda point 15.8 was noted as the AGM is booked for the 19th April 2023 and not the 19th March 2023. To be corrected by the Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

Once corrected, the minutes from 7th December 2022 will be approved at the next Council meeting.

9. Matters arising from the Minutes where these are not covered under the subject headings below and Clerks update.

9.1 Cllrs noted that the tree work signed off at the last meeting for the Village Hall car park, Irving's Corner and Three Hill has been booked for Monday 6th March 2023

10. Planning – including consideration of the following planning applications requiring comments and note the updated planning log:

10.1 Planning log circulated by Clerk on 6th January 2023
Cllrs noted that the following applications:

Responded under delegated powers

Application No: 22/03019/FUL
Site: The Dairy House Annexe, Maplescombe Farm, Maplescombe Lane, Farningham, Kent, DA4 0JY
Development: Proposed infill dwelling with a minimum of 1 or maximum of 2 net dwellings.
Comments by: 31st December 2022

No Comment

Ratification of planning applications received but not needing further comment or action

Application No: 22/03479/WTCA
Site: Ornamental Screen Across The River Darent, East Of The Bridge, High Street, Farningham, Kent
Proposal: Works to 1 Dawn redwood tree

Application No: 22/03478/WTCA
Site: Farningham Village Hall, High Street, Farningham, Kent, DA4 0DH
Proposal: Works to 1 Beech tree.

Application No: 22/03115/WTCA
Site: South Hall Stable High Street Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0DE
Proposal: Conifer - top the tree by 4m

10.2 Planning Applications

10.2.1 Reference 22/03410/FUL
Site: Charton Manor Farm Gorse Hill Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0JT
Proposal: Conversion of the existing barns to 4no. dwellings, demolition of existing workshop/garage, conversion of field stable to provide car barn/home office, erection of new car barn along with associated parking, amenity and landscaping.
Comments by: 15th January 2023

No comment

10.2.2 Reference: 22/03198/FUL
Site: Lincoln Boarding Kennels and Cattery
Proposal: Demolition of existing kennels and cattery buildings and the construction of two new dwellings, one bungalow and one single storey dwelling with a dayroom and studio within the roofspace. Alterations to the existing access on the Donkey Lane to serve both new dwellings.
Comments by: 20th January 2023

No comment

10.2.4 Reference: 22/03469/FUL
Site: Maplebank Poultry Farm Maplescombe Lane Farningham Kent DA4 0JY
Proposal: Proposed change of use of redundant farm building to B8 (storage and distribution)
Comments by: 24th January 2023

Objection

Farningham Parish Council objects for the following reasons:

Local residents, most of whom are in the Farningham Parish, have put up with continuous applications by the owners for nearly 20 years. None have been successful. The site sits within Green Belt and Kent Downs AONB.

The proposal in no way conserves or enhances the rural landscape of the Kent Downs AONB and significant damage to the landscape and its dark skies would result. See image 1

This application (as with numerous previous one for the site) references the Planning Permission granted in 2006. This Permission contained a number of Conditions that were never complied with and therefore the Permission never came into force. The only lawful activity on site would be for Agricultural Purposes and that ceased 20 years ago.

The building in question is referenced as being in good condition. That is because, **despite having no Planning Permission to do so**, it was converted by the owners for use as storage, offices and possibly asbestos processing a few years ago.

The applicant's statements about traffic levels are incorrect. The location of the site makes it totally unsuitable for any commercial activity. Access via Maplescombe Lane is over 2 miles from an A road and is single track with limited passing places. Access via Botsom Lane is down a single-track lane, again with limited passing places and is an extremely steep hill. The original lawful use of the site as a Chicken Farm required very few vehicle movements. This application by the nature of the 19 offices referenced implies there will be frequent travelling to the site for office staff in addition to commercial vehicle movements. The request for storage suggests that significant sized vehicles will be used. Maplescombe Lane is already subject to regular tractor movements – at one stage in the summer of 2022 for a period of weeks there were 8 tractor movements every hour from 8am to 8pm causing significant damage to the verges and making walking, horse riding, cycling and driving in the lane all but impossible.

The site is in a sensitive area of Green Belt and AONB. It is totally inappropriate in the Maplescombe Valley and continues to harm the Green Belt and AONB. Any vehicle parked on site (and with 19 offices there would be likely to be many) is also inappropriate in the AONB. It can clearly be seen from bridleway SD272to its North and North West, and from footpath SD172 to its North East, as well as from Maplescombe Lane, Knatts Valley Lane and Botsom Lane.

