

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26th JANUARY 2021 held virtually via Zoom at 3.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs M Moy (Chair), J Morgan, H Swan and Mrs A Broadhurst, Clerk

The Clerk informed all present that she had received the CPRE annual subscription renewal and asked that Councillors consider this today under Agenda item 4 (Finance). All Councillors were in agreement.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

The Clerk reported that Cllr Swan had completed a dispensation form, as she has an interest in Agenda Item 4.4 (Donations), as a member of the Church (who have submitted a donation request). The Clerk had approved the dispensation in order for the Council to be quorate to make a decision on this request.

3. MINUTES of the Meeting held on 9th June 2020

The Minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and Cllr Swan proposed that the minutes were a true record. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour. (The minutes will be signed by the Chairman, when Covid restrictions allow.)

4. FINANCE

4.1 To note Budget Monitoring Report to 31st December 2020

The Budget Monitoring Report was **Noted**.

4.2 To note Transactions since June meeting

All Councillors ratified the following transactions, agreeing that this was an accurate record of the transactions discussed and approved since the last meeting.

Income:

MBC Parish Service Scheme (2nd half)	£373.00
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Expenditure:

Cheques:

101275 – Greenbarnes Ltd – Noticeboard	£1,352.55
101276 – PKF Littlejohn LLP – External Audit	£ 240.00
101277 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Salary Owed	£ 259.80
101278 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Website Domain Name)	£ 90.14
101279 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Printer Cartridges)	£ 106.06
101280 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Salary Owed	£ 330.04
101281 – Mrs A Broadhurst – Expenses (Office 365 & McAfee, Conference)	£ 138.60
101282 – Mr B Cushing – Litter Picking Supplies	£ 25.14

Telephone Transfers

HMRC – PAYE	£688.73
Harrietsham Parish Council – Share of Clerk’s SLCC Membership	£ 81.06
HMRC – PAYE	£688.93
All Able Ltd – Website Accessibility Audit	£210.00
HMRC – PAYE	£854.85

Standing Orders

Mrs A Broadhurst – June Salary	(£42.04 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – July Salary	(£41.84 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – August Salary	(£42.04 owed)	£720.00

Mrs A Broadhurst – September Salary	(£41.84 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – October Salary	(£288.20 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – November Salary	(£42.04 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – December Salary	(£41.84 owed)	£720.00
Mrs A Broadhurst – January Salary	(£42.04 owed)	£720.00

Direct Debits

Information Commissioners Office – Data Protection Annual Subscription	£35.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (June)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (July)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (August)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (September)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (October)	£55.24
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (November)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (December)	£55.00
People’s Pension – Monthly Payment (January)	£55.00

4.3 Donations for 2020/2021

The Clerk reported that three requests had been received for this year:

- Dandelion Time have asked for a donation towards their craft studio which is currently being built.
- The Heart of Kent Hospice have asked whether we would consider making a donation as they have cared for 4 people from the village this year.
- The Church has asked for a donation of £500.00 towards the ground’s maintenance in the churchyard.

It was noted that, last year, the Parish Council chose to make the following donations:

The Farleigh WI - £400.00 All Saints Church - £400.00 Heart of Kent Hospice - £250.00

The Clerk reported that £1,600 had been set aside in this year’s budget for donations. West Farleigh currently has 426 residents on the electoral register so the maximum s137 payments for this year is £3,544.21.

It was noted that the Hospice is not just assisting with end-of-life care now, they are also supporting people with dementia and their funding has been vastly affected this year. Dandelion Time have been operating for vulnerable families throughout the pandemic but have been unable to carry out their usual fundraising due to the ongoing restrictions. The Church has lost £2,405 in hire fees and £3,400 from their usual fundraising events, this has left a significant shortfall with meeting the churchyard upkeep costs of £3,000. Councillors felt that all three requests should be supported as much as possible this year due to the current situation, as the social distancing restrictions will be ongoing, affecting the groups for some time yet. Councillors queried whether the Parish Council could afford to increase the donation budget this year to £2,500 and the Clerk confirmed that there was enough in general reserves and this figure was still below the limit set by s137.

Cllr Moy proposed that the Church be given £500 and both Dandelion Time and The Heart of Kent Hospice be given £1,000 each. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

101283 – Dandelion Time - £1,000

101284 – All Saints Church - £500.00

101285 – Heart of Kent Hospice - £1,000.00

4.4 Budget and Precept for 2020/2021

The Clerk had previously circulated the budget paperwork to all councillors explaining the effect any increase in precept will have on the annual charge per Band D household. The number of Band D properties has increased from 232.2 to 240.1, which will result in the current precept of £25,500 being increased to £26,368.92.

