

FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on 14th April 2010 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

Present: Prof. David Mellor, Parish Council Chairman

Mr John Grant

Mr David Dashwood

Mr Ian Hunt

Mr Martin Wall

Dr Nigel Heywood

Ms Sue Shepard, Clerk

Mr Ron Sawbridge, County Councillor

Mrs Rebecca Breese, District Councillor

Sgt. Tim Pearson

PC Gez Shillito

PCSO Scott Cochrane

Approximately twenty five villagers were also in attendance.

1. Welcome. Chairman, David Mellor extended a warm welcome to all those present and thanked those who had delivered the Banbury Cake. An invitation had been attached to each copy before being posted through letterboxes. He also informed those present that the Chairman's Report and the Financial Report would be available on the website.

2. Apologies: Mrs Jenny Forbes, Lena and Graham Thorley

3. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th April 2009 were read and signed as being a true record.

4. Matters Arising.

5. Reports from:

County Councillor Ron Sawbridge Appendix 1

District Councillor Rebecca Breese

Northamptonshire Police, PC Gez Shillitoe and PCSO Scott Cochrane Sgt. Tim Pearson

Reported crime figures for 2009 - 10 as follows:

Violent crime	0	Vehicle interference	0
Robbery	0	**Criminal damage	5
Burglary - dwelling	0	Drug trafficking	0
*Burglary - other	11	Drugs - other	0
Thefts from motor vehicles	4	Other theft	7
Theft of motor vehicles	0		

* Eight of these burglaries were at the Recycling Centre.

** Five cases of damage to the fence at the Recycling Centre

Crime figures in general are down by 19% but Fathinghoe Tip has a break in almost every weekend. Farms have been targeted by travelling criminals and this is an ongoing problem. Operation Guardian has targeted known offenders.

This was followed by a presentation on “Smartwater”, a chemical with its own DNA, which if applied to property which is stolen and then retrieved, enables the Police to link the criminal to the crime. Would the Parish Council be interested in purchasing on behalf of the village? Some funding would be available from the Police who would also take care of the registration process and the administration of the scheme.

The Chairman, Councillor David Mellor

“Firstly I would like to thank all my fellow councillors for their personal support and commitment over the past year. Special thanks to our Clerk, Sue Shepard who has kept us on course throughout our deliberations.

Traffic Issues

Traffic continues to be a major focus of the Parish Council. At this point I would like to pay special thanks to John Grant who continues to devote many hours lobbying the District and County Council in exploration as to what is possible and what is not. I would also express special thanks to Ron Sawbridge for his backing on all occasions when we pursue support. We have been assured by Northamptonshire County Council that the junction between Cockley Road and Main Road will be reconstructed during financial year 2010-11 (budget permitting). This will protect the entrance to the school and take traffic further back from the pedestrian crossing.

Although funding is still to be identified for a Farthinghoe Bypass we continue to lobby our local and prospective Members of Parliament and have been assured by NCC that we remain on the list. Assuming the considerable housing development in Middleton Cheney goes ahead then clearly traffic will increase.

We are also monitoring with interest the impact that the High Speed Rail-link between London and Birmingham might have on traffic levels. If properly planned and routed, with the retention of F1 at Silverstone the link could bring business to the area.

Parking

Although we explored the possibility of off-road parking on Charlton Road the Council have elected not to pursue this initiative further at this point in time.

Street Lighting

The Parish Council has again continued to monitor street lighting and new lights have been erected on Main Road. The old wooden posts carrying the overhead cables are scheduled for removal shortly and e-On will ensure all remaining standards are lit. Following a request from Residents of Bowling Green we hope to secure project funding for an additional light at the top of the Green during financial year 2010-2011. This will have no impact on precept.

Village Web-site

The Village web site now displays a soft copy of the Farthinghoe Chronicle and various reports as they become available. Links are provided to the School, Limes Farm and Fox Inn. The web address is www.farthinghoeparishcouncil.org . This report is available for downloading now on the website!