The site is in a disgraceful state with cars, commercial vehicles, rubbish and shipping containers surrounding it and, despite the Enforcement Notice there are still no attempts whatsoever by the owners to clear it up. See Image 2

The building in question has security lighting on the outside operating 24 hours a day which is harmful to wildlife and the dark skies that Kent Downs AONB are keen to protect.

Cllr Gough joined the meeting

4. Report from the County Councillor

Upon arrival Members told Cllr Gough that they are very concerned about an unlawful site along the A20 that had illegal work completed in December 2022 and several mobile homes arrive without prior consent. A planning application has since been received for discussion, agenda point 10.2.3. Members asked Cllr Gough to discuss the application with the Highways planning department as they may not fully understand the severity and implications on the A20 as several aspects have been omitted from the application. Cllr Gough agreed to discuss with the Highways department. **Action: Cllr Gough.**

Cllr Gough reported:

London Road turning circle

That the potential for a turning circle at the top of London Road is being investigated by the Highways team and that if the area is not large enough for refuse, emergency and large vehicles to manoeuvre then the potential solution for priority three on the Highways Improvement Plan will not be feasible. The Clerk is to check that the Highways team are looking into this. **Action: Clerk**

20mph scheme

The largest contributing cost to the quote received for the 20mph scheme is for the traffic management that is approximately £3,000 and for the scheme to be deliverable on site, including two-night closures. Members queried the costs further asking if any items have been double counted and requesting a detailed breakdown as the quote is more than double than what was expected. Cllrs requested the cost for the design of the scheme and that it is removed from the quote considering £2,500 was paid for the Traffic Regulation order in May 2022. Cllr Gough agreed to discuss further with the Highways Team. **Action: Cllr Gough**

Bridge feasibility study

Members reported that had the methodology of the bridge feasibility study been explained the work would not have been requested. Cllr Gough requested a copy of the email where the Highways team were asked for the purpose of the study but no detailed reply given. **Action: Clerk**

Kent County Council budget

Cllr Gough advised that the budget should be published on the 9th February 2023 and that it has been a very tough year with a projected overspend of £60 million at the six-month forecast, mainly

due to general inflation, market conditions and costs associated with Social Care. Adding, that this is the first time in 22 years that Kent County Council will be over budget.

Lorry Park/burger van
Cllr Salmon asked Cllr Gough if the removal of the abandoned burger van in the A20 lorry park was the responsibility of Kent County Council. Cllr Gough agreed that it probably is and would request the removal as it is causing hazards to drivers and pedestrians. **Action: Cllr Gough**

Cllr Gough left the meeting

10.2.3 Reference: 22/03191/FUL
Site: Land East Of Farningham Hill Stables Farningham Hill Road Farningham Kent
Proposal: Material Change of use of Land for the creation of 8 Gypsy/Traveller Pitches comprising 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, 1 dayroom and 2 parking spaces per pitch (net increase of 7 Static Caravans). Erection of gate.
Comments by 25th January 2023

Objection

Farningham Parish Council objects for the following reasons:

- The proposal will create additional traffic hazards along an already very dangerous stretch of road that is renowned for being a crash hotspot, with fatalities.
- Vehicles arriving and leaving site have been observed crossing the double white lines along the A20, including a large articulated lorry when turning right out of site and resulting in a member of the public taking evasive action and calling the Police. The frequency of vehicle crossing the double white lines has increased dramatically since the arrival of several unauthorised mobile homes in November/December 2022.
- The access driveway has two entrances/exits onto the A20:
  One is within a national maximum speed limit joining onto the very busy and fast flowing A20. To turn left off of the A20 and enter site, vehicles travelling downhill will have to slow down considerably creating a ripple effect along the A20. And, vehicles joining the A20 from site will have to pull out into very fast-moving traffic which will be unexpected for drivers already on the road.
  The second entrance to the access drive is within a 40mph zone, however, traffic travelling along the A20 from the Swanley interchange rarely slows to be within the 40mph limit after leaving the national maximum speed limit whilst travelling downhill.
- Drivers travelling along the A20 will not be aware of vehicles entering and leaving site creating additional crash hazards, especially in the dark as there is no street lighting.
- The land lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where strict policies of restraint apply. The proposal would be inappropriate development harmful to the maintenance of the character of the Green Belt, and its openness and would add to the built form on the land to a degree that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Low level lighting has appeared along the upper side of the newly tarmacked access drive which is intrusive to the area.
- The land is adjacent to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the area.
- The proposal will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area and is within close proximity to listed buildings.
- Details have been omitted from the application including the newly tarmacked access drive, installation of a large solid infilled gate and a newly planted, non-native, Portuguese Laurel

hedge along a section on the South side of site that will not aid in screening the development until fully established and is not appropriate for the Metropolitan Greenbelt.

