

# ***FARTHINGHOE PARISH COUNCIL***

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on Wednesday, 10th April at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

## **Present**

Parish Council Chairman Prof. David Mellor  
County Councillor Ron Sawbridge  
PCSO Scott Cochrane and PCSO Colin Brooks  
SNC Waste Services: Louise Gibney  
Parish Clerk: Sue Shepard

Twenty members of the public

**1 Welcome.** A warm welcome was extended to all speakers, representatives of village organisations and villagers.

**2 Apologies:** Neil Downing, John Grant and Jenny Forbes

## **3 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

The draft minutes had been uploaded on to the website after last year's meeting and printed copies were available for those without access to the website. Cyril Jarvis proposed the minutes as being a true record of the meeting and this was seconded by David Dashwood.

## **4 Matters Arising**

### **5 Reports from: PCSO Scott Cochrane**

Steane Ward.

Total crimes 58 (49 in 2012)

Burglary – other, 16 but none since July 2012

Recent theft of milk will be part of next year's crime figures.

Theft from motor vehicles – in particular number plates. This is a countywide problem and is driven by the increase in the price of fuel. Tamperproof screws can deter would be thieves.

There have been changes at management level with a new Chief Inspector, new Inspector, Andy Hall and a new Sergeant, Micki Kennett.

**Comment:** A resident had been the victim of a burglary but had not rung the Police.

**Response:** Ring 999 at the point at which the person enters your property. There have been complaints about the 101, non-emergency number.

Perpetrators of crimes may get picked up elsewhere for other crimes but the detection rate is low.

Last year April to June saw a peak in the statistics and residents are asked to remain vigilant.

### **County Councillor Ron Sawbridge**

*You will all be aware by now that the County Council element of your council tax has not increased for the present financial year. This is the third consecutive year when the tax has been held at the same level. As a consequence you, as a Northamptonshire taxpayer, have*

*for several years enjoyed the lowest rate of council tax of any county in the country. Gone are the days at the beginning of the last decade when you were having to accept an average annual increase of nearly 8% and in one year, 2002/3, an increase of a staggering 11.9%. Northamptonshire is now recognized as one of the most efficient, innovative and enterprising Councils in England and as a result the county was last year awarded the accolade 'Most Enterprising Place in Britain'.*

*During the last four years in particular the County Council has, as a result of the tight financial situation, had to find different ways of doing things in order to reduce its cost base. The council has been made more efficient, more accountable and more effective. The creation of the LGSS (Local Government Shared Services organisation) starting with Cambridgeshire County Council, but now including other councils, has made huge back office savings enabling the protection of front line services without increasing taxation. The upshot of all this is that someone who lives in a Band 'D' property is now paying about £200 a year less in Council Tax than the average for England.*

*I am now going to move on to the Boundary Review which has taken place throughout England. As a result new Electoral Divisions have been created so that they each have about 10,000 voters and this will reduce the number of County Councillors from its present 73 to 57. Another cost saving. It means of course that each councillor will represent larger areas and more electors. As a result, my current electoral Division of Brackley West, which include three wards, disappears. The west ward of Brackley is incorporated into an enlarged Brackley Division and the wards of Steane and Little Brook, which include, Aynho, Croughton and Evenley, Charlton, Hinton-in-the Hedges, Farthinghoe, Steane, Halse, and Greatworth, become part of an enlarged Middleton Cheney Division. Under the new arrangements I have been selected as the Conservative candidate for the newly formed Brackley Division. The election for the new County Councillors will take place on May 2nd and I do urge you all, whatever your political persuasion to vote. The result of this election will determine who forms the administration at County Hall for the next four years and this will impact on everyone who lives in the county. It's not about national issues, it's not about membership of the EU, it's not about immigration, gay marriage, or HS2, it is about Care for the Elderly, the Disabled, and Children in the care of the County Council, it is about Bus services, our Parks and Libraries. It's about Improving the County's Infrastructure, Expanding and Aiding the Voluntary Sector, and it is about Education and the creation of Job Opportunities. Importantly and in summary it is about how you want your local services to continue to operate at an acceptable cost.*

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give you this, my last address as your County Councillor – it's been a pleasure to serve you for the last twelve years. During this time in 2011 I had the honour of being elected Chairman of the County Council and I shall always be very grateful for having this privilege. If there are any questions I shall be pleased to try to answer them.*

#### **Chairman David Mellor**

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

*Since this is his last meeting as our County Councillor I would like to express on behalf of the Parish Council our gratitude to Ron Sawbridge for his support at all times during his tenure as our representative at County Level. Many projects would not have been possible in the village without Ron's assistance.*

#### ***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.*

#### ***Land Registration***

*The Parish Council have identified that the grassed area outside the school has not been registered at the Land Registry and neither has the plot on the junction of Charlton Road and Queens Street. It was our intention to register the land in the name of Farthinghoe Parish Council and to plant two trees to commemorate HM Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee. The trees have been planted but the land has not been registered. This topic will be discussed as an agenda item later in the meeting to allow parishioners to express their views.*

