

Farington Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Farington Parish Council held at Bashall Grove Sheltered Accommodation on Monday 5 February 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:- Councillor Shaun Bradbury (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Tony Green; Councillor Michael Green; Councillor Baz Howard; Councillor Phil Lawson and Councillor Haydn Williams.

In attendance:- Sue Whittam – Locum Clerk
Councillor Mary Green – South Ribble Borough Council
8 members of the public

101. (23/24) Apologies for Absence/Chairman's health and Safety Announcements

Due to the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton, it was agreed that the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury should chair the meeting.

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefed everyone on possible health and safety considerations for this evening's meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Karen Walton, and apologies for lateness from Councillor Michael Green.

102. (23/24) Declarations of interest & written requests for dispensation

The Clerk confirmed that written requests for dispensation had been received from all present in order for them to consider the precept up to the 31 March 2027 in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Haydn Williams declared a prejudicial interest in Item 7 Planning as a Member of South Ribble Borough Council's Planning Committee. He advised that he would leave the room if any planning applications were discussed that would be considered by the Planning Committee at South Ribble Borough Council.

103. (23/24) Approve appointment of Interim Clerk

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury explained that as the current Clerk had left Farington Parish Council, a new Clerk would need to be appointed initially on an interim basis. It was recommended that Sue Whittam should be appointed on initially a six months basis from 1st March 2024, and would be paid point 28 on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services salary pay scales which was the same rate of pay as the previous Clerk. This was proposed by Councillor Phil Lawson and seconded by Councillor Baz Howard and unanimously agreed.

In addition to this it was also agreed that Sue Whittam should be paid for her hours accrued so far at the same rate, plus the additional hours required for February 2024 to ensure continuity and compliance for the Parish Council. It was noted that Sue

Whittam had not been paid for the hours worked in November when she covered the Extraordinary Meeting as the Locum Clerk and this would be resolved once the Parish Council's accounts had been audited.

It was further noted that a contract of employment for Sue Whittam would be provided in due course.

Resolved

i) That approval is given to appoint Sue Whittam as the Interim Clerk for Farington Parish Council on initially a six months basis with effect from 1st March 2024, and that the salary will be point 28 on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services salary pay scales.

ii) That approval is given to pay Sue Whittam for her hours accrued so far at the same rate, plus the additional hours required for February 2024 to ensure continuity and compliance for the Parish Council.

104. (23/24) Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Clerk explained that she had obtained a copy of the Minutes from the meeting on the 4th December 2023 and she had circulated these to the Parish Council with suggested tracked changes. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the changes, so the Clerk would arrange for a "clean copy" to be presented at the next meeting for approval. It was noted that Councillor Haydn Williams name included a spelling error, so this would also be corrected.

Resolved

That a "clean copy" of the Minutes would be presented to the next Parish Council meeting on the 4th March for approval.

105. (23/24) Neighbourhood Policing Team Update

It was noted that there was no one from the Neighbourhood Policing Team present at tonight's meeting, so the Clerk agreed to contact the Policing Team to see if they could attend future meetings. In the event that they could not attend they would be asked if they could forward the latest crime information for the Farington Parish area.

It was noted that a meeting would be held with Andy Pratt, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and representatives from the Borough Council to discuss the issues at the tank roundabout. Representatives from the Parish would also be invited to attend.

A member of the public asked about the police presence in the area and the Parish Council felt that there needed to be some positive messages/action in the Parish to tackle crime.

Councillor Michael Green explained that he was on the Police and Crime Panel at Lancashire County Council and said that the Police and Crime Commissioner had

been focusing on issues such as anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Andrew Snowden, the Police and Crime Commissioner and ask what is being done in the area and highlight the lack of attendance by the Police in dealing with crime and other issues.

106. (23/24) Adjournment for Public Participation.

The Chairman Councillor Shaun Bradbury adjourned the meeting for public participation and asked if anyone had anything to raise under this item.

One member of the public raised the issue about a mast opposite her home on Stanifield Lane and raised concerns about the health impact and the fact that she had not been consulted on the installation of the mast. Councillor Mary Green explained that this would have been an Officer's decision rather than through Planning Committee. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury stated that he thought that through Government legislation the mast's could be installed without permission. Councillor Baz Howard said he would write to his Ward Councillor to ask about the mast.

One member of the public asked about the consultation for St Paul's Park and when this was likely to be done. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury said that this should have been ready to go before Christmas, but it will be discussed later at this meeting and then at the March meeting to finalise the consultation and the timescales.

One member of the public raised the issue regarding the area as a whole and the amount of litter and rubbish dumped in the Parish brought the look of the area down. In particular she referred to Stanley Road where land close to some converted flats was full of rubbish and glass etc. It was noted that if this was private land, the Parish Council were limited on what they could do, but this was something that could be raised with South Ribble Borough Council.

