

FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th April 2011 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

Ms Sue Shepard, Clerk

Mr Ron Sawbridge, County Councillor

Mrs Rebecca Breese, District Councillor

Approximately twenty eight villagers were also in attendance.

1. Welcome. Chairman, David Mellor extended a warm welcome to all those present and advised that the Chairman's Report and the Financial Report would be available on the website.

2. Apologies: Dr Nigel Heywood and Mrs Jenny Forbes

3. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th April 2010 were read and signed as being a true record. Sid Atkins proposed and Cyril Jarvis seconded.

4. Matters Arising - none

5. Reports from:

County Councillor Ron Sawbridge Appendix 1

District Councillor Rebecca Breese

"As we all know last year has been a particularly tough one for local government and South Northants Council. For our district council the main area of pressure has been on the amount of Government Grant given to us. This has reduced by £1.2 million for 2011-12. A reduction of 21% compared to the previous financial year.

In the last two years the Council has taken £3.4 million out of its base budget in the form of efficiencies, reduced budgets or increased income.

Where are examples of these efficiencies? Well, you may be aware the South Northants Council and Cherwell District Council are about to share a Chief Executive and executive directors. This step will save our council over £340,000 annually from next year. The cost of the top tier will be split 50/50 and all the executives will be giving their time on an equal basis to each organisation. A joint steering group has been set up to ensure that these arrangements work as intended and I work on this group. This is not a merger of the two councils. Each will remain a sovereign organisation with separate aims and policies. The councils are looking at areas where joint working will bring improvement in services and savings to each organisation but this work will not start till the Chief Executive is in post.

Other savings have been made and where possible these have been affected in areas where customer services are least likely to be affected. For example the annual £13,000 subsidy given to the staff canteen has been removed, and for most council meetings involving elected members biscuits are no longer offered – although they are where members of the public are involved. Some of us councillors resort to making cakes to take along to longer meetings.

Towcester public toilets have been closed, but this decision was only taken after a survey of footfall was conducted and it was found use was very limited. The public loos anyway are located in an unsuitable spot

behind a supermarket and there are a number of other facilities available in the town centre. I argued successfully in favour of retaining Brackley loos in my role as Cabinet member for the environment and persuaded my fellow councillors that Brackley users do not have the same options in terms of other facilities and the toilets themselves are well sited. An argument my fellow cabinet members accepted. I have also argued in favour of retaining the out of hours environment service which deals with issues such as noise nuisance and public health issues – of which there were two major incidents this year.

Council tax for SNC has been frozen this year and out of your total council tax, a sum of £3.28 per week is charged for the provision of all SNC's services – that is refuse collection, benefits administration, environmental health, planning services, emergency planning, street cleansing, licensing and so on.

In my role as your ward member in the last year I persuaded the council of the urgent need to get a planning policy in place for large Wind Turbines. We are one of the first if not the first council outside Scotland to get this policy written and formally adopted so that we do not have a policy void that can be exploited by large commercial organisations. Any applications received now have to go through an extensive process and the development control committee have a sound background against which to look at an application. As a result of this policy the application for the wind farm at Sulgrave was withdrawn as the applicants did not want to test the policy. The aim of the policy is to get the best possible outcome for our district.

On HS2 South Northants Council has a policy against the railway as it does not believe the business case is convincing and for our district there is absolutely no benefit – indeed there is a positively negative effect, particularly on our railway access as there will be fewer trains stopping at local stations used by South Northants Rail users. There has been a much publicised sum of £100,000 earmarked from our reserves for HS2. This is not a fighting fund, as we do not see that as our role, but as a fund to ensure that we get the best possible outcome for the district in terms of mitigation measures should the railway go ahead. This includes things like ensuring footpaths and bridleways are preserved, environmental measures are the best available and arguing in favour of details such as new bridge on the Greatworth to Welsh Lane Road, which on the latest maps has been completely ignored and ensuring that HS2 recompenses the community for the disruption and permanent damage it will do to our district should it go ahead. I am a member with Rosie Herring on the Liaison Group that has been set up by district and county councils up and down the proposed route and I am a member of SNAG on my own behalf.

