



**MINUTES OF EAST FARLEIGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON
TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2024 AT 18:30PM AT EAST FARLEIGH
SCHOOL**

Present: Cllr A Fullwood, Cllr A Palmer, Cllr D Hussein, Cllr B Older, Cllr G Ashcroft,
Cllr D Abbott

Officer: Clerk, Nina Henley

External Attendees: Cllr S Webb KCC, Cllr L Parfitt-Reid MBC

Apologies: Cllr S Shearman, Cllr P Tranter

External Apologies: PC H Greenfield

- 1-APM/24 **Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting by the EFPC Chair Cllr Alex Fullwood**
Cllr Fullwood thanked all those attending and introduced all the East Farleigh councillors and clerk.
- 2-APM/24 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies were accepted for Cllr Shearman, Cllr Tranter, Peter Beasley (JBLC Allotments, Operation Scarecrow) Richard Yaxley (Almshouses) Community Support Warden Sandra Edmonds, Ellissa Morris (Brownies) Sarah Shearman (Pre-School), Porchlight, Kent Air Ambulance.
- 3-APM/24 **Recording of the meeting**
The Clerk recorded the meeting for EFPC.
- 4-APM/24 **Kent Police Report**
Report received from PC Harry Greenfield was read out.
Report attached.
- 5-APM/24 **Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting**
Approval and signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023.
Approved and signed as a true record.
- 6-APM/24 **Matters from the previous minutes**
None.
- 7-APM/24 **Kent County Report**
Report received from attendee Cllr Simon Ward
Report attached.
- 8-APM/24 **Maidstone Borough Council Report**
Verbal report received from attendee Cllr Parfitt-Reid
- 9-APM/24 **Annual Report for East Farleigh Parish Council**
Report Delivered by EFPC Chair Alex Fullwood.
Report attached.
- 10-APM/24 **Reports and representation from local organisations and groups – All reports attached**
- I. Allotments, Speedwatch and Operation Scarecrow
Report received from Peter Beasley. Report attached.
 - II. Almshouses
Report received from Richard Yaxley Chairman. Report attached.
 - III. Montessori School

- Report received from Jeannelle Dening-Smitherman. Report attached.
- IV. The Old School Hall
Report received from Amanda Howard. Report attached.
 - V. Fete Committee
Verbal report from Hilary Whibley Secretary. Report attached.
 - VI. Heart of Kent Hospice
Verbal received from Sue Shaw HOKH Ambassador .
 - VII. Report received from Farleigh WI
Report attached.
 - VIII. Report received from Community Support Warden.
Report attached.
 - IX. Little Fawns (East Farleigh) Preschool
Report received from Steve Shearman, Report attached.

11-APM/24 Public Participation

Member of the public are invited to make statements or ask questions

- I. Member of the public reported the white lining in the village in bad state of repair.
- II. Member of the public reported speeding in the village has increased.
- III. Member of the public requested the reintroduction of Speedwatch. Cllr Fullwood reported that the new ward police officer would be targeting speeding and using the speed gun in areas of the village.
- IV. Member of the public reported that various public rights of way needed attention. EFPC to report to PRoW.

Cllr Fullwood presented the KALC Community Award to Adam Palmer for his 10 years as chair of the Fete committee and his continued hard work for the community.

12-APM/24 Date of the next Annual Parish Meeting
To be confirmed

13-APM/24 Meeting closed 9.00pm

It has been an absolute pleasure to be your Chairwoman this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with every member of this team.

We have achieved our goal of refurbishing the playground. And despite the hefty expenditure, we have managed to decrease the precept over last year in real terms. I believe this expenditure will give joy for many years to the local children and those attending East Farleigh school. We are mindful that costs are going up for everybody in the village and I am proud that while most councils are increasing tax, we have not had to. Our reserves are healthy and there is still room to spend on the various initiatives in the coming year.

These initiatives include mostly highways projects: -

- Further speed projects to limit speed around the village (namely workhouse lane and heath road where we are currently investigating costs of limiting the speed limit from its current levels.)
- Trying to get weight restrictions on Dean Street to combat the HGV traffic.
- And in general, reducing HGV traffic and speed around the village. This is a challenge considering the exponential growth of housing in the surrounding areas.

I would like to thank the highways working group for all their invaluable contributions.

I am pleased our councillors were able to help kick off the Bull working group. A new tenancy looks set to be a positive for the village. I do hope this working group will continue and that they find further initiatives in the village to progress.

Thanks to Gina, we have been able to relaunch a newsletter to take the place of the beloved Grapevine. We hope the postal delivery will reach those who are not connected to the Council on social media where we are very active now.

There are still numerous problems in the village that need work which we need to focus on for the remainder of 2024 including: - Drainage - Potholes - The container on the rec ground - The continuous litter deluge - Potential risks to the village of developments As a byproduct of being more flexible on meeting attendance and timing of volunteer work, we have been able to become a much more diverse council in both age and gender and locations in village. This was very important to me in my time as Chairwoman so that we had a mixture of different voices in the community. I hope the new council will continue to be flexible. It is the quality of the work that is important not the quantity or the hours, although believe me many hours of volunteering go into this job no matter what the role!

A special thank you to our other volunteers , and former councillors, Glyn, Peter and Perry who continue to volunteer their time to make our village a better place.

