



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR EAST FARLEIGH
held via Zoom on Tuesday 30th March 2021 at 7.30pm.
Meeting ID: 952 8114 4073

Present: Cllr Glyn Charlton (Chairman), Cllrs Peter Beasley, David Hussein, Brian Dorton, Lloyd Porter, Alan White, Alex Fullwood; Desiree Home (Parish Clerk);
Borough Councillors Richard Webb and Lottie Parfitt-Reid
John Wilson (KALC) and 7 representatives of village institutions and the general public.

1. OPENING ADDRESS

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Glyn Charlton, at 7.30 pm. The Chairman first wished to thank all those who have given support during the COVID pandemic. Special thanks went to Roseanna Smitherman-Cairns and the Local Support Group for all of their continued help to the village throughout what has been a very difficult year. The Chairman also wished to reiterate the Elections postponed from last year, are taking place on 6th May 2021 and there is a call for people to come forward and stand for Election.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Perry O'Callaghan

3. RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

The Clerk was recording the meeting for the Parish Council.
Cllr AW was recording.

4. REPORT FROM POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

No representative attended and no report was sent.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 30th April 2019 were approved and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. There was no APM in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic.

6. MATTERS ARISING

None

7. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The County Councillor was not present and had not submitted a report. The Chairman wished to extend thanks to Cllr Paulina Stockell for all of her help and support over the past year.

8. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Borough Cllr Richard Webb reported briefly on issues he had been involved with in East Farleigh including the fact that he has enjoyed working with East Farleigh Parish Council. Unfortunately, he hasn't been able to attend many meetings, but stated he is always available via email. He went on to highlight the LPR issues.

Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid joined the meeting.

Cllr Parfitt-Reid, who is on the LPR Strategic Planning and Infrastructure team, stated that the LPR Consultation period is now over and, information is still being loaded onto the Planning Portal. The problems with "The Green" in East Farleigh have received attention and a better plan for dealing with this is being put into operation.

Nothing further to report at this stage as all attention is now focussed on the upcoming Elections in May.

A couple of positive points to note; Maidstone in Bloom is being planned and Maidstone is getting its own Monopoly board.

Further, the Chairman thanked Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid for her help with keeping the village pavements cleared and passable.

9. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF EAST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

A copy of this is attached and items covered in Opening Address.

10. REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

The major points to emerge from verbal or written reports from village institutions were as follows:-

10.1 East Farleigh Pre-School

No one attended and no report was received.

10.2 Sir John Franklyn Almshouses Trust

Hilary Moon attended and read out a brief report (attached). Richard Yaxley was unable to attend.

10.3 East Farleigh Club

No one attended and no report was received.

10.3 John Bunyan Leaver Charity

Cllr Peter Beasley, trustee of the Charity, reported that they have had a good productive year and, this has proved invaluable resource during Covid restrictions.

The Charity has donated to East Farleigh School for the greenhouse and Dandelion Time this year. Currently no vacant plots.

10.4 Speedwatch

Cllr Peter Beasley reported that East Farleigh Speedwatch normally deploys twice monthly at certified sites in the village but, this has been on hold because of Covid restrictions (now allowed to continue as of 29th March). Volunteers are always in short supply and always needed.

10.5 East Farleigh Brownies

No one attended and no report was received.

10.6 West Farleigh Youth Football Club

No one attended and no report was received.

10.7 East Farleigh Primary School

No one attended but Headteacher, Mark Rivers, sent a report (attached).

10.8 Church/East Farleigh Parochial Church Council

Peter Callway attended and explained that the benefice faces challenging times. Rev Callway proceeded to read out his report.

10.9 Farleighs WI

Pam Lindon attended and read out the WI Report (attached).

10.10 Priory Close Residents Association

No one attended and no report was received.

10.11 Montessori School

No one attended and no report was received.

10.12 Farmers Markets

No one attended and no report was received.

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10.13 Gardening Club

No one attended and no report was received.

10.14 Old School Hall

Gary and Mandy were unable to attend but sent a short report (attached). The Chairman wished to thank them for their support and for managing to keep going during difficult times. He further mentioned that this is an important venue for the village.

10.15 Fete Committee

Adam Palmer reported that the fete did not go ahead in 2020 because of Covid restrictions and there are no plans for a fete this year either for the same reason. Planning is now focussed on a fete in 2022. He further reported that, there have been a few people who are no longer able to help out or, who have moved out of the village – Sue Morris will no longer be able to help but the Fete Committee wished to express their thanks for all her past efforts.

The Chairman wished to pass on thanks to the Fete Committee on behalf of East Farleigh Parish Council.

