Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Farningham, held at Shand Hall, High Street, Farningham on Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7pm.

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

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

1. Chair's welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Philip McGarvey (Sevenoaks District Council).

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.

Cllr McGarvey reported that planning application 22/03191/FUL, Land East Of Farningham Hill Stables Farningham Hill Road Farningham Kent, is delayed because the applicant has not provided all of the information needed to support the application, and to make a planning decision without that information could, if refused, facilitate lengthy (and costly) Appeal.

Members requested that the Clerk find out how long an applicant has to submit missing information in these instances. **Action: Clerk**

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.

Two members of the public attended to oversee proceedings due to local interest and a third with a specific interest with Highways and the A20.

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 meeting on 1st February 2023.

The minutes from the Parish Council meeting on 1st February 2023 were approved and signed.

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

9.1 Update on Conservation appraisal actions

The Clerk advised that the proposed map is correct as the extension of the boundary to reach the weir at the back of the Mill Estate came from comments made at the public consultation event that are now being considered rather than not being included in the original map.

The Clerk reported that a request has been submitted for the small pocket of land at the back of Secunda to remain in the conservation area. Members unanimously agreed to discuss the TPO request again and agreed that a TPO should not be requested by the Clerk should this area be removed from the conservation area.
The Clerk added that Alan Baxter has confirmed that the small pocket of land containing established trees sitting parallel to London Road will remain in the conservation area.

9.2 Flint wall at Market Meadow
The Clerk reported that Mick Turpin from the Village Hall Committee has tried several times to contact Jon Draffan for an update on the Albury Trust and flint wall but Jon has not returned his messages. Mick has since written to the family lawyer, William Albery, who has responded to advise that he does not have any information with regards to the intentions of the Albery Trust or the possible sale of the retained land.

9.3 Caravan at Farningham Wood carpark.
The Clerk advised that an Environmental Enforcement Officer from Sevenoaks District Council has informed her that an unlawful encampment of one caravan is currently in the car park at Farningham Woods. The Officer has attended and believes one person and one dog are occupying the caravan and will continue to monitor the situation.

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 24th February 2023
Noted

10.2 Planning Applications

10.2.1 References: 22/03128/FUL and 22/03129/LBCALT
Site: Building North of The Dairy Barn Beesfield Lane Farningham Kent DA4 0LA
Proposal: The alteration and conversion of barn to residential with landscaping and parking has been amended. A summary of the main changes is; Revised proposed floor plans, revised proposed elevations and replacement bat survey report plus statement.
Further comments, if required, due by: 7th March 2023

No further comments from Farningham Parish Council

10.2.2 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. A summary of the main change is: Drawing amended and correspondence from agent.
Further comments, if required, due by: 7th March 2023

Object

These comments are to be read in conjunction with those submitted in January 2023. Since those comments were made the owners have submitted a revised site plan and a response to KCC Highways questions.

In relation the site plan:

- This is dated November 2022 but was only posted (and presumably therefore submitted) on 14 February 2023 – presumably having been received shortly before that..
- In late January/early February 2023 (ie just before the plan was posted) the owner constructed a new building on site which is not shown on the plan and for which they have no planning permission. (see attached photographs the 1st taken on 29th January and the 2nd on 3rd February 2023)
- The site plan shows the whole site bordered in red. There is no explanation of this and yet the planning application they have submitted refers only to one building.
- The plan states that that the building in question is currently used for Agricultural storage. It has not been used for Agricultural Purposes for nearly 20 years – prior to the current ownership. It is not used for Agricultural Storage – but is used mainly by HSP for Asbestos decontamination ie for commercial purposes for which planning permission does not exist. Previous planning permissions granted (2006 and 2011) contained conditions that were never met and were only for storage – not for storage and distribution which is requested this time. Subsequent Applications were rejected.
- The site plan references dilapidated buildings on the site – over the last few weeks some have been removed without planning permission. Concrete hard standing is referenced but this was the floors of previous buildings and pathways.
- The plan shows a considerable amount of parking required for the proposed commercial activities (lorries and cars) but it is also concerning that a significant part of the site shows 'nothing'. On the weekend of 25/26th February there were around 20 Asbestos Decontamination Trailers parked on the site
- The site continues to be in a disgraceful state and the owners have not complied with the Enforcement Notice issued by SDC in June 2020, and ratified by the PINS decision. They were required to comply with this by 23rd December 2022

