

FARNHAM WITH STRATFORD ST ANDREW PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 9 June 2025 at the Riverside Centre

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

In attendance: Katherine Abbott (Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer) and Cllr Andrew Reid (Suffolk County Council).

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Annabel Warne.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.

3 Reports of the District and County Councillors

Cllr Reid (SCC) had provided a written report which he summarised for the meeting. In summary, SCC had formally objected to National Grid's SeaLink project, similarly it had objected to the various solar farms proposals for the vicinity. The devolution to a mayoral structure of unitary council proceeded; SCC proposed a single unitary authority for the whole of Suffolk which it considered to be more cost-effective and resulting in less disaggregation of services as many were already provided county-wide. A public consultation was planned. The impact of the different models had been assessed by an independent consultant, and it had stated that potential savings were considerable if one authority was in put in place, a dual authority (east/west) would realise less savings and a triple authority (east/west and Ipswich) would realise no savings.

Cllr Reid was asked if the proposals would result in redundancies. He replied that any redundancies would be at the senior management level. Cllr Reid added that there was a probability that Parish Councils would be able to volunteer to take on additional roles and responsibilities and stated that if the final structure was correct there would be more money available to Parish Councils to do this.

Cllr Noble (ESC) had submitted a written update which was noted.

4 Minutes of the last Meetings

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14 April and of the Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, both held on 12 May, were approved without amendment.

5 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6 Questions from members of the public

Signed(Chair)

Date.....

Jill Pass, speaking as Steward of the Riverside Centre, asked if the Clerk had forwarded information relating to possible funding opportunities for the Centre as requested and agreed at the Annual Meeting in May. The Clerk confirmed that she had sent information on several opportunities for consideration and would continue to do so. These would also be copied to Cllr Conibeer and Jill Pass, as Steward, going forward.

7 Update from the SZC Southern Transport Forum held on 4 June 2025

Ahead of the minutes being available on the SZC website, Cllr Norman provided a verbal update on the key points which had been discussed at the Forum.

ACTION: The Clerk was asked to enquire if the SZC bus could be hailed and members of the public allowed to use the service.

8 Public Rights of Way - Roles and Responsibilities of the public, local authorities and landowners

The Clerk had prepared a draft document for consideration of publication on the Parish Council's website to outline the roles and responsibilities around the use and maintenance of public rights of way. It was suggested that in the event of issues with access or maintenance it would be useful to have such a document to refer residents of landowners to. ACTION: The document was agreed, subject to it being described as a guidance document, and would be placed on the website.

9 Complaints Procedure and Policy

It was agreed that discussion of a draft Procedure and Policy be deferred to a later meeting.

10 Communications Protocol

The Clerk had prepared a draft Protocol for consideration. This proposed to establish a protocol for effective communication of the Parish Council's activities and pertinent information to the media and members of the public.

The protocol and its recommendations were discussed. ACTION: It was proposed, seconded and by unanimous vote agreed that the Protocol be approved. The Clerk to investigate the resurrection or establishment of a social media presence; subject to that investigation, and if the use of social media was subsequently approved, the Protocol's wording to be amended to reflect this; and, that the use of the existing WhatsApp group to alert residents to items of interest continue – in so doing, Councillors were reminded of the requirements of the Code of Conduct and the need to be clear if their comments were personal or on behalf of the Parish Council.

11 Verbal report of the Responsible Finance Officer

The current balance of unrestricted funds was £7601.63.

The current balance of restricted funds was £1581.06 (CIL) and £38 remaining from Open Play Space

Fund allocation by ESC. ACTION: It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that the £38

within the Open Play Space Fund be contributed to the Riverside Centre specifically for the refurbishment of the playground equipment. This Fund therefore now sat at £0.

The RFO suggested that the two village signs needed a clean to remove dirt, debris and moss etc. It was not possible to pay for this from CIL funds. A quote had been obtained for this work and the spend was approved.

The RFO reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, a corporate printer had been purchased at a cost of £159.98.

The following invoices were submitted for consideration and were approved for payment. Salary for the Clerk/RFO £336.34 and £84.08 HMRC. The balance of unrestricted funds, after payment, would be £7181.21.

12 Verbal report from the Clerk

The start of the internal audit had been delayed by SALC due to unforeseen issues. It was hoped the audit would commence later in the week. The resulting report and any recommendations would be received by the Parish Council at the next meeting (see item 14 below).

13 Urgent items for discussion

There were no urgent items for discussion.

14 Items for the next meeting

It was unanimously agreed that the July meeting be cancelled. Items of business would be deferred to the scheduled meeting on Monday 11 August 2025 and would include the internal audit report, quarter one income and expenditure, further policies etc.

Signed(Chair)

Date.....