10.16 Community Support Warden

Adam McKinley is no longer the CSW for this area. The current CSW contact is Janet Greenroyd and no report was received.

Note: The Chairman thanked all the village organisations and volunteers for all they do for the village of East Farleigh and its residents.

11. PUBLIC FORUM

No public attendee wished to speak.

Cllr David Hussein wished it noted that there has been a Parish Council in East Farleigh for over 150 years. There is a possibility that MBC would have to step in if there is no interest in people standing for election and, Cllr Lloyd Porter mentioned that it may be subject to a “Grouping Order” but this is uncertain at this time. Therefore, there is an urgent need for new Councillors at the forthcoming elections.

12. NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

- To be advised
- Next Parish Council Meeting is Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 7.15pm after the Planning Committee Meeting (Agendas and Meeting links are on the Parish Website <https://eastfarleigh-pc.org.uk>)

There being no further business, the meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.09 pm.

EAST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2021

My report last year was written and only placed online in the hope that it would be able to be delivered within a few weeks. As we are now all aware, COVID-19 has affected us all for far longer than we had hoped but at least the outlook looks brighter now.

Council elections were cancelled last year so our term of office was extended and now the elections are due on 6th of May. Currently the council is up for re-election and there are potentially 9 vacancies for election. We are running with 8 councilors after Jackie King resigned during the year. We are aware that 5 councilors are putting themselves forward for re-election so even if they are successful there are plenty of opportunities for others to stand to attain the full complement of 9. This presents a huge opportunity for those interested especially those from areas where residents feel they are not represented. It has always been my aim to have councilors from all areas in the village. This is a real opportunity as if more than 9 residents stand there will be an election for all to decide how the village will be best represented. We have done a lot of work recently setting up a new web site in an endeavor to improve communication with everyone. You will find details of what The Parish Council is responsible for in looking after the community in which we live. Please take a look: www.eastfarleigh-pc.org.uk

We have continued to deal with planning issues in the village as a consultee and we have managed village maintenance trying to keep pathways clear, gully's flowing, and litter to a minimum. It will always amaze me the amount of litter that is discarded from cars as they drive through our village. I wish to express our thanks to the many residents that pick up litter throughout the year. Many villages organise litter picking days but we are also very concerned at the lack of footpaths in East Farleigh and the dangers of walking on the roads with fast moving traffic.

Ongoing are efforts to restrict lorries on Dean Street and when COVID-19 restrictions allow, we are ready to set up lorry watch. This has potentially increased large lorries onto Lower Road and we are discussing if there is something that could be done to reduce this flow of lorries. There is a scheme under consideration by Kent Highways for all lorries to have a permit if they are delivering in the area, but this has got bogged down a little due to the issues over Brexit.

We continue to endeavor to prevent speeding through the village and are currently in discussion with highways over the traffic calming scheme on Lower Road. Speed watch has been suspended during COVID-19 which certainly has not helped. We are just initiating an experiment where we will pay for police time to attend regularly to carry out speed enforcement.

Des, our clerk, is settling in now and I would like to thank her for all her hard work. I would also like to thank all the council members who all play an important role in bringing our decisions to fruition. I am not standing for re-election. I have been on the council for 16 years and it is now time for me to pull back to give the opportunity for new ideas. I have enjoyed my time serving the community and have been very privileged to see many ideas come to fruition.

I would particularly like to thank Peter Beasley who has been Vice Chairman all the time I have been Chairman.

In closing, I wish the new Councillors - whoever they are - good luck in looking after our Parish and the community in the years to come.

Glyn Charlton

REPORTS FROM VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT TO EAST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL THE SIR JOHN FRANKLIN CHARITY FOR ALMSHOUSES CHARITY NO. 210899 - ANNUAL REPORT

Committee Members:-

Richard Yaxley – Chairman
Debbie McKay – Trustee Treasurer
Hilary Moon - Honorary Secretary
Peter Jennings – Trustee Building Maintenance
Trustee Gardens – position vacant

Introduction

This year has been a difficult year for all of us , with Covid interfering with the way we live our lives and with the third wave, it has become apparent that we all now know someone that has the virus clearly a sign of how careful we all need to be. Fortunately all the residents and Trustees have managed to avoid Covid.

Cottages

With regard to the ongoing maintenance issues on such old buildings we have had to cut back on some of the internal work to the restrictions of Covid, only emergency work has been carried out, namely the replacing of the gable ends weather boarding that was torn out during a storm – during this work we took the opportunity to increase the insulation . Also some updating of the electrics ‘deemed unsafe’ was carried out.