Litter

Although the Parish Council does not intend to formalise a Stop the Drop Campaign as proposed by the CPRE we do feel strongly against the amount of litter thrown by passing motorists as they leave the Village. Cockley Road and Charlton Road are particularly badly affected. Major Cox has agreed to walk Clarks Lane once a month and collect litter and I have agreed to walk Cockley Road from its junction with Seven Sisters Close to the Burial Ground on a similar basis.

Sir Paul Hayter, David Montagu-Smith and two Volunteers will collect litter under the auspices of CPRE, around Farthinghoe on Saturday 17th April 2010.

If we can find volunteers to walk each road of the Village once a month and collect litter this will considerably reduce the amount of litter. We can provide yellow high visibility tabards but it must be said that this is a purely voluntary activity and not a formal Parish Council

undertaking. Please contact me at chairman@farthinghoeparishcouncil.org if you are willing to volunteer to be a Litter Warden.

The major issue remains to be the A422 where unless we can close the road once a year, litter will continue to build up. If e-On close the A422 to remove the old lamp standards FPC will instigate at short notice a litter collection when the road is free of traffic.

Dog Waste

You will no doubt have observed that a bin has been provided near the children's play area on New Road for the collection of pooh bags. Dog walkers are encouraged to pick up their dog's waste and deposit in this bin. Further bins will be considered if dog fouling continues to be an issue.

Fox Inn

The Council wish to express its sincere thanks to Mark Higgs and his team for the splendid work they have done over the past year in bringing life back into the village. We have had some excellent events and sincerely hope this will continue in the years ahead!

Grass Cutting

As our group of active volunteers continues to age we have of necessity had to employ external help to cut the grass at both the Village Hall and Children's play area. The cost of such an exercise is over 20% of our Annual Council Budget.

Council Tax

You will have noticed that once again the Parish Council has made special efforts this year to contain our budget since we recognise how tightly many of our villagers are being pressurised by rising costs. However, we have once again been able to make contributions to a number of worthy requests including the Alms Houses. My special thanks to Nigel Heywood and John Grant for keeping our eyes on the financials.

Finally I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, Ian Hunt for monitoring all planning applications submitted within the village and taking the Chair when I am unable to attend due to other external pressures."

Q and A session.....

The road may need to be closed in order to remove the redundant wooden poles on Main Road.

The Farthinghoe Chronicle is uploaded onto the website at the same time as it is sent to the printers.

It had been suggested that CPRE do a litter pick along Charlton Road and Hinton Road.

Lena and Graham Thorley had written to the Parish Council expressing their concerns about the equipment in the playground. There was nothing in the letter that the Council was not aware of and all issues will be addressed. The Council appreciated their comments but it is not simply a case of replacing the equipment.

6. Financial Report for year ending 31st March 2010.

Opening balance at 1st April 2009: £7,119.76

Last year the precept was £6,250. It had not been raised for two years but this year has seen a 4% increase to £6,500. The Parish Council also received other income of £455.52: a £451.94 VAT refund and £3.58 in interest. The amount of interest received last year was £53.76.

Total expenditure £10,882.77 (£ 8,222.61 for year ending 31st March 2009)

Balance at 31st March 2010: £3,684.51

A realistic balance for the end of year at just over half the precept. The work to underground the electricity cables on Main Road was finally completed and the money that had been held

in reserves to cover this cost was finally paid in October 2009. However, since the work was completed Central Networks have appointed a new contractor and as many of you are aware the problem with the lights is still to be resolved.

Although the Council paid £4,401.38 in total for street lighting and maintenance, this did include replacement columns in Queen Street and Baker Street and the six new columns on Main Road. I would like to be able to say that the ones on Main Road represented excellent value for money and so they would if they were all working! The one in Baker Street was covered by an insurance claim

The administration costs were £2,692.50 (£2,480.66 in 2009) which included insurance, external audit, the Clerk's salary and her expenses. The Clerk received a small pay award but only took the increase from half way through the year when the award was finalised.