- The application has not been submitted as a retrospective planning application even though work started in November 2022 including the access drive being tarmacked up to the A20 with new low-level lighting, a gate installed and, a non-native, Portuguese Laurel hedge planted along a South section of site which is also not appropriate for the Metropolitan Greenbelt. Several mobile homes arrived in 2022 and still remain, unlawfully, on site. Previous planning records show that one residential mobile home is permitted on site, planning ref: 15/02315/LDCEX.
- Farningham already has an active travelling community constituting of around 5% of total dwellings within the parish.

10.2.5 Application No: 22/03408/PAC
Site: Charton Manor Farm Gorse Hill Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0JT
Proposal: Prior notification for a change of use from agricultural use to Dwellinghouse (Class C3) and associated operational development.
Comments by: 12th January 2023

No discussion took place as a PAC is a pre-planning application. The Parish Council has not been contacted directly for consultation at this stage.

11. Finance Items for noting and decision

11. Items paid, payable and receipts
Items paid, payable and receipts were agreed and sign off.

11.2 Flexed budget report, December 2022
Noted

11.3 South East Water Community Grant, £2,500
Members noted the £2,500 contribution from South East Water following the waster disruption over summer 2022.

11.4 CPRE optional increase to membership renewal
Members agreed to pay the increase membership fee of £60.00. **Action: Clerk**

11.5 Adobe subscription price
Members agreed to the increased Adobe subscription price.

11.6 Parish Recharge estimates 2023. Contested and non-contested elections
Members noted that an uncontested election has been calculated at £367.63 and a contested election calculated at £1,989.18

11.7 Budget 2023/24
Members requested that the Clerk increase the budget for reserves to £7,600 and agreed to request a 2% increase in the precept for 2023/24. **Action: Clerk**

12. Items for decision and allocation of resources if necessary:

12.1 Windows and Doors – Village Hall
Agreed for payment

12.2 PO Box – 12-month renewal
Agreed for payment

12.3 Insurance renewal
Agreed for payment

13. Highways including

13.1 20mph scheme
Cllr Pointer noted that when joining the A20 at the top of London Road there are no signs to warn a driver that they are leaving a 20mph zone and entering a 40mph zone. The Clerk will ask the Highways team if this needs to be added to the scheme. Cllrs agreed not to have the gateways installed as part of the 20mph scheme. **Action: Clerk**

13.2 Highways Improvement Plan – to discuss dates for Automated Traffic Counts alongside Brands Hatch Race Event Calendar, locations of ATCs and quantity.
Cllrs agreed for an ATC to be positioned near to Eglantine Lane but that they need more information before confirming locations for the remaining two and dates for all three. Cllrs requested that the Clerk finds out how 40mph limits can be enforced as this may help determine if the 40mph section of the A20 should be extended, or not. Cllrs also requested that the Clerk find the data and feedback from the last Automated Traffic Count at Button Street. **Action: Clerk**

13.3 Bridge feasibility study
Discussed under agenda point 3.

13.4 Road gritting
Cllrs noted the response from Highways and that the gritting route would not be extended to include the High Street or White Post Hill towards the Doctors surgery. Cllrs also discussed that there is no suitable location within the village where salt can be stored and distributed by volunteers in icy conditions and, that if Charton Manor Farm contacts the Clerk regarding the salt they have in storage this can be donated to a local organisation.

14. Streetlights

14.1 Contract tender – two quotes, JC Electrical Ltd and Streetlights
Cllrs agreed to continue with Street Light Ltd following their quote but that the contract must be new and not a roll over from the previous agreement. The Clerk must request a copy of the new contract for signing. **Action: Clerk**

15. Events

15.1 King Charles III Coronation event Monday 8th May 2022
The Clerk advised that the Cricket Club will discuss the Councils request to use the club's grounds for the event.