The Clerk detailed the following points to Councillors: When preparing the budget, allowance had been made for the need to pay hall hire for the forthcoming year, when Covid restrictions allow. As mentioned last year, the Parish Council’s laptop will need to be replaced in the future. £500 was set aside in the last financial year for this so nothing additional has been added to the Office Expenses heading. The salary heading has been held at the previous level as there will likely be a minimal rise under the current circumstances. The Parish Scheme Payment was reduced to a very small sum last year and there has been no notification of any payment for the forthcoming financial year to date. The Parish Council will be gifted additional land from development in Charlton Lane and this area will require maintenance. The current sum in the Open Space heading should cover this, as it will probably only require several cuts a year as it is hoped to maintain a wildflower meadow area. If it does require additional money to be spent during the year, there is sufficient in general funds to cover this. The contingency fund has been reduced by £2,000 as the website is now up and running with minimal cost to Council.

There was brief discussion regarding the money being put aside for a VAS, as it was agreed by all present to add £3,500 to this project (bringing the money set aside to £5,000).

The figures in the budget would suggest that, keeping the precept at £25,500 would give a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year and this was the Clerk's recommendation to Councillors.

The Clerk explained that, if Councillors decided to hold the precept at £25,500, this would give a reduction of 3.30% resulting in the precept on a Band D property decreasing from £109.81 to £106.19 for the year.

Councillors were in support of the recommendation and did not wish to make any changes to the proposed budget for 2021/2022.

Cllr Moy proposed **"that the precept for the forthcoming year be held at £25,500, a decrease of £3.62 per Band D household per year"**. This was seconded by Cllr Morgan, with all in favour.

4.5 Renewal of Annual Subscription to CPRE

The Clerk reported that the annual subscription for CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) is due for renewal in the coming months at a cost of £36.00. Cllr Swan proposed that the subscription be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Moy, with all in favour.

5. Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Emergency Powers

Members were requested to re-adopt the following statement, as advised by NALC:

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decisions cannot be reasonably deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The clerk will further consult with the chairman for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.

It was proposed by Cllr Moy to readopt this statement. This was seconded by Cllr Swan, with all in favour. It was noted that the current system is still working well, with the Clerk emailing all Councillors when an invoice is received, for payment to be approved.

6. RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

6.1 Internet Service in the Village

Cllr Swan reported that she had been in contact with Openreach to enquire how much it would cost to install fibre broadband from the cabinet in Teston Lane to the Green in Charlton Lane. No response has been received to date. In the meantime, Cllr Swan has also contacted both MBC and KCC to see whether they can put any pressure on Openreach to upgrade the service before 2023. MBC responded to say that it was not in their remit and a response from KCC is still outstanding. Cllr Swan informed all present that the scheme is overseen by KCC on Openreach's behalf and residents are offered £1,500 per household and small businesses can claim £3,500 towards the cost. In order to meet the probable cost, a large number of residents and small businesses would need to get involved. It was noted that when Hugh Pritchard had given a previous update, he had 5 or 6 people who were interested and Cllr Moy had given him the names of a further 6 people. However, this number would be nowhere near the volume of people needed for the project to be a success. The Clerk reminded all present that an article had been placed in Lifeline and on the Village Facebook page to ask anyone interested to contact the Clerk, however this had only produced a few further interested residents.

It was agreed that nothing further could be done until responses are received from both Openreach and KCC, however residents could still register their interest through the Parish Clerk (westfarleighpc@goolemail.com)

7. PLANNING MATTERS

7.1 Planning Decisions

7.1.1 Applications Approved by MBC

20/502462/TPOA – The Cricket Ground, Church Lane

TPO Application T1 (Oak) Is 13m wide and 14m high, Reducing the crown all around by no more than 2m, also to thin by no more than 25% T2 (Oak) is 11m wide on 12m high, Again, reducing the crown all around by no more than 1m, also to thin by no more than 25% T3 (Oak) 10m high and 10m wide, As T2 T4 (Oak) 7m high and 7m wide, As T2 T5, No works to be carried out. T6, 7 and 9 - Remove any deadwood due to signs of excessive dieback. T10 - (2x Oaks) Smaller Oak to be removed as it is in decline, Remove deadwood from larger Oak and cut back to leave clearance 2-3 metres from building to stop damage to pavilion thatched roof. T11 (3x Silver Birches) Crown lift lower branches to give clearance of 2.4m from ground. T12 (Oak) is 11m wide on 12m high, Again, reducing the crown all around by no more than 1m, also to thin by no more than 25%

20/503734/FULL – 1-2 Court Lodge Cottages, Church Lane

Erection of a single storey rear/side extension

19/503633/FULL – Ewell Manor, Ewell Lane

Conversion of barn to a single dwelling including the rebuilding of the attached wall, pens and stores; conversion of cattle shed and stock shed into 2 no. holiday lets

20/503517/FULL – Elmscroft House, Charlton Lane

Erection of a 10Kw ground mounted photovoltaic solar array.

20/504300/FULL – Land adjacent to The Good Intent, The Green

Erection of two bungalows with associated parking, landscaping and provision of amenity land

7.1.2 Applications Refused by MBC

20/504418/FULL – Land at 1 Bow Hill Cottages, Bow Hill

Erection of an outbuilding on agricultural land for housing farm machinery, feed and equipment.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Due to the current situation, it was agreed that this would need to be confirmed at a later date.

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 15.58pm.