I hope I have conveyed to you what a busy year it has been for SNC council and for me – as I am now Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, which is the largest division of the council and I am determined to defend my portfolio from any reduction in service, as it affects us all. I am also vice-chair of Development control and over the last few years have been involved with many planning issues in the area.”
Thank you.

Northamptonshire Police – Crime report

“I would like to apologise for not being able to attend your annual meeting as I am sure you can appreciate we get invited to a large number of AGM's this time of the year and we sadly cannot attend everyone.

Firstly I wish to inform you about the changes to the way Northamptonshire Police record crimes. We recently moved from Beats to Wards and because of this the figures for next year will be Ward related rather than Village figures. However this change does not affect the officers and staff that cover your area or the amount of crimes recorded in your village it is purely to allow villages to be aligned to the wards that they share within the election procedure.

During the previous 12 months we have continued to hold Community Panel Meetings; however this has changed in line with the Ward alignments and no longer exists. We will be conducting 'Street Briefings' and Interaction Sweeps in all our villages over the next few months, we will advise you in plenty of time when we will visit Farthinghoe. If you require any further information about Street Briefings or Interaction sweeps please contact myself or any member of staff at Brackley Police Station. Contact details can be found on www.northants.police.uk and follow the links to your Safer Community Team page, or alternatively call 03000 111 222 and ask for any member of the team at Brackley.

Below is a list of crimes that have been reported within the village and outlying area between March 2010 and March 2011

Dwelling Burglaries	1
Burglary Other	4
Criminal Damage	2
Thefts	10

A total of 19 crimes for this year, unfortunately we cannot compare these figures direct with your crimes from last year due to the changes that are mentioned above, but I can give you the figures for your ward as a whole, this includes the following villages: Farthinghoe, Great Purston, Greatworth, Halse, Hinton in the Hedges, Newbottle, Steane and Stuchbury

For the year 2009 – 2010 this Ward had 59 crimes reported against 56 for year 2010 – 2011 that's a reduction of 3 crimes."

Thank you

Clive Ashmore
PCSO 7138 Brackley Safer Community Team

The Chairman, Councillor David Mellor Appendix 2

Q and A session.....

1. The 500 bus service from Banbury to Brackley is a subsidised service so there are likely to be some changes. Parish Councils may be asked to contribute. The County Council is looking to save £3.4 million.
2. Vehicles parked near to school in Cockley Road and too close to the junction with Main Road are compromising road safety and vehicles have been damaged. Initially, any comments should be directed to the Parish Council and time is set aside before Parish Council meetings to hear these comments. Many avenues have been explored and if a vehicle is causing an obstruction then it should be reported to the Police. The Parish Council has passed on comments to Northamptonshire County Council but subsequently more complaints about the parking and the problems encountered at the junction have been received. A safety audit is required as parked vehicles reduce the road to a single track and larger vehicles are not able to pass. *Cllr Ron Sawbridge will take up*. Further comments should be forwarded to the Parish Council before 1st May if they are to be included on the agenda for the meeting on 11th May.
3. The Parish Council has authorised the area in front of school to be used for a building compound after the school holidays so as not to prejudice the safety of the children.
4. Could the grass area at the junction of Charlton Road and Queens Street be adopted by the village to improve the area and make it an attractive entrance to the village? Spring bulbs could be planted.
5. The ivy and the shrubs overhanging the bus shelter have been cut back. Approval has been given for the wood to be treated but the rubbish needs to be removed.
6. Could a waste bin be sited near the bus shelter?

6. Financial Report

Opening balance at 1st April 2010: £3,684.51

The precept has remained at £6,500 for this next year. The Parish Council also received other income of £1,934.00 from the County Council Empowering Scheme, a £835.04 VAT refund and £2.50 in interest.