15.2 River dipping Saturday 4th March 2023 with North West Kent Countryside Partnership
Members noted the event and agreed to include information in the Trident report. The Clerk will contact the Manager of the Lion Hotel so that they are aware of the event nearby. **Action: Clerk**

16. Proposed diversion of Public Footpath SD169 (part) at Farningham
No objection

17. The Pensions Regulator re-enrolment/declaration

Noted and Cllrs requested that the Clerk complete any information that is required. **Action: Clerk**

18. Notification of National Grid Grantor Change

Noted and Cllrs requested that the Clerk complete any information that is required. **Action: Clerk**

19. Trident

To be completed by Cllr Burns. **Action: Cllr Burns**

20. Urgent Business that occurs and requires attention before the next meeting may be reported at the Chairman's discretion.

The Clerk reported that the Farningham Conservation Area appraisal being managed by Alan Baxter Ltd. and commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council will be open to the public for consultation soon. The Village Hall has been booked for a drop in session on Saturday, 28th January 2023, 11am to 4pm, where the public and view and comment on the new draft appraisal.

Cllrs noted that there will be new compulsory IDs for voting but that the information is very limited at the moment.

Cllr Salmon asked the Clerk about the CPRE discount to houses and how this works as the Parish Council is joined as a member. The Clerk advised that this will be investigated. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting ended at 21:30

Date of next meeting Wednesday 1st February 2023

Items Paid

Farningham Parish Council
PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher	Date	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
126	15/12/2022	Computer Support	Miss H Penney	S	54.16	10.83	64.99
128	01/12/2022	Audit fee	PKF Littlejohn	X	240.00		240.00
129	15/12/2022	Acrobat	Miss H Penney	S	12.64	2.53	15.17
130	14/12/2022	Bank charges	Handelsbanken	X	11.55		11.55
131	23/12/2022	Clerk's salary	Miss H Penney	X	1,502.94		1,502.94
132	15/12/2022	Tax/NI	HM Revenue and Customs	X	263.27		263.27
133	20/12/2022	Pension contribution	Nest Pensions	X	148.80		148.80
134	19/12/2022	Electricity supply	npower	L	67.54	3.38	70.92
135	15/12/2022	Telephone & Broadband charges	Miss H Penney	X	4.95		4.95
136	15/12/2022	Printing	Miss H Penney	X	1.50		1.50
137	15/12/2022	Christmas	Miss H Penney	E	59.59		59.59
138	15/12/2022	Tree Survey	Down to Earth Trees	S	492.00	98.40	590.40
139	02/12/2022	DONATION	Anthony Roper School	X	200.00		200.00
140	02/12/2022	DONATION	Citizens Advice Bureau Sevenoaks	X	200.00		200.00
141	02/12/2022	DONATION	EFL Trident	X	60.00		60.00
142	02/12/2022	DONATION	Ellenor	X	250.00		250.00
143	02/12/2022	DONATION	FELHS	X	150.00		150.00
144	02/12/2022	DONATION	Kent Air Ambulance	X	150.00		150.00
145	02/12/2022	DONATION	NW Kent Volunteer Centre	X	100.00		100.00
146	02/12/2022	DONATION	Swanley Food Bank	X	200.00		200.00
147	02/12/2022	DONATION	West Kingsdown Food Bank	X	200.00		200.00
148	15/12/2022	Telephone & Broadband charges	Mrs Jane Gray	X	20.56		20.56
				Total	**4,389.50**	**115.14**	**4,504.64**

Receipts

RECEIPTS LIST

Voucher	Date	Bank	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
18	29/12/2022	FPC Current Account (HB)	DONATION	South East Water	X	2,500.00		2,500.00
19	30/12/2022	FPC Deposit (HB)	Bank Interest	Handelsbanken	X	11.78		11.78
				Total	**2,511.78**		**2,511.78**

Items Payable

PAYMENTS (AWAITING AUTHORISATION) LIST

Voucher	Date	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
149	19/01/2023	Village Hall expenditure	Door and Windows	S	3,636.67	727.33	4,364.00
150	11/01/2023	PO Box	Royal Mail Group Ltd	S	315.00	63.00	378.00
152	11/01/2023	Clerk's salary	Miss H Penney	X	1,030.60		1,030.60
153	11/01/2023	Tax/NI	HM Revenue and Customs	X	38.78		38.78
154	11/01/2023	Pension contribution	Nest Pensions	X	91.68		91.68
155	11/01/2023	Electricity supply	npower	L	175.07	8.75	183.82
156	11/01/2023	Insurance Renewal	BHIB Councils Insurance	X	2,306.54		2,306.54
				Total	**7,594.34**	**799.08**	**8,393.42**