The member of the public also raised issues regarding the public rights of way at Centurion Way close to the railway bridge through to Carr Lane and Fowler Lane and that lorry drivers were using this area as a toilet and again the area was full of litter. The Clerk said that she would ask the Parish Council Lengthsman to look at this area and carry out some litter picking.

One member of the public said that it may be worthwhile contacting Community Payback to ask them if they could litter pick hotspots in the area. One member of the public said she had the contact for Community Payback and she would forward the details to the Parish Council. It was also felt that the Parish Council needed to know which areas were cleaned in the Parish by Neighbourhood Services and the frequency, in order to avoid duplication of resources.

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury then reconvened the meeting.

107. (23/24) Planning

The Parish Council gave consideration to Planning Applications in Farington Parish. The Clerk reported that on the weekly planning list dated 29th January 2024, there was an outline application with all matters reserved for two residential dwellings at Land at Lodge Lane, Lodge Lane, Farington Moss (reference 07/2024/00053/OUT). The Parish Council agreed to delegate the response to the Clerk, depending on comments received from Parish Councillors. Councillor Karen Walton would also be asked to call in the application to Planning Committee, if the Parish Council had concerns regarding this application. It was noted that as Councillor Haydn Williams was a member of Planning Committee at South Ribble Borough Council, he would not be commenting on this application until it was presented, subject to call in, to the Planning Committee.

Councillor Michael Green informed the Parish Council that outline permission had been granted by Lancashire County Council in December for the Lancashire Strategic employment site at Cuerden. He also said that South Ribble Borough Council had recently approved the new vehicular access off School Lane.

The Parish Council also considered the Statement of Community Involvement Consultation which set out how the local planning authority (South Ribble Borough Council) would consult and notify the community, businesses and other organisations or 'stakeholders' about the development of their area. The Parish Council agreed to let the Clerk have any comments on this consultation so she could respond as appropriate to South Ribble Borough Council by Tuesday 13 February 2024.

Resolved

- i) That with regard to Planning Application 07/2024/00053/OUT that the Clerk would collate any comments received from Parish Councillors and respond to South Ribble Borough Council as appropriate.
- ii) That subject to any concerns raised above, that Councillor Karen Walton would be asked to call in the application to Planning Committee.
- iii) That with regard to the Statement of Community Involvement Consultation that any comments received from the Parish Councillors will be collated by the Clerk and a reply would be sent as appropriate to South Ribble Borough Council.

108. (23/24) Financial Matters

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury advised that although the laptop had been collected from the previous Clerk, the Parish Council were unable to access the Parish Council bank account as it appeared that the new mandates had not been actioned. However, arrangements were now in hand for the bank mandates to be resubmitted in order to access the bank account. It was noted that at this current time the Parish Council did not have an accurate up to date balance on the account, and any outstanding invoices would have to be paid once the new mandates were actioned.

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury reported that an informal budget meeting had been held in January to consider the budget and make recommendations for the precept. Copies of the updated spreadsheet had been circulated to the Parish Council, and the draft budget was unanimously agreed. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury suspended Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to ask a question about the precept. The member of the public was seeking reassurance that the error in the precept last year would not be repeated. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury said that this had been due to an admin error and said that the Parish Council should always consider what is required to run the Parish Council and provide services for the residents, and gave reassurance to the public regarding this year's precept. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury then reconvened the meeting.

The Parish Council then gave consideration to the precept for 2024/2025. After taking into account the draft budget and the recognition that again would be a difficult year for a number of residents due to rising costs, the Parish Council were proposing that the precept for 2024/2025 should remain the same as last year at £97,120.00. This was proposed by Councillor Michael Green and seconded by Councillor Haydn Williams and unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council then gave consideration to appointing an internal auditor for this year. It was reported that due to issues with the bank account, it was recommended that Bill Fairman from Fairman's Accounts and Tax Consultants should be asked to go through the accounts to ensure legal compliance and to carry out a full internal audit. An amount of £5,000 had been included in the budget for Accountancy/Professional fees. Fairman's could also be used to administer all the accounts and invoices going forward and a price for this would be obtained so the Parish Council could consider this. This was proposed by Councillor Phil Lawson and seconded by Councillor Tony Green and unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

- i) That with regard to the bank account, that the Parish Council mandates are resubmitted to the bank urgently to allow access to the account.
- ii) That the draft budget as now presented is unanimously approved by the Parish Council.
- iii) That approval is given to the precept for 2024/2025 to remain the same as last year at £97,120.00 and the Clerk is authorised to inform South Ribble Borough Council accordingly.
- iv) That approval is given to Fairman's Accounts and Tax Consultants to carry out the internal audit for the Parish Council and to examine the accounts to ensure full legal compliance. That a price for the continuation of this work going forward is obtained and presented to the Parish Council for consideration.

