FARNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL - Clerk to the Council: Mrs J.C. Gray,
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Farningham Parish Council met via a video link on Wednesday, 1st April 2020, and present were seven parish councillors, the Clerk, Jane Gray, Sevenoaks District Councillor Philip McGarvey and Kent County Councillor Roger Gough.

Covid-19 virus pandemic:

The government lockdown in the face of this outbreak forced postponement of our Annual Parish Meeting organised for 1st April 2020 and the requirement for our monthly Council Meeting was held via the Zoom website. The next Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 6th May will be also be held virtually via Zoom and the Annual Parish Meeting will precede it at 7.00pm. Members of the public are asked to send any questions or comments prior to the meetings to the Clerk or alternatively contact the Clerk to get a login to join the either meeting; details will be placed on the noticeboard at the Farningham Village Hall and on the website. The virus outbreak has also forced the temporary closure of the car park at Farningham Woods and the play area in Oliver Crescent while Friends of Farningham meets have been postponed until further notice.

Support network:

It is very encouraging to see the network of support that has grown following the virus outbreak. A volunteer group of Farningham and Eynsford residents has been formed and our local businesses have also reported an upsurge of customers. Farningham Butchers have had many more customers, some not seen for a number of years, and they are also operating a home delivery service. Many expressions of grateful thanks have been aired by residents and the same appreciation has been offered to Rafferty's local shop and Norman's Butchers in Eynsford. Riverside Tea Rooms has also made deliveries to residents and community spirit is undoubtedly uplifted by these expressions of generosity. 'Cook' (via Sevenoaks District Council) has offered to provide a weekly cooked meal for elderly and vulnerable residents and though this is not up and running yet, it will be shortly. Please contact the Clerk if you wish to be put on the list or can suggest a suitable resident. When we are finally out of the grip of this deadly virus it can only be hoped that local residents will remember these kind thoughts and deeds and support our local shops – please use them or lose them. Our Clerk, Jane Gray, is one of the volunteers available to assist those in need and her contact details are above.

Housing issues:

Sevenoaks District Council's Chief Officer, People and Places, Sarah Robson has issued guidelines to residents concerned at their housing situation in the wake of any financial difficulties caused by the

Covid-19 outbreak. The Government has announced that private and social landlords will not be able to evict tenants; there is further information on the Sevenoaks District Council website https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20001/housing/512/coronavirus_and_housing or contact direct by telephone 01732 227000.

Kent County Council:
Cllr Roger Gough reported that a 'Kent Together' 24-hour support network has also been formed in the face of the virus pandemic and can be contacted via the internet on the KCC site or by telephone on 03000 419292. The resurfacing of Cinder Path, between Oliver Crescent and the High Street, has been completed and further investigation into the flooding in Eynsford Road has revealed the drainage system that runs under private properties may have been tampered with during building operations in the past.

Dog waste bins:
We have decided to remove the five dog waste bins from the village and now ask residents to deposit their bagged dog waste into the Sevenoaks Council street litter bins. Notice was received from KCC that dog waste now needs to be mixed with other rubbish and so Councillors made the decision to remove the dog waste bins and install new litter bins at the High Street end of Sparepenny Lane and at the Farningham end of Millfield. We learnt that dog waste and items put in the village litter bins are collectively treated as contaminated waste and all of this is incinerated thus having separate bins is unnecessary. We will monitor the situation to see if more litter bins are required. Unfortunately, our volunteer litter pickers continue to discover quite large numbers of discarded plastic bags full of dog waste, particularly on the Darent Valley walk along Sparepenny Lane and on the river walk. This is a nationwide scourge akin to fly tipping and very sad to see. There are also some problems at the moment because Sevenoaks cannot empty the litter bins as frequently as usual. It should be noted that the use of these bins for household waste is not permitted by SDC but some residents ignore this and overflowing bins become even more of an issue.

Farningham Woods:
The Parish Council have released funds for remedial work to improve security, the drainage and surface of the car park at the woods.

Bonfires:
Everyone is reminded not to light bonfires as it is unneighbourly.

Shand Hall:
The Hall was transferred to St. Peter and St. Paul's Parochial Church Council on 9th March 2020 as a community building for Farningham.

Casual Vacancy:
The Parish Council would like to thank Guy Williams for his valuable contribution to the Council; he will be much missed. Accordingly, there is now a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. Please contact the Clerk (contact details above) with a few details about yourself if you wish to be considered for Co-option.

Sevenoaks District Council – Grass Cutting:
Sevenoaks District Council's maintenance team have been redeployed helping with refuse collections and we have been informed the greens in Alban and Oliver Crescents will not be cut for the foreseeable future. Sevenoaks District Council is the only Council in Kent to maintain a weekly refuse and recycling collection. Most other Councils alternate between the two; the Parish Council is therefore happy to support this. A very public-spirited parishioner in Alban Crescent has cut both

greens with his own lawn mower and the Parish Council would like to record grateful thanks. The Parish Council has stepped in and arranged for a contractor to cut the grass in Oliver Crescent.

Our next meeting Parish Council meeting will be on Wednesday, 6th May 2020; please see first paragraph for details. The Clerk holds a list of parishioner's email addresses and the Parish Council are keen for relevant information to be circulated, particularly at this unprecedented time; please email the Clerk if you would like to be included on this list via clerk@farninghampc.co.uk

Cllr. Carol Salmon