The grounds of the cottages have not been neglected by Covid, our contract gardeners along with some help from the residents have managed to keep them looking neat and tidy.

Committee

Last year we saw the resignation of one of our Committee members Trevor Jones, we thank him for his work on the Committee and wish him well.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking all the past and current members of the Committee for all their work they do in supporting this charity.

Residents

Despite the difficult times, in general the residents continue to live in relative harmony and in good health.

Summary

With the continued support of the Committee and in spite of Covid we will do our best to continue our work for the charity in maintaining the cottages and gardens, to ensure a pleasant environment for all residents to live in.

Chairman
Almshouses
R.F. YAXLEY

John Bunyan Leaver Charity Allotments

The JBLC Vicarage Lane Allotment site continues in good health, despite the difficult year endured by one and all.

An oasis of growing pleasure in the very heart of the village, with around 35 plots, both full 10 rod plots and some half size 5 rod plots, a huge range of vegetables, fruit and flowers are grown.

Maintenance and Insurance costs having been paid, the charity made donations to East Farleigh School for the purchase of a Greenhouse and to Dandelion Time to assist with their invaluable work with young people.

We currently have no vacant plots and a small waiting list.

Thank you.

Peter Beasley

March 2021

East Farleigh Speedwatch Team is part of the Kent Community Speedwatch Network

I am sure you are all familiar with Speedwatch, so just to say the dedicated team of volunteers that normally deploy on a twice a month basis at the certified sites in the village helping to make the local roads safer have been unable to do so as Speedwatch deployments were not permitted on the instruction of the Chief Constable due to Covid. I am pleased to report that the ban will be lifted shortly, and regular deployments will resume.

The volunteers are all police trained, operate at carefully selected roadside sites using portable speed indicating devices (known as SIDS) The teams capture and report details of vehicles travelling above nationally recommended speed thresholds. The details are stored by Kent Police for 12 rolling months. Letters will be sent to registered owners who repeatedly speed and to those who are more than 50% over the limit. The more serious of these letters are hand delivered by police officers.

Interestingly 90% of speeding vehicles are not detected a second time by any of the multiple speedwatch deployments in Kent during the following 12 months. Once seems sufficient for most drivers.

Speedwatch relies on volunteers and these are in short supply, so If you are interested to help make our roads safer, willing to undergo police training, and can spare a few hours a month please get in contact with me.

Thank you.

Peter Beasley.

March 2021

East Farleigh Primary School Update – Parish Council
March 2021

Like others, this has been an extraordinary year for our school and its community. East Farleigh has needed to quickly evolve and adapt to keep up with the ever-changing directives from the government in their response to the pandemic. I am exceptionally proud to say that the school has remained open throughout this period to provide support for those whose parents are critical workers or are classed as vulnerable. Our staff have been a credit to their profession, exhibiting relentless commitment and energy in providing the very best provision for our young people and their families. Equally, our parents and extended family members have been phenomenal in supporting our endeavours to ensure that children continue to engage in their learning albeit through very different means.

In my last report, I nodded to the planned investment to improve the school's infrastructure for IT; this turned out to be an invaluable venture. The school has swiftly moved forward to meet the technological demands of the 21st century, this has included the installation of broadband and Wi-Fi networks; procuring new laptops and supporting equipment and software; upskilling staff and pupils to use a multitude of teaching and learning platforms. Through this investment, we have been able to provide an exceptional level of remote provision; this provision has evolved enormously throughout the last year, from uploading pre-recorded videos at the start of lockdown to delivering daily, live virtual lessons.

East Farleigh continues to benefit from the generosity of the wider community. Whilst the WI haven't been able to be in school to listen to readers, they have continued to support the school in leading an IT initiative of donating preloved equipment to support families and children in accessing online learning. I would like to extend my thanks to all those that supported this cause so generously. The Friends of East Farleigh have also continued to be a huge support to the school. Their past fundraising efforts have helped us enormously in providing much needed funds for 32 new Chromebook laptops. Like other charities, the pandemic has posed significant obstacles for the usual calendar of fundraising events, however the drive and passion amongst our Friends committee remains impenetrable with a number of events already in the pipeline for when restrictions are relaxed. I know the support from our local community will continue to champion the school in these endeavours.

I am delighted to say that the children have quickly settled back into their school routine, the sense of excitement and beaming faces when we reopened to all children on the 8th March was an absolute joy to see. Whilst there will undoubtedly be some catching up to do, the children continue to show enormous resilience to make great strides in their learning. The invaluable partnership between parents, family members, the local community and our school will continue to play a pivotal role in enabling children to overcome challenges in order to reach their full potential.

