

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9 December 2024 at the Riverside Centre

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

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk), Steve Horner (Chairman, Riverside Centre Executive Committee) (item 10)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and approved from Councillors Jill Pass and Annabel Warne.

2 Declarations of Interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest related to the agenda.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2024

The unconfirmed Minutes of the November Meeting were approved without amendment.

4 Matters arising

Bicycle rack

Following receipt of monies from ESCs Open Space Play Fund a bicycle rack had been ordered and would be delivered to the Riverside Centre for installation later that week.

Fit Villages initiative

Councillor Williams reported that he had, to date, received 30 replies to the survey. The most popular requests were for Pilates (which was already available at the Riverside Centre) and Yoga. Councillor Williams would contact those who sought Pilates to provide them with the details of the existing class and who to contact to attend. ESC was seeking a Yoga teacher and would then contact Riverside about available dates and times. The Parish Council thanked Councillor Williams for his excellent work.

Fido bin

The decision not to obtain a third fido bin was noted. This was due to the cost of bin and licence, plus annual cost for servicing, being too expensive.

Bulbs

Bulbs to attract bees and butterflies had been received from ESC. Those for Farnham had been planted and those for Stratford St Andrew would be placed in troughs provided by Councillor Norman. The Parish Council agreed to pay £30 for compost for the troughs.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

5 Reports of the County and District Councillors

Both Councillor Sally Noble and Councillor Andrew Reid had sent apologies for the meeting. Both had provided a written update report and these were noted.

6 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from the public.

7 Reports from external meetings

(i) SZC Southern Transport Forum – 13 November 2024

Councillor Ayres updated the meeting on the key issues discussed at the Forum: vegetation clearance for the main site construction, traffic management proposals, grants available to renovate homes to accommodate SZC workers, freight management facility on the A14, and the creation of a roundabout at Friday Street and proposals for temporary traffic lights and speed limits. It was also noted that 285 journeys by HGVs were taking place, per day, and, when counted as journeys to and fro the site, this was close to the 600 per day limit.

There was a discussion of the recent email by the Chairman of Friston Parish Council and the concerns expressed, specifically on the overlapping construction periods of SZC and SPR and the likely impacts. It was agreed by a majority that the Council would contact the relevant parties to support some of the concerns raised by Friston and to seek an expedited construction of the by-pass.

Look East had contacted the Parish Council to seek residents' views on the by-pass and the wider construction of SZC. Councillor Ayres had suggested some potential interviewees to the reporter. It was agreed that Councillor Sayer would speak on behalf of the Parish Council, if invited, to reflect its support for the by-pass and a wish to have its construction expedited.

(ii) Defib management and information session – 28 November

Councillor Williams updated on the key information from the session. The life of the defib's battery had been clarified. Councillor Williams undertook to include a service sheet within the defib box as he had been advised it needed to be checked more frequently than currently requested by The Circuit. It was agreed that the defib be labelled with where to return it to after use and the Clerk was asked to obtain these from The Circuit. Councillor Williams said he would prepare an itemised list of the contents of the defib box.

8 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) report

The Responsible Finance Officer provided a brief verbal update on held CIL monies. Since April 2022, a total of £3107.55 had been received and £1578.71 spent in accordance with the criteria. A total of £1528.84 remained and this was required to be spent by April 2028.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

9 To adopt the Code of Conduct for Councillors

The Clerk referred the Parish Council to the latest version of the Code which had last been reviewed and adopted in 2022. The Parish Council, having reviewed the Code of Conduct, voted unanimously to formally adopt it.

10 Review of the application for grant funding for an outside adult gym facility

Mr Horner advised that the Riverside Trustees' Meeting in early January would discuss possible ideas for improvements and whether, or not, to apply for grant funding to achieve these. It was agreed that the Clerk would be available to assist the Riverside with the application, if it was decided to proceed with this, and either pay the Clerk directly or reimburse the Council for her costs. The application would then seek reimbursement of these costs.

The Clerk was asked to find out if the possible ideas by the Riverside met the criteria of the SZC Community Fund and if repeated applications were permitted. (Note: After the meeting, the Clerk reported by email what was included within the criteria and how these might be met by the proposals, she also reported that organisations could have more than one grant award at any one time, as long as each award was for a different project or activity.

It was agreed to put the application for the outside adult gym on hold pending the decision of the Riverside Trustees.

11 Cleaning of the bus shelter in Farnham

The Clerk advised that the current contractor had suffered severe ill health. The Parish Council approved his fee for the one-year arrangement made in February 2024.

It was agreed that the Clerk decide who seek quotes and decide who would clean the shelter twice in 2025 and negotiate best value for money in this regard. This was delegated to the Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulations (items 5.9, 5.12 and 5.15 refer). The Clerk to report back to the Council in due course.

12 Responsible Finance Officer's verbal report

The RFO sought Councillors to check and authorise the reconciliation sheet for payments approved last month.

Receipts since the last meeting £83.15 from ESCs Open Space Play Fund to be used for the purchase of a bike rack for the Riverside Centre.

The balance of the bank account was £3405.81.

Invoices for approval to pay were circulated, agreed and signed for approval. These were: Clerk's salary £284.56; HMRC £71.12; Clerk's allowance £120 (£10pcm paid annually); reimbursement to Clerk for payment for bike rack £45.99; £50 to window cleaner (item 11 above refers).

Signed

Date.....

(Chair)

An invoice was awaited from Councillor Ayres for the replacement and purchase of new items for the emergency box. An indicative price was provided by Councillor Ayres. Approval was given for this to be paid on receipt.

The balance after payments would be £2834.14.

13 Clerk's verbal report

The Clerk referred to Councillor Reid's email seeking information on broken/missing road signs. A reply had been sent regarding the sign to Sweffling on the A12 (southbound). The Clerk was asked to repeat the report about the broken drain cover and the damaged barrier at Farnham. (Note: After the meeting SCC reported that the drain cover would be repaired/replaced within December.)

14 Urgent business for discussion (not decision)

There were no items raised under this item.

15 Future meetings

The next meeting on 13 January 2025 would focus on setting the budget for 2025/6 and approving the Precept Demand.

The meeting then moved to closed session under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 12A.

16 Review of the Clerk/RFO performance and terms and conditions

The Council agreed the Clerk/RFO salary as SP29, allowance as £15 pcm, and increased her hours to 5 per week.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

Signed(Chair)

Date.....