

Farington Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Farington Parish Council held at Lowerfield Community Centre on Monday 4 March 2024 at 7.00pm.

Present:- Councillor Karen Walton (Chairman); 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 – Clerk
PCSO Debbie Thompson – Lancashire Police
Councillor Mary Green – South Ribble Borough Council
4 members of the public

115. (23/24) Apologies for Absence/Chairman's health and Safety Announcements

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

There were no apologies for absence.

116. (23/24) Declarations of interest

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.

Councillor Michael Green declared an interest in Item 11 Waste Plant – Lancashire Business Park as the elected County Councillor for the area.

117. (23/24) Parish Council Vacancy

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton welcomed Andreea Oprea to the meeting who had applied for the Parish Council vacancy. Andreea gave a presentation to the Parish Council, she said that she had lived in Leyland for the last 16 years after coming to England as a student. She was a local business owner and her background was in retail. Andreea said she was a good listener and felt that communication skills were an important part of the role when dealing with residents. She was willing to work hard as a Parish Councillor and help people as much as possible with their concerns.

Andreea then left the room while the Parish Council voted on the co-option. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to co-opt Andreea Oprea onto the Parish Council with immediate effect. Andreea Oprea returned to the room and signed her Acceptance of Office form.

Resolved

That Andreea Oprea is co-opted onto the Parish Council with immediate effect.

118. (23/24) Minutes of the Last Meetings

A copy of the Minutes from the meetings held on 4th December and 5th February had been circulated to the Parish Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Lawson and seconded by Councillor Shaun Bradbury that the Minutes from the 4th December should be agreed and signed by the Chairman. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

With regard to the Minutes from 5th February, it was noted that the communications mast referred to under public participation had been allowed under permitted development, in this particular case. It was also reported that there had been no comments received by the Clerk in relation to the Lodge Lane Planning Application. The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton had spoken to the Planning Officer about the application and it was likely to be granted. It was agreed that the application should be left to the Planning Officer to determine and should not be called in to Planning Committee.

Taking into account the comments made above, it was proposed by Councillor Michael Green and seconded by Councillor Baz Howard that the Minutes from the 5th February should be agreed and signed by the Chairman. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That the Minutes from the Parish Council Meetings held on 4th December 2023 and 5th February 2024 are both approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

119. (23/24) Neighbourhood Policing Team Update

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton welcomed PCSO Debbie Thompson to the meeting. Debbie explained that she had retired as a Community Beat Manager two years ago but had now returned to policing as a PCSO. Debbie gave an update on issues in the Parish Council and in particular there was a discussion about the vandalism by an off-road bike to the pitches at BTR field. It was suggested that the CCTV at the neighbouring business park may have captured those responsible and Debbie said she would visit the premises the next day to see if there was any useful information from the business park security team/CCTV. It was also possible that the security cameras at Rowland Homes could also have captured the vandalism taking place, and Debbie said that this would be looked at as well.

Debbie explained that there had been a number of similar incidents on parks throughout the Borough and they were currently looking at all leads regarding this.

Councillor Michael Green raised the concerns of residents regarding speeding in the Parish and Debbie agreed that this was an issue throughout the whole Borough and she had brought a number of "Slow Down, Saves Lives" stickers to hand out at the meeting. These were generally used on household bins to promote the message. A member of the public said it was great to see the Police at the Parish Council giving a full update on issues in the area, as well as an opportunity for residents to raise issues of concern.

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton agreed and thanked Debbie for her attendance and looked forward to the Parish Council working closely with her. Debbie said she would attend the meetings whenever she could, and advised everyone to sign up to "In the know" if they had not already done so.

120. (23/24) Adjournment for Public Participation.

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

One member of the public commented that they had no questions but wanted to say that the Parish Council was doing a wonderful job. Another member of the public said they had details of Community Payback contacts and Regeneration which they would give to the Clerk, as these may be useful with community projects such as clean ups.