Total expenditure £8,340.75

Balance at 31st March 2011: £4,615.30

A realistic balance for the end of year at just over half the precept.

Although the Council paid £2,776.25 in total for street lighting and maintenance, this did include an additional column near the footpath to Bowling Green. This lamp was funded (£1934.00)

through the County Council Empowering Scheme. One of the lights on Main Road was damaged during the snowy weather before Christmas and if not already repaired, will be shortly. The repair of this lamp is subject to an insurance claim.

The administration costs were £2,935.90 which included insurance, external audit, the Clerk's salary and her expenses. There was no pay award last year so the Clerk's pay remained at the same level.

The Parish Council now pays for the mowing and hedge cutting at the Village Hall and last year this was £920.00. The cost of mowing the playground, including the cost of the annual inspection, was £552.30. The cost of grass cutting and the Clerk's salary now makes up approximately 43% 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 unless there are any more volunteers.

The printing of the Farthinghoe Chronicle had been paid for by the Church. They will be reimbursed for January and February but as of March's invoice it will be paid by the Parish Council direct. The annual cost of maintaining the website and keeping it up to date is £299.00. The Parish Council is now a member of CPRE and the £29 annual subscription goes towards helping them with their campaigns to protect our countryside.

The Parish Council also made a donation of £500 to the Almshouses and pledged to help the Brackley Volunteer Car Service this year if funding was withdrawn from other sources. The cost to enter the Best Village Competition is £15 and this represents excellent value if it gives encouragement to all to do their bit for the village.

Sue Shepard
Clerk

7. Reports from other village organisations

Farthinghoe Primary School - Sid Atkins, Chair of Governors

The OFSTED report was good with some outstanding practice. He advised that a residential trip had taken place, tenders had been put out for an additional classroom for reception and Key Stage 1 children and extended his thanks to Wendy, the head teacher, who would be leaving at the end of August.

Farthinghoe PCC - Rosemary Jarvis

Individuals who lead services and all other helpers were thanked. The PCC had met 7 times and the Quinquennial inspection had revealed that there were some items needing attention. Events during the year included the Flower Festival with a musical evening, a Fete, the Scarecrow Festival with all scarecrows made by different people as Marjorie Tolchard was not able to make them due to ill health and a Christmas Coffee morning where the children of Farthinghoe School sang.

Church services followed the usual pattern and included Harvest Festival, hosting of Women's World Day of Prayer for the Benefice and, although the Midnight Service had to be cancelled because of snow, the Crib Service was very well attended.

Sadly, Marjorie Tolchard, a very efficient secretary to the PCC and Chronicle editor died in December.

Thanks were also extended to all those who helped with brass cleaning, cleaning the church, flowers, reading, acting as key holders, Chronicle deliverers or helping out at events. Thanks especially to Mary Sharman for helping to keep the churchyard tidy, Mrs Wenmouth, the organist, Lucy Garnier who took over editorship of the Chronicle at the end of the year, Vic

Tolchard for keeping the accounts in good order, Richard George for acting as auditor and Lisa Wenmouth for being the secretary.

Thanks were also extended to the Parish Council for funding the Farthinghoe Chronicle.

Farthinghoe Village Hall – written report

It is run by a small committee of volunteers who have carried out a programme of improvements over the past ten year, and continue to do so whilst trying to keep a well maintained village asset.

It is self financing and relies on income from its hirers with the dance classes being the main hirer.

Sadly, it is under utilised by the village and the last two functions last year were very poorly attended and unsuccessful.

After a great day last year, this year the second Village Show is being held on 17th September and any extra helpers will be made most welcome.

Annual turnover is less than £10k but a healthy bank balance has been maintained with a profit being made on the running costs and also from events, sales and 150 Club.

AOB

Limes Farm wanted to record their thanks to the village for their support

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

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Sue Shepard, Clerk to Farthinghoe Parish Council