Our school continues to make strides in its journey to improve, with rejuvenated classrooms, an enticing new curriculum and ever-improving standards; the local authority agree that we are now a good school. We remain optimistic about the summer months and easing of restrictions so that we can once again open up our doors to the wider school community and celebrate all that has been achieved so far.

Mr. Mark Rivers
Proud Headteacher

Report for the East Farleigh Parish Council AGM from East Farleigh Parish Church

As you know, the church in East Farleigh has been at the centre of the life of worship in the community for over a thousand years, and as the Rector for the past eight years my desire has been to build a thriving church open to the community. We are committed to maintain the fabric to ensure access for future generations. The number of regular worshippers has regrettably fallen over the past couple of years as our older members have become more frail and some, sadly, have died. This presents a real challenge to maintaining the presence of the church in the village, and even more so in the light of a global pandemic. We are grateful for the ongoing relationship and partnership with the Parish Council and our neighbours in the Old School House.

We have particularly benefitted from village involvement in Christmas Carols and Remembrance Services, our relationship with the school, and the annual Christingle still attracts hundreds of people during normal times. My hope is that we might yet have a revival of worship in the church, and I pray that this will bring benefits to the wider community.

On a personal note, I am retiring from active ministry in September and will be moving to Langley, where I hope to use all I have learned about parish life to serve the community there.

Revd. Peter Callway

30th March 2021

The Farleighs WI

Here is the report for The Farleighs WI and yes, I will be attending next week, unfortunately the Chair of the Hall Committee cannot attend.

From: Pam Lindon <pamlindon@btinternet.com>

Just before lockdown we had arranged to have the floor sanded and revarnished. The hall committee worked hard to ensure the hall was covid safe and we were able to have a few hirers until lockdown again. We have received a few generous donations and grants during the year, which enabled us to have new front doors fitted.

The WI has not been able to hold a meeting in the hall since March 2020 but in order to keep in touch with our members we arranged, monthly updates in newsletters to be sent to all members, meetings in the Park to catch up and Zoom meetings with Speakers since Christmas.

We are looking forward to welcoming back WI members and hirers, when we will be the hub of the community again.

We will continue to ensure the hall is kept in good condition as an asset for the village.

Pam Lindon
President

Wendy Barrott
Chairman

OLD SCHOOL HALL

Report to Parish AGM 2021

Like all businesses – and individuals – we’ve had a strange year. The hall closed completely on the first lockdown in March 2020. Preschool returned in June for the final six weeks of its year but no other users were able to come in, including our regular bookers such as Brownies, parish council, the Farmers’ Market, fitness classes and Old School Samba. Preschool resumed in September but other than that, the hall has seen no use except for three events that were permitted activities under the government Covid-19 regulations. They were: being a ‘green room’ for a music video filmed in the church; a booking by Shearwater Media to record an interview for a Discovery Channel documentary; and a funeral. We don’t know when, or even if, our community users will return to the hall as the restrictions ease.

Fortunately we qualified for the initial government SME grant of £10,000 and since then another of just under £1,000 from MBC for ‘continuing restrictions’ to our normal functioning. We were not eligible for other grants because we were neither ‘fully open’ nor ‘fully closed’ – something of a Catch-22 situation.

But despite these grants, obviously the hall’s finances have taken a big hit. We need to concentrate now on securing higher-profile bookings that bring in a better income than the parties and similar of the past to try to claw back to a healthy bank balance. With incredibly bad timing, we took out a licence as a wedding and civil partnership venue in June 2020 – but of course have not secured any bookings. However, we are going to push for this new use and we’re not afraid to put in some hard work and creative flair in exchange for the sort of money people will pay for celebrations of this kind.

We really hope this use will take off: please, if you know anyone wanting a small, intimate and unique venue for their wedding, or even for a funeral or memorial gathering, do suggest the Old School Hall. It’s difficult to know how we can enter a second decade of owning, managing and caring for the hall without an influx of bucks quite soon.

BUILDING

We’ve had to halt progress with replacing the upper floor windows due to lack of funds. All the ground floor ones need doing too and we’ll be looking for some funding to help with this. Anyone have suggestions?

THANKS

We’d like to say a big thank-you to Preschool for returning to the hall and for carrying cheerfully on despite having to make massive adjustments to its own operations. We have tried to make things as easy as possible for the staff in the same way that they have worked round our domestic use of the hall over the weekends, especially during the cold winter months.

Gary Hindley & Amanda Howard
March 2021