In relation to the responses to KCC Highways:

The applicant's agent makes specific statements in relation to the anticipated traffic and parking. There is nothing to support the calculations and as the site is leased to a Third Party these seem to be hard to rely on. If permission were granted, they would be immaterial to future activities. They contrast their estimates with 'a working farm' stating that the building 'could generate a significant volume of traffic' as such. In reality this was (prior to the current owners purchasing it) a Poultry Shed with very, very few vehicles visiting.

The estimates are of limited value but refer to 10 lorries per day, this is 20 commercial vehicle movements a day plus those for staff parking. We maintain our view that that this is totally inappropriate. The access via Botsom Lane is completely unsuitable for Commercial Traffic being single track and extremely steep. The access via Maplescombe Lane is over 2 miles from the A 225 and is single track with limited passing places. As previously referenced, this is a rural area with the lane used regularly by walkers, cyclists and walkers, as well as for access by car for those living in Maplescombe and Knatts Valley.

The parking of these vehicles on site is inappropriate in the area and is clearly visible form local roads and footpaths/bridleways. We would remind SDC of their own objections to last year's Maplescombe Farm Yard application (less than half a mile away) which included that the parked cars and other paraphernalia outside buildings would be harmful to the Kent downs AONB and to the PINS comments in their support of SDCs 2020 Enforcement Notice:

30. The site is also located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In particular, it is within the Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs character area. I could see during my site visit that the site is situated in a particularly open and attractive area of rural countryside in close proximity of the lane.
31. The site is therefore widely visible and is prominent within the landscape. The mixed use however introduces open storage that is completely at-odds with the rural character of the area. It therefore fails to conserve the distinctive openness that contributes to the special character of the landscape. The storage and associated paraphernalia, including parking of vehicles, is consequently harmful to the scenic beauty of this rural area. The wider use of the site for the mixed use, including the partially collapsed buildings, represents a decline in the quality of this attractive open landscape.
34. I conclude the mixed use is harmful and neither conserves nor enhances the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB in contravention of Policy LO8 of the CS and Policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, February 2015. These policies, amongst other things, require development to conserve the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of the landscape, noting such areas have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. This is a matter to which I attach considerable weight.

10.2.3 Reference: 22/03410/FUL
Site: Charton Manor Farm Gorse Hill Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0JT
Proposal: The conversion of existing barns to 4no. dwellings, demolition and conversions of buildings for car barns/home office, associated parking, amenity and landscaping has been amended. A summary of the main changes is; A heritage statement has been provided.
Further comments, if required, due by: 9th March 2023

No further comments from Farningham Parish Council

10.2.4 References: 23/00318/HOUSE and 23/00319/LBCALT
Site: 7 High Street Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0DG
Development: Repair of Victorian shop front and render together with replacement first floor vertical sliding sash windows. Ground floor layout alterations
Comments by: 13th March 2023

Support

10.2.5 Reference: 23/00356/HOUSE
Site: 17 Eynsford Road Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0BD
Development: Single storey rear extension with flat roof and roof lantern
Comments by: 14th March 2023

No comment

10.3 Planning Appeals
10.3.1 Reference: 23/00002/ENF, Planning inspectorate APP/G2245/C/23/3314841
Site: The Beacon 46 London Road Farningham Dartford Kent DA4 0JP
Nature: Appeal against issue of Enforcement Notice for: Without Planning Permission erection of outbuildings
Comments to planning inspectorate by: 23rd March 2023

No comments to be submitted by Farningham Parish Council

11. Finance Items for noting and decision

Cllr Bourne reported that the jump in the Tax Base (number of households paying CT) by 10.4, means that the 2% precept increase has been spread over a greater number of households, and has therefore been diluted to a 0.4% increase per household rather than 2% as previously thought. That would have accounted for an extra £757 that the Council could have claimed.