A special thank you to Adam who has given a lot of his time as my Vice Chairman this year and Head of the East Farleigh Fete Working Group. We couldn't have had so much success without his hard work.

And a huge thank you to Nina who has settled into the role of Clerk seamlessly and improved many of our policies and banking procedures.

As we look into 2024 and beyond, I hope that the council and our volunteers continue to grow in diversity and strength. We have had a full council for the most part this year and that in itself is an accomplishment. As we go into elections now, we anticipate a few councillors will not be running and I hope others will step up to take forward these existing initiatives and new ones. I must at this point relay that I will be standing down as chairwoman and as councillor, but I hope to continue my work on the highways working committee. After 5 years on the council, I need to put my family and work first but I have been so grateful to all who have mentored me and assisted me in my role. I hope that I have set an example that you don't have to be retired to do this job. Every person who gives their time to this Council is truly amazing and inspiring. Thank you to all!

East Farleigh PC Meeting 26/03/2024 – Police report

Good evening all,

My apologies for my absence, I am on a rest day today and due to being on a training course, did not have enough time to sort out swapping my rest day in order to work it, so I could be present tonight.

For those of you who haven't met me yet, my name is Harry and I am the new beat officer for East Farleigh, as well as many others. I cover from Sutton Valence, Langley, Chart Sutton, Boughton Monchelsea (helping colleagues out with the top of Park Wood also, which presents its own challenges as I am sure you all can imagine), through Linton, Loose, through to Coxheath and Hunton and last but not least both East and West Farleigh. So I have a fair number of areas with lots of Parish Councils to work alongside, as well as the general KCC. In addition to all of this, I still work within a team which sometimes requires more officers than their capability (for example property searches etc), so am sometimes abstracted for that.

Despite all of the above, I look forward to working with the East Farleigh Parish Council in the coming months.

The main issue which has been highlighted to me by the PC, is speeding through both East and West Farleigh. This issue has been a constant thing for officers working within Maidstone's CSU team (Community Safety Team) across Maidstone. Speed gun training is being rolled out to officers, I am unfortunately still awaiting my training course but once I am trained, I am to be out more often stopping speeding with a 0 tolerance mindset. In the meantime, I have asked officers that are completing their speed checks to pay particular attention to both the Farleigh's, which they have been. Unfortunately I have been unable to get any results from these officers (where shifts do not align, and some officers being special constables and so do not work set shifts like full-time officers).

Another on-going issue which has been highlighted to me is parking. Unfortunately, there is very little I can do with parking. All I can really do is work with local areas (ie schools or shops) to prevent the parking occurring. I liaise with MBC Highway safety and National Highways about these issues frequently all coming back negative. However I normally find that the main issue arise from people who live locally, in nearby houses or work close by, so maybe starting with local education could be an avenue to go down? This is something I will look to work with the East Farleigh PC to overcome in the future.

Lastly, there are issues which I cant talk about publicly due to GDPR and Data protection rights. These are things such as neighbour disputes and Domestic violence related incidents.

Although I would love to hand out my phone number / email to all, this would simply swamp me with work which I would not be able to keep up with, so please send through any requests / queries to the clerk for dissemination to myself. As always, if there are any immediate issue with risk attached to them, please phone 999 and do not wait for me to next be on duty to inform police.

Maidstone Rural West Residents' Update 2023/24

Dear Resident,

It has been my privilege to represent you at County Hall for the last three years.

The third year has been even more challenging than the first two, as you all are aware, the impact of the war in Ukraine, the high level in inflation, the cost of living crisis and the resultant rises in service, delivery and unit costs have required KCC to undertake some radical financial cuts. The 2023/24 budget was the most challenging yet, as can be read in the KCC Auditors report.

The continuing refusal of Central Government to equitably fund Adult and Children's Social Care has been the most frustrating part of seeking to bring back a budget deficit and also ensure that the services both vulnerable adults and young people receive meets their immediate needs.

Within Education here are equal challenges from the increase in Home to School transport and the rising cost of SEN (D) EHCPs; and given a grant from the government to cut our costs, they seem to be growing higher than ever.

I am fortunate to have been on both the Governance and Audit and Scrutiny Cabinet Committees this last year and both committees have been able to significantly challenge the Cabinet Members on the decision they have made.

For the financial year 2023/24 I was allocated a Members grant of £3,600 and I have been very careful to allocate some funds to support a wide range of projects, for vulnerable groups. In the coming year 2024/25, quite rightly the grant continues to be £3600.

At the current time, I am working closely with:-

- a) Nettlestead Parish to try to reduce the speed limit through the village
- b) Coxheath Primary School to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph term time, outside of the school
- c) Loose Parish Council and Loose Amenities Association to develop a 20 mph speed limit through the village.

I sit on two cabinet committees, (a change from last year) which gives me a broad section of work to complete, these:-

- 1. Scrutiny Committee
- 2. Audit and Governance Committee

I would like to pay tribute to the Leader of KCC, Mr Roger Gough, who leads by example and continues to fight for our residents at both a local, regional and national level.

I list below the exact details of the Members Grant to show complete transparency.

Communities		
Applicant	Project	Amount
Yalding Parent and Toddler Group	Replace tables and games equipