

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8 July 2024 at the Riverside Centre

Councillors present: Ian Norman (Chair), Richard Ayres, Rosemary Conibeer, Jill Pass, Tim Plant, Richard Sayer, Annabel Warne and Jeremy Williams.

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk)

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest related to the agenda.

3 Minutes

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 were approved, without amendment, as a correct record.

4 Matters arising from the last minutes

The Clerk confirmed that Mr David Findlay, via the Deben Climate Change Group, had kindly agreed to attend the September meeting of the Parish Council to review and explain the data from the analysis of water samples, answer questions, discuss next steps etc.

The Delivery Group on landscaping and noise mitigation proposals would meet on 12 August 2024. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask that the substitute representative for SCC attend the meeting and be fully informed on the issues to be discussed and able to answer any queries raised at the meeting.

Councillor Plant advised that he had informally discussed the proposed modest increases in allotment rents with some tenants and no concerns had been raised. It was proposed by Councillor Plant, seconded by Councillor Norman and by unanimous vote agreed that the rents be increased by the small amounts discussed at the June meeting; the Clerk would write to tenants to formally inform them.

Further to the discussion of overgrown footpaths at previous meetings, Councillor Ayres had obtained a map of the vicinity, from the Land Registry, and this had clarified land ownership. The footpath had been cleared, it was assumed by SCC following numerous reports and residents, including Councillor Conibeer and Councillor Ayres, had then tidied further to ensure the footpath was completely clear and able to be fully used. In addition, the Parish Council noted that the footpath adjacent to the A12 had been skirted.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

6. Questions from members of the public

No questions had been received from the public.

7. Discussion and agreement of the Council's consultee response to the two planning consultations for a conversion of a granary structure into self-contained annex at Elm Tree Farm, Farnham

The Parish Council had received two applications for consultation.

The Parish Council noted that the Planning Department at East Suffolk Council had included the wrong plan of the proposed drainage system within the documentation. After the meeting, the Clerk queried this with the Assistant Planner who stated that drainage was not a material consideration for an application of this type, however, he confirmed that he had spoken with the applicant and, as far as he understood it, the proposed annexe would share all services, including drainage, with the main dwelling and would continue to do so. It was noted that there was an existing issue with run off after heavy rainfall and the Parish Council agreed to include reference to this in its response. The Parish Council was supportive of the proposal, which, if approved, it hoped would be a sympathetic conversion of a listed building. It also expressed the wish that, if approved, the site did not worsen the issue of run-off after heavy rainfall.

8. Proposal for an outside adult gym – Discussion of how best to consult and indicative costs

The Parish Council noted the briefing note the Clerk had circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman referred to plans under the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood Plan included proposals for an indoor sports and fitness centre. He questioned whether the outdoor adult gym would therefore be needed if a fitness centre was in Saxmundham. The Chairman also suggested that the current demographic of the villages did not support an outside gym. Councillor Williams said that outdoor gyms were popular and could be a viable asset for the villages and the Riverside Centre. He added that the Parish Council should support a more progressive approach within the villages. Councillor Conibeer said the Riverside would benefit the gym as an additional draw to its facilities.

The Chairman said that there were no outside toilet facilities for gym users. Councillor Conibeer said the Riverside Centre was proposing to build outdoor toilet facilities for other events held there so this would also be available to gym users. The Parish Council also discussed the probability of empty properties being purchased by families, the likely change to the overall demographic and the need to be more progressive in its plans.

It was agreed unanimously that the Clerk would ascertain if CIL funds could be used for the proposed gym; if a grant from the Sizewell C Community Fund was possible and, if yes, for how much and was this contingent on demonstration of need; and place an item in the Ebb and Flow seeking views on the proposal and what equipment potential users would like.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

9 Clerk's report and correspondence

The Clerk reminded the Parish Council of its request for free bulbs; the original funding had been increased slightly. The successful applicants would be advised in August.

The correspondence log of items received in the period since the last meeting had been circulated to the Councillors for information.

10 Responsible Finance Officer's report including the income and expenditure during Q1

The Parish Council had received the income and expenditure report for quarter one; this was noted. Councillor Williams suggested that an application for grant funding to cover an element of the Clerk's salary be made in view of the additional work linked to the by-pass which was expected.

The RFO presented three invoices for approval.

Item	Payee	Amount	Legal power
Clerk's salary	K Abbott	£390.96	Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 s.112
PAYE	HMRC	£97.74	LGA 1972 s.112
Internal audit fee	SALC	£212.40	LGA 1972 s.111

The invoices were approved for payment. The balance after the invoices were paid would be £7223.42.

Following discussion, it was agreed that an additional account be opened with Unity in the event of grant funding being obtained and these funds would be held separate to the current account.

11. Training in the use of the defibrillator

Further to discussions at previous meetings, it was agreed that the free one-hour SARS training be requested. Once the numbers of Parish Councillors attending were confirmed and vacant places would be offered to the Riverside Centre for its staff.

12. Internal audit report for 2023/4

The Parish Council received the internal auditor's report and its recommendations.

In summary, the Clerk highlighted the bookkeeping errors in the early part of the 2023/4 financial year, the need to update and review the contents of the website, and the need to update or include several policies and procedures following their adoption. It was agreed that the Clerk would undertake this work over the course of the year.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

13 Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The final version of this Return, received previously in draft form, was proposed for approval by Councillor Plant, seconded by Councillor Norman and by unanimous vote. So approved.

14 Good Councillor's Guide

The Clerk had circulated the updated version of the Good Councillor's Guide from the National Association of Local Councils. This Guide was linked to the Code of Conduct which the Parish Council had previously adopted.

The updated Guide was noted and adopted.

15 Agenda for the first meeting of the Delivery Group on landscaping and noise mitigation measures

The Clerk had circulated a draft agenda for comment.

It was suggested by Councillor Ayres, and agreed, that the wording be amended to clearly seek confirmation from attendees at the Delivery Group meeting on 12 August 2024 that the landscaping and noise mitigation measures listed on the agenda were included in the final proposals. The agenda to also seek updates on indicative stages of the by-pass project and confirmation of future dates etc. The Clerk undertook to place an item in the Ebb and Flow about the meeting as it was to be held in public.

16. Urgent business for discussion, not decision

Councillor Sayer raised the subject of communication with parishioners. This had been on the agenda under item 8, above, so, whilst not strictly for decision at this point on the agenda, it was agreed to discuss the item rather than defer to the September meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion on the desire to communicate more effectively with residents, the restrictions which GDPR placed on some proposed methods, the effort to compile and maintain plus salary costs, and several related matters, including the recommendation of the Auditor and advice of the Clerk about the continued use of personal or business emails.

It was agreed that a sub-committee be established to consider the subject of communications. The sub-committee, to be run in accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, would bring its recommendations to the Parish Council as the main determining body in September. It was confirmed that these recommendations would be provided in a written report in advance of the September meeting of the Parish Council.

17 Items for the next meetings

The items indicated by the Clerk on the agenda were noted.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

DRAFT UNTIL CONFIRMED AND SIGNED

The meeting concluded at 21.37hrs

Signed(Chair)

Date.....