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton then reconvened the meeting.

121. (23/24) Planning

There were no current planning applications for discussion, however the Clerk agreed to circulate the weekly planning list issued by South Ribble Borough Council to all Parish Councillors.

122. (23/24) Appointment of Parish Council Solicitors

It was noted that Jacqui Kerrigan from the Lee Rigby Partnership had previously been the appointed Solicitor for the Parish Council, but she had now retired. The Clerk advised that it was prudent to have a Solicitor to act on behalf of the Parish Council when required. It was reported that the only cost to the Parish Council would be when a Solicitor was appointed to act on behalf of the Parish Council in relation to a particular matter.

It was proposed by Councillor Shaun Bradbury and seconded by Councillor Baz Howard that Lee & Co Solicitors of 25 Hough Lane, Leyland are appointed as the Parish Council Solicitors to act on behalf of the Parish Council when required. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That Lee & Co Solicitors of 25 Hough Lane, Leyland are appointed as the Parish Council Solicitors to act on behalf of the Parish Council when required.

123. (23/24) Financial Matters

The Clerk reported that bank statements were now being delivered to her home address and it was noted that there was currently £361,269.30 in the HSBC current account at 9 February 2024.

It was reported that the Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton together with Councillor Shaun Bradbury and Councillor Baz Howard had been to the bank to submit the mandate to amend the signatories on the account. It was hoped that this had now been actioned by the bank. The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton had received the cheque book and it was noted that all invoices would have to be paid by cheque until internet banking was available.

It was noted that Fairman's Accounts and Tax Consultants were currently carrying out the internal audit on the Parish Council accounts as agreed at the last meeting.

There were two outstanding invoices for payment: -

Reimbursement to Councillor Shaun Bradbury - £5,476.51 for payments made on behalf of the Parish Council.

C & W Berry Ltd - £21.92 for Lengthsman's materials.

The above invoices were approved by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That the update on financial matters is noted, and that approval is given to pay the outstanding invoices as outlined above.

124. (23/24) Projects for 2024/2025

The Parish Council considered the following projects: -

Parish Council Newsletter – A “mock-up” draft newsletter produced by Darren from the Refillstore was circulated to the Parish Council. Greenmanmarketing had also been approached for similar ideas and had forwarded a newsletter produced for Whittle Parish Council. It was agreed to go back to Darren and ask for costings for producing a newsletter which could be circulated to schools and residents. The first newsletter would be available in June.

St Paul's Park play area refurbishment – It was noted that the reinspection of the play area had been carried out on 29th February and the Parish Council were awaiting the report.

St Paul's boundary fence repair (update)

It was noted that the Church Wardens had confirmed that the fencing work could be carried out and Lancashire County Council would be carrying out the tree survey so that any tree work could be carried out before the fencing was installed.

St Paul's Park (Phase 2) - Public Consultation – The draft consultation that had previously been agreed had been circulated with the agenda. The Clerk advised that a Privacy Notice needed to be included with details on how data collected would be handled. The consultation would mainly be online with a few copies distributed to local residents and the Bowling Club. It was agreed that information about the consultation would be included in the newsletter, so the period of consultation would run from the beginning of June for six weeks.

Church Lane Seating area – Councillor Shaun Bradbury had carried out a Land Registry search on the land at Church Lane and it appeared that the land was owned by Lancashire County Council which meant that the Parish Council had no authority to carry out improvement works to the land. Councillor Michael Green said he would check out the ownership details with Lancashire County Council.

125. (23/24) Waste Plant – Lancashire Business Park

A reply had been received from County Councillor Shaun Turner, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change at Lancashire County Council, and this had been circulated to the Parish Council.

Councillor Phil Lawson said it was good to receive a comprehensive reply from County Councillor Turner and the information would help allay any fears about the use of the Waste Plant going forward.