The Clerk advised that, after the 2023 elections, a fourth reserves pot could be created for election expenses to remove the need to budget for a contested election every financial year. Members agreed for an Elections Reserve to be created after the May elections. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Gough arrived at 19:27

11.1 Items paid, payable and receipts

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

Cllr Burns requested that the Clerk check the previous two months HMRC and Pension costs as they were the same even though the salary paid was different. **Action Cllr Burns and the Clerk.**

11.2 Flexed budget report, February 2023

Noted

11.3 Internal Interim Audit

Members noted the interim audit report and requested that the Clerk investigate the Accountants VAT and expenses questions. The Clerk has already asked for examples. **Action: Clerk**

3. Report from the County Councillor

<u>A20 traffic accident</u>

Cllr Gough started by saying how sorry he was to hear of the fatal accident that happened along the A20 on the evening of Saturday 11th February 2023 and that the Highways Safety Team are in regular contact with the Serious Collision Investigation Unit while the investigation is still ongoing adding that initial findings show the accident was caused by driver error, rather than a problem with the road. However, Cllr Gough feels that the A20 needs further examination as it is a renowned spot for traffic accident and the long, straight stretch can encourage speeding.

The member of public who was in attendance added that as a long-term resident of Gorse Hill, they feel that local residents must also be considered during investigations and not just vehicle users and their passengers. They also noted that changing the National Speed Limit to 40mph from West Kingsdown to Farningham would only add one minute onto a journey.

Cllr Gough confirmed he would take this information back to the Highways team noting that working with Kent Police to reduce speeds can be problematic as lower speeds are not always enforceable and moving forwards the Police must complete their report before being able to progress with the Highways team. Farningham Parish Council will be kept updated throughout the investigation.

20mph speed reduction

Cllr Gough confirmed that he still has £5,000 ready to contribute to the scheme and that the Parish Council should be aware that the costs have increased since the quote was sent. Cllr Gough added that there might be some money available from a small works fund and that he maybe able to contribute a small amount more but the remainder will have to be funded by Farningham Parish Council. Members stated their frustration at the time frames it has taken to get to this point which has seemingly only added more costs to the scheme.

Burger van

Cllr Gough reported that the van is being dealt with by Sevenoaks District Council as it is classed as an abandoned vehicle but it is the responsibility of Kent County Council to clear the furniture around the van. Sevenoaks have issued a notice after which they can remove the van when Kent County Council can return to collect the remaining items.

Bridge Feasibility Study

Cllr Gough advised that the study was carried out as requested by Farningham Parish Council and that no refunds will be made. Members stated their frustration at the methodology and that they will require a full breakdown of future studies before agreeing for any to take place.

Planning

Cllr Gough advised that Kent Highways have requested for more information on the planning application for Farningham Hill Stables and until this is provided, they cannot return any comment to the Sevenoaks planning department.

Highways Improvement Plan

Cllr Burns noted that during the Zoom call with the Highways team on the 25th November 2023 Highways advised that they would look into the justification and evidence gained that allowed for the installation of the roundabout on Seven Mile Lane. Cllr Gough and the Clerk said that they would chase for information. **Action: Cllr Gough and the Clerk**

Cllr Gough added that Kent Highways are trying to catch up and gathering place with repairing pot holes and that he will confirm how Kent County Council have ended the 2022/23 financial year once known.