The Parish Council now pays for the mowing and hedge cutting at the Village Hall and last year this was £870. The cost of mowing the playground, including some maintenance, was £634. The cost of grass cutting and the Clerk's salary now makes up approximately 40% of the Council's annual budget. These jobs used to be done by volunteers or for very little remuneration but now it is likely that these costs will increase each year and will inevitably have to be covered by a rise in the precept, that is, unless volunteers come forward.

The Farthinghoe Chronicle received £772 and the web site cost £474. The Parish Council is now a member of CPRE and the £32 annual subscription goes towards helping them with their campaigns to protect our countryside.

Q and A continued....

Playground equipment is very costly but refurbishment will take place in the next financial year. A safety check takes place every year and action is taken if required.

Stickers and a lot of marketing will be used to alert criminals to the fact that property has been marked with Smartwater and criminals will be specifically checked for it. Trading Standards are also targeting second hand shops.

Seventy three local offenders had been arrested as part of Operation Guardian.

7. Reports from other village organisations

Farthinghoe Primary School

Sid Atkins, Chair of the Governors said that a recent OFSTED report was good with some outstanding elements. The Limes would soon be supplying school meals which is an excellent way of developing links with the community. Wendy Whitehouse, Head, advised that there were 41 on role but the school could take 42.

Farthinghoe PCC

The church services are well attended and the church appreciates the help given even if people do not attend church. We have a new Archbishop and the quinquennial survey has been carried out and it is likely to involve a lot of work. Marjorie Tolchard has resigned.

Events planned include the Fete on 12th September and the Scarecrow and Harvest Festival on 17th October. A thank you to those who clean the church and the brasses and to Mrs Sharman who continues to look after the churchyard.

The following were written reports provided for the meeting by Marjorie Tolchard.

Book Group

This group meets on the first Monday of the month at 8.00pm, usually at 3, The Wall Tree, Charlton Way. The length of the meeting varies according to what we are discussing but is normally about 1½ hours. There are seven regular members.

We read some non-fiction and a wide variety of fiction, ranging from 19th century classics to modern best sellers. Our choice is the result of discussion and recommendation by individual members. We do not buy the books, as some book groups do, but borrow them from Northamptonshire Library Service. With older books we cannot always obtain sufficient copies of a particular title but can usually get something else by the same author. New titles are not always available in sufficient numbers until some months after they are published, but we don't mind waiting.

Although seven is a viable size we could accommodate one or two more members if anyone else wishes to join us.

Needlework Group

This group meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month, 2 – 4pm but unfortunately, there are only three members who meet in each other's houses. This is not a needlework class and no particular level of skill is expected. We are people who get together to work on current projects and occasionally help each other. We interpret the term 'needlework' widely to include such things as tatting, crochet and macramé. We would very much like to welcome some new members

Junior Gardening Club

This club is actually an after school club though there is one member who does not attend Farthinghoe School, but whose brother does. The children must be accompanied by a parent or carer. We meet on a Tuesday afternoon after school, depending on the weather. However, at busy times of the year and when crops are ready for harvesting the children often come along at weekends and during the holidays.

Part of my allotment has been divided into four strips, each of which is worked by one or two children. This means that the maximum number of members we can accommodate is eight. At present there are seven.

The children are expected to grow vegetables rather than flowers and are encouraged to choose a wide variety. They also grow raspberries and strawberries and occasionally some herbs.

Membership changes from year to year as children move on to secondary education but some who join when quite young manage up to three years in the club.

What they lack in skill they make up for in enthusiasm and often help parents to garden at home or on their own allotments.

The Allotments are all occupied and looking much better

Marjorie was thanked wholeheartedly for her contribution to life in the village.

AOB

In order to reduce the carbon footprint and light pollution, it had been suggested that the street lights need not be kept on throughout the night. The electricity for the lights is unmetered therefore the savings may not be that significant it was thought that the status quo should be maintained.

The contribution to SNC's pension pot from the Council Tax that we pay is 12%.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and their contribution to the good exchange of views.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Sue Shepard, Clerk to Farthinghoe Parish Council