Councillor Shaun Bradbury said that various social media posts had been causing a lot of concerns for residents, so it was a positive step that County Councillor Turner had responded with the current position. It was also pleasing to note that County Councillor Turner had agreed to attend the Parish Council meeting on 2 April 2024 to answer any questions raised by the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write back to County Councillor Turner to thank him for agreeing to attend and also to inform him that the Parish Council would like further information on the following when he attends the Parish Council meeting: -

The current figures of residual waste being treated at the site and the projected figures for the amount of waste including food waste.

Details regarding a community impact assessment and what is being put in place to allay the concerns of the local residents regarding potential smells and other issues emanating from the site.

Information regarding the process and procedures in relation to dealing with food waste at the site.

Projected vehicular movements and the logistics of transferring the food waste, in particular the Parish Council would wish to see the transportation via the by-pass and not Stanifield Lane.

Resolved

That the Clerk responds to County Councillor Shaun Turner, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change at Lancashire County Council in line with the above.

126. (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 still not gone back before the Planning Committee at South Ribble Borough Council.

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton said that there had been a meeting at Moss Lane with the Head of Parks, the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner Andy Pratt, Councillor George Rear, Parish Councillors and some residents regarding the land, and its future use. The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton said that South Ribble Borough Council had £2m in UKSPF monies that had been earmarked for certain projects in the Borough. It was noted that Moss Lane would be a wildlife area and an ecology site. There would also be some land for a children's play area which would be a great asset for the local community.

Councillor Michael Green thanked the Chairman for all the work being done to get this area improved for residents. Councillor Michael Green updated the Parish Council on the recent budget approved by Lancashire County Council which included 2% ringfenced to Adult Social Care. Councillor Michael Green also informed the Parish Council that a report was going to Cabinet at Lancashire County Council regarding the A582 South Ribble Western Distributor which allocated £71m towards the improvement of junctions along the route rather than full dualling. Councillor Michael Green said the dualling was still very much needed but this package of initial improvements would provide benefits and ease the road network. He also reported that closing Croston Road was no longer part of the plan.

127. (23/24). Clerk's Report – for information only

There was nothing further for the Clerk to report.

128. (23/24) Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled Parish Council meeting would be held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 2nd April (change of date due to Easter), at Bashall Grove Community Centre, PR25 4JU.

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information which is described in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 which is specified against the heading to each item, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

129. Freedom of Information Request (para 1).

The Clerk reported on a Freedom of Information Request (FOI) that had been received by the Parish Council. Although it was taking some time to collate the information for the FOI, the Clerk highlighted that the first two hours of the Clerk's time were provided free in conjunction with the charging schedule. However, if further detailed information was requested then there would be a cost for providing this. It was proposed by Councillor Shaun Bradbury and seconded by Councillor Baz Howard that if further information relating to the FOI was requested then the Clerk would produce a cost for providing this. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That in response to the FOI request it was agreed that the first two hours of the Clerk's time were provided free in conjunction with the charging schedule. However, if further detailed information was requested then the Clerk would produce a cost to the requester for providing this.

130. Appointment of Accountants and Tax Consultants (para 8,9).

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton and seconded by Councillor Shaun Bradbury that the Parish Council should appoint Fairmans Accountants & Tax Consultants to undertake the book keeping/internal audit on behalf of the Parish Council, and this would be reviewed in May 2025. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That Fairmans Accountants & Tax Consultants are appointed to undertake the book keeping/internal audit on behalf of the Parish Council, and this would be reviewed in May 2025.

131. Appointment of HR Professional Services (para 8,9).

The Parish Council gave consideration to the appointment of HR professional services for the Parish Council. The Chairman, Councillor Karen Walton proposed

that this should be deferred pending further information on the services provided, this was seconded by Councillor Michael Green and on being put to the vote the deferral was carried.

Resolved

That the appointment of HR professional services for the Parish Council is deferred until the next meeting of the Parish Council to allow further information to be obtained.