Cllr Gough left the meeting at 20:28

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

12.1 Down to Earth - Ash tree work

Agreed for payment

12.2 KALC Annual Planning Conference (30 March 2023)

Agreed for payment

12.3 Reconciliation of Clerk's salary, months 1-11

Agreed for payment

12.4 Clerk's expenses – stationery

Agreed for payment

13. Highways including

13.1 20mph scheme

Discussed under agenda point 3

13.2 Highways Improvement Plan – Automated Traffic Counts and London Road cul-de-sac

Members agreed for the fourth ATC to be placed near to Donkey Lane crossing the lanes travelling in both directions. **Action: Clerk**

Members agreed to remove transforming the top of London Road into a cul-de-sac from the HIP following an email from Kent Highways that indicate there not being adequate space to create a turning circle and historical costs for similar schemes. **Action: Clerk**

13.3 Bridge feasibility study

Discussed under agenda point 3

13.4 A20 Road Traffic Accidents

Discussed under agenda point 3

13.5 Farningham Hill Stables and reporting incidents to the appropriate authorities

Discussed under agenda points 3 and 4.

14. Streetlights

14.1 Contract renewal

The Clerk advised that the new contract has not been received and will continue to chase. **Action: Clerk**

14.2 Service inspection report

Member asked the Clerk to confirm that items identified should be covered under the maintenance contract and to therefore instruct Streetlights to go ahead with the work prioritising anything that posses a risk also checking how doors are replaced if they are no longer made. **Action: Clerk**

15. Events

15.1 King Charles III Coronation event Monday 8th May 2023

Members noted that dogs are strictly prohibited from the event and the only cars allowed on site are stall holders and disabled badge users. It was asked if Market Meadow can be opened and used as a car park. **Action: Cllr Salmon.**

Cllrs Salmon, Bourne, Pointer, Shanmuganathan confirmed that they can attend and help during the day. Cllr McGarvey verbally confirmed to the Clerk prior to the meeting. Cllr Salmon advised that some volunteers from Friend of Farningham may be able to help along with members of the Cricket Club. The Clerk will confirm volunteer numbers from Eynsford Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

Members only agreed to a bouncy castle being hired if the company's insurance details are checked before progressing any further and that is it a free activity for children to use during the fete. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Bourne confirmed that Chris Bourne will support with creating advertising material.

Members agreed for up to £500.00 to be spent on gifts for children that attend the fete. The Clerk and Cllr Salmon are to determine numbers and items with Eynsford Parish Council. **Action: Cllr Salmon and the Clerk.**

15.2 Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 19th April 2023, 8pm

The Clerk advised that invitations have been sent.

16. Amendments required for regulatory documents for 2022/23 end of year internal audit

Deferred to the next Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 5th April 2023.

17. Emptying of street litter bins

Members asked the Clerk to request with Sevenoaks District Council that bins throughout Farningham are still emptied when the usual worker is away on annual leave. **Action: Clerk**

18. My Community Voice

Members noted the service

19. Additional Designated Rural Status

Members noted the information

20. Trident

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

21. Items to communicate to Parishioners

Cllr Bourne reported that fewer items have been circulated to parishioners recently and that the mail chimp function needs to be used more and the Clerk is to forward items to be emailed to the distribution list moving forward. **Action: Clerk**

22. Friends of Farningham

Cllr Salmon advised that the dates have been confirmed and advertised for the 2023 season.

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

23.1 Farmers cluster and wild flower strip

Cllr Bourne advised that she, Cllr Shanmuganathan and the Clerk met with Marc Crouch, Senior Farmer Cluster Officer, from Kent Wildlife Trust, and James Alexander, a local farmer and land owner, to discuss planting a wildflower meadow for residents to enjoy. Cllrs agreed for the Clerk to progress the idea and allocated up to £500 to be spent on seeds if a reasonable area will be covered and James is willing to prepare the ground. **Action: Clerk**

A community orchard was also suggested and the land at the back of Market Meadow being a potential location. Cllrs agreed to try and progress the wild flower strip before approaching this idea with the Village Hall Committee and requested that the Clerk ask the Farmers Cluster if fruit trees could be planted where the wild flower strip was being suggested. **Action: Clerk**

23.2 Village Hall Committee meeting update

Cllrs Burns and Salmon reported that the Axstane Players have asked if they can sink two post holders into the ground next to the cedar tree in the Village Hall car park to be used to advertise their performances. Posts will be inserted into the post holders and a sign attached when needed for

advertising. Axstane Players have said that other organisations can use the posts for advertising when not in use. Members agreed that the Axstane Players can install the post holders, to be informed by Cllr Salmon. **Action: Cllr Salmon.**

The three members of the public left the meeting.