109. (23/24) Projects for 2024/2025

The Parish Council considered the following projects: -

Parish Council Newsletter – costs to be obtained from companies who will pull the newsletter together and obtain sponsorship from local businesses. The Parish Council was committed to producing a newsletter but recognized that the cost of producing and distributing was very high, so various models would be explored with the aim of producing a newsletter for June. One of the company's previously contacted would be asked to come along to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

St Paul's Park play area refurbishment – A reinspection of the play area needed to be carried out as soon as possible before the final payment could be made to the play equipment provider. The Clerk to action this.

St Paul's Park (Phase 2) - Public Consultation – This should have been carried out last year, but would now be brought back to the March meeting of the Parish Council to finalize the consultation and timescales.

Church Lane Seating area – The Parish Council were committed to improving this area in time for the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings on D-Day 6th June. However, there was currently a question regarding the ownership of the land which needed resolving before any works went ahead.

LALC Area meeting representatives – Councillor Michael Green reported that there had been a recent LALC meeting which had been positive. There had been a discussion regarding the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Moss Lane green space – There was a discussion about this project, the piece of land was full of rubble and stone, and local residents were not happy as it looked a mess. It was noted that travellers had tried to access the land last year. It was understood that the land had been donated by the developer to South Ribble Borough Council for a green space/wildlife area. The Parish Council were willing to undertake a joint project with South Ribble Borough Council but this would be dependent on cost, ownership and ongoing maintenance.

110. (23/24) St Paul's Emergency Perimeter Fence Repair

The Parish Council gave consideration to the works needed to urgently repair the perimeter fence on St Paul's Park. The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury raised concern about children climbing through the fence into the graveyard, this was dangerous and a health and safety issue. However, it was noted that approval would be needed from the Diocese who owned the land for the works to be carried out. The proposal was to replace the concrete post and panel fencing to 2 meter's high mesh fencing in green. A member of the public present whose land bordered the park said he would also ensure there were no gaps in their fencing from their side. A tree survey also needed to be undertaken urgently as this had been agreed before but there was no record of the survey being done.

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Lawson that the quote received via Lancashire County Council for Landscape Engineering Ltd to carry out the replacement of the fence at a cost of £3,578 + VAT is approved, subject to agreement by the Diocese.

This was seconded by Councillor Baz Howard and unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

- i) That approval is given for the replacement of fencing at St Paul's Park at a cost of £3,578 + VAT subject to the approval of the Diocese who own the land.
- ii) That arrangements are made for a tree survey to be carried out on St Paul's Park, as previously agreed.

111. (23/24) Waste Plant – Lancashire Business Park

The Chairman, Councillor Shaun Bradbury made the following statement in relation to the Farington Waste Plant: -

“As you may be aware, numerous social media postings have been made regarding proposed food waste recycling within Lancashire, that may utilise the existing facility at Lancashire Business Park. As a Parish Council, we act only on information that is directly received from the relevant organization. On this basis, a request will be made to Lancashire County Council, by the Parish Clerk, to provide a formal update on any new proposals for the Waste Plant. Upon receipt of a formal notification, the Council can then access the situation and an appropriate discussion will take place”.

The Parish Council unanimously supported the above statement and the Clerk was asked to make the formal request, to County Councillor Shaun Turner, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change in line with the above.

Resolved

That approval is given for the Clerk to contact County Councillor Shaun Turner, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change for a formal update on any new proposals for the Waste Plant.

112. (23/24). Borough Council and County Council reports – for information only

Councillor Haydn Williams reported that the Planning Application for the Model Farm at Croston Road had been deferred by South Ribble Borough Council pending further information required.

Councillor Michael Green reported that the Devolution Consultation had received a significant number of responses and although the consultation was now closed, further information and updates could be obtained at www.lancashiredevolution.co.uk

Councillor Michael Green also advised that as a County Councillor he had a small members grant that could award grants to constituted groups and advised that any group seeking financial help towards a project could apply via the County Council website.

Councillor Michael Green also informed the Parish Council that work had started on the world class cricket facility at Farington and this fantastic asset would also include community use for schools and clubs.

113. (23/24). Clerk's Report – for information only

The Clerk reported that she had received the Lengthsman's timesheets and paperwork, and that he had been paid for January 2024. Arrangements would be needed to put in place to pay the Lengthsman for February, but hopefully access to the bank account would be sorted by then. She had also asked the Lengthsman to obtain prices for his new PPE, high vis vests/jacket with the Parish logo to be included on them.

The Clerk reported that there was an issue with a couple of the heaters in the changing cabins on BTR field and she would arrange for these to be repaired.

The Clerk reported that she would speak to Mike Otter regarding the defibrillators and see if there were any issues with the defibrillators/cabinets.

114. (23/24) Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled Parish Council meeting would be held at 7.00 pm on Monday 4th March 2024 at Lowerfield Community Centre, PR26 6QQ.

It was further noted that the April meeting had been rescheduled from Monday 1st April to Tuesday 2nd April due to Easter, and the May meeting had been rescheduled from Monday 6th May to Monday 13 May due to the Bank Holiday.