#### ***Village Web-site***

*The Village web site continues to display 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](http://www.farthinghoeparishcouncil.org) . This report is available for downloading now on the website!*

#### ***Farthinghoe Chronicle***

*Thanks to Pip Sandel for editing the copies of the Chronicle for the early part of this reporting year and special thanks to Shirley Downing for taking over seamlessly when Pip decided to hand over the baton. Both have done an excellent job over the past year keeping us aware of activities taking place in the community and thanks to the Fox Inn and Limes Farm we have been able to keep the cost to Parishioners at zero.*

#### ***Village Sign***

*The new village sign and notice board outside the school appears to meet with Parishioners expectations since being rescreened and no further vandalism has occurred.*

#### ***Diamond Jubilee***

*I would like to thank John Grant and his team for the spectacular events which took place at Village Hall to Celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen at the beginning of June 2012.*

*The events were a considerable success and thanks to everyone on the village who supported the event in any way since without you we would not have had such an enjoyable time.*

*I would like to express note of thanks also to David Claydon and his team for coordinating the Village Beacon.*

#### ***Grass Cutting***

*Jon Hampson has done an excellent job over the last year cutting the grass at both the Village Hall and Children's Play Area. Due to budget constraints and to avoid increasing*

*the precept the Council have decided to continue to fund the cutting of the grass at the Children's Play Area and also the areas we attempted to register but not the Village Hall. Since County grass cutting is now somewhat random and of a considerably reduced nature we want visitors to see our village at its best and wish to avoid the grass outside the school and Church growing to over twelve inches as it did in 2012 between cuts.*

#### **Children's Play Area**

*The Parish Council intends, subject to available funds, to update the equipment at the Farthinghoe Play Area and applied for a County Council grant through our current Councillor Ron Sawbridge but unfortunately he will not be our County Councillor when 2013-14 Funds are allocated. Councillor Dashwood had agreed to match the County Council grant should it be achieved. We intend to lobby our new county councillor immediately he is elected on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 to uphold the commitment that had been made by Councillor Sawbridge.*

*You will have noted that in parallel with Parish Council efforts Becky and Louise have, through the Farthinghoe Chronicle, asked for your support and ideas on this issue.*

#### **Broadband**

*Although as reported last year BT Openreach have fed 276 fibre optic cables through the village as yet they have chosen not to give any of the villagers or businesses benefit of improved access to the Internet.*

*With the advent of LTE and government commitment to rural areas we are hopeful that internet speed will increase in the not too distant future. Only by constantly complaining to your supplier will we see action.*

*Finally I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, John Grant for taking the Chair when I am unable to attend due to other external pressures.*

#### **SNC Waste Services Louise Gibney**

Farthinghoe's collection day will remain the same although much of the district has changed. Mondays will now be used as training days and for vehicle maintenance. It is anticipated that this will increase efficiency.

Later this year recycling boxes will be replaced with a new blue wheelie bin which will take more recyclable waste and caddies will take food waste.

Anaerobic digesters will convert the food waste to a gas and a soil conditioner.

It is expected that all these changes will increase the amount of recycling from 50% to 63 – 65% with the result that less goes to landfill.

More publicity and information will be available prior to the changes.

#### **What about:**

Textiles – each month bags are supplied on behalf of the Air Ambulance.

Batteries are not collected at present but will be able to be bagged and collected with the blue bin.

Light bulbs can be recycled at Farthinghoe Recycling.

Smoke alarms, remove batteries, but if can't be removed whole unit to go in black bin.

NCC is moving from County Hall to a new development in Angel Street and SNC is moving from Springfields to Moat Lane. Both premises promising to be more energy efficient.

**Comment:** There is little infrastructure in Brackley as Towcester seems to be the town more likely to receive any available funding.

Ron would continue to fight for the swimming pool in Brackley.

There is also the added expense of travelling to Towcester or Banbury.

This would be raised with Rebecca Breese.

**Comment:** In the forthcoming County Council elections, Ron Sawbridge will be standing as the candidate for the Brackley Division which will include West Brackley as part of the boundary changes. Little Brook and Steane Wards will become part of the enlarged Middleton Cheney Division and Ken Melling is the present county councillor for this division.

**Comment:** There had been much concern about the traffic data that had been collected and the fact that nothing had been done with it. Ask Rebecca to raise.

Something needs to be done to protect Farthinghoe.

What were the results of the Rightracks initiative?

The split vote on the choice of route for a bypass was an excuse to remove funds.

Ron will raise with Andrea Leadsom MP.

A bypass is the only answer.

## **6 Financial report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013**

*Opening balance at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012: £2,645.39*

*The precept has remained at £6,500 for the coming year, no increase for the fourth consecutive year. However, you will have noticed a small increase in your Council Tax. There had been late correspondence and exchange of information from SNC and NCALC regarding legislative changes to the council tax base and how this would affect the setting of the precept. The Parish Council did not wish to re set in the light of the additional information regarding the allocation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme grant and consequently there has been a small rise in your Council Tax. The grant would amount to approximately £105.51 and would be paid in addition to the precept. The Parish Council also received other income: a VAT refund of £983.84, a £60.00 refund from Land Registry and £1.23 in interest.*

*Total expenditure £7,831.80*

*Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013: £2,358.66*

*Annual lighting costs were £525.80 and £333.35 for maintenance: a small increase on last year. The administration costs were £2,229.99 which included a lower insurance premium of £515.21, internal audit £145, external audit £135, a subscription fee to NCALC of £123.48 and the printing of the Farthinghoe Chronicle at £64.90 per month.. There was no pay award last year but the Clerk did receive a small increase of £15.00 for the year: salary was £1,400 and £300 was paid to cover expenses.*

*Mowing costs for the Village Hall and the playground amounted to £1,522.30 and this included one cut of the hedge at the Village Hall. For the coming season the Village Hall Management Committee will be responsible for mowing and hedge cutting at the Village Hall but the Parish Council will continue to mow the playground and has taken on responsibility for the two areas it tried to register: one at the junction of Charlton Road and the other outside of school. The annual cost of mowing varies according to the*

*growing season and it is obviously a later start this year but whether that will result in fewer cuts will again depend on the weather! The annual inspection of the playground cost £42.30. There has been no increase in the cost of maintenance of the web site, which includes uploading minutes, and remains at £299.00 per annum. The Parish Council had been able to contribute £379.10 towards last year's Jubilee Celebration. The Parish Council is also a member of the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the £29 annual subscription goes towards helping them with their campaigns to protect our countryside. I hope this gives an indication of how the Parish Council spends the precept on your behalf. The Parish Council will be pleased to answer any questions.*

**Comment:** The electricity supply for the street lights is unmetered so there is no extra cost for leaving the lights on. LED street lights are much brighter than the existing lights.

#### **7 Registration of grass area at junction of Queens Street and Charlton Road and Cockley Road and Main Road**

This had been dealt with in the Chairman's report and there were no further questions.

#### **8 Reports from village organisations**

##### **Farthinghoe Church**

*"We thank everyone who has led our services and all other help they have provided. In September we welcomed our new Rector, Revd. Simon Dommett, his wife Heather and their children.*

*The Church building remains in general in reasonable order, and work is progressing on the restoration of the clock.*

*In the latter part of 2012, we had the Church and Churchyard days when it was very good to see many villagers turn out to help clean and tidy. It is hoped that the Yew trees will be trimmed to a more reasonable height soon.*

*The Church produced a "Welcome to Farthinghoe leaflet" which details various information which someone moving into the village might welcome.*

*Fundraising events included two coffee mornings, one in the Spring and at Christmas, at which the children from school sang for us. We had a very successful Fete which started earlier with a BBQ and ended with Songs of Praise.*

*Worship continues on most Sundays, taking the form of said Holy Communion, All age service and Evening Prayer. When it is our turn, we have short Morning Prayer at 8.30am during the week and Candle Prayers 7.15 – 8.15pm. There is also a Taize evening which is held at Evenly Church on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month (next one on 5<sup>th</sup> May). Full details of all the services for the benefice (5½ parishes) appear in the Chronicle. It would be lovely to welcome you to them!*

*Our thanks must go to everyone who helps in anyway with the smooth running of our Church.*

*Finally, as always, we need help not only in the building, but in the Churchyard."*

##### **Church Piece Allotments**

*"They are in good order with some holders being more green fingered than others! A new list of rules has been drawn up and we will try to abide by them. There are currently 1½ plots available."*

**Almshouses** Report from Jenny Forbes

*"I would like to thank my fellow trustees of the Charity of Thomas Amphlett for their tireless work and their help in the management of the Farthinghoe Almshouses. The trustees are in the process of undertaking a large project to update the exterior and interior plumbing which we hope to have completed by the end of Summer 2013. Information on the Almshouses can be found on the Parish Council website".*

**Chair of School Governors**

Building work is currently being undertaken but the internal work will take place during the holiday. Contractors have been asked to park at the Village Hall.

Chair: It is appreciated that the contractors have worked hard to leave the site as found.

**9 Other business**

The Parish Council will ask for five extra copies of the Chronicle to be printed.

It has been suggested that some extra items of play equipment could be included at the Village Hall.

The Parish Council supports the proposal to raise funds for new play equipment but needs to inform that the Parish Council's Public Liability insurance would only extend to the Playground.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20pm

Sue Shepard

Clerk to Farthinghoe Parish Council