23.3 Elections
Cllrs Oztosun and Pointer advised that they would not be standing in the May Elections. The Clerk was asked to provide the election timelines. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting ended at 21:30

Date of next meeting Wednesday 5th April 2023

Items Paid

24 February 2023 (2022-2023)

Farningham Parish Council

PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher	Code	Date	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
157	Donations to Voluntary Organisations	09/02/2023	Membership	CPRE	X	60.00		60.00
158	Christmas Decorations	09/02/2023	Christmas	Lothlorien Landscapes	S	830.00	166.00	996.00
159	Administration Fees	09/02/2023	Payroll services	DM Payroll Services	X	90.00		90.00
160	Street Lighting Repairs	09/02/2023	Street Light Repair	Streetlights	S	97.75	19.55	117.30
161	Maintenance Assets/Open Spaces	09/02/2023	Notice Board	Lothlorien Landscapes	S	90.00	18.00	108.00
162	Bank charges	14/02/2023	Bank charges	Handelsbanken	X	11.36		11.36
163	Clerk's salary (net)	23/02/2023	Clerk's salary	Miss H Penney	X	1,030.60		1,030.60
164	Salary On Costs (Tax, NI etc)	09/02/2023	Tax/NI	HM Revenue and Customs	X	38.74		38.74
165	Pension (PC & Clerk's contributions)	08/02/2023	Pension contribution	Nest Pensions	X	91.68		91.68
166	Electricity Charges	17/02/2023	Electricity supply	npower	L	169.98	8.50	178.48
168	Donations to Voluntary Organisations	09/02/2023	DONATION	Darent River Preservation Society	X	20.00		20.00
				Total		**2,530.11**	**212.05**	**2,742.16**

Receipts

1 March 2023 (2022-2023)

Farningham Parish Council

RECEIPTS LIST

Voucher	Date	Bank	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
24	28/02/2023	FPC Deposit (HB)	Bank Interest	Farningham Parish Council	X	£10.64		£10.64
					Total	**£10.64**		**£10.64**

Items Payable

1 March 2023 (2022-2023)

Farningham Parish Council

PAYMENTS (AWAITING AUTHORISATION) LIST

Voucher	Code	Date	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
173	Maintenance Assets/Open Spaces	01/03/2023	Tree Surgery	Down to Earth Trees	S	£1,200.00	£240.00	£1,440.00
167	Clerk's salary (net)	01/03/2023	Clerk's salary	Miss H Penney	X	£32.82		£32.82
175	Clerk's salary (net)	01/03/2023	Clerk's salary	Miss H Penney	X	£1,030.40		£1,030.40
176	Salary On Costs (Tax, NI etc)	01/03/2023	Tax/NI	HMRC	X	£38.94		£38.94
178	Salary On Costs (Tax, NI etc)	01/03/2023	Tax/NI	HMRC	X	£2.84		£2.84
177	Pension (PC & Clerk's contributions)	01/03/2023	Pension contribution	Nest Pensions	X	£91.68		£91.68
169	Computer	01/03/2023	Acrobat	Miss H Penney	S	£45.92	£9.19	£55.11
170	Telephone /Broadband	01/03/2023	Telephone charges	Miss H Penney	X	£14.85		£14.85
171	Postage/Stationery/Print	01/03/2023	Printing	Miss H Penney	X	£4.50		£4.50
172	Postage/Stationery/Print	01/03/2023	Office stationery	Miss H Penney	X	£13.58		£13.58
174	Training	01/03/2023	KALC course	Miss H Penney	S	£60.00	£12.00	£72.00
								£160.04
					Total	**£2,535.53**	**£261.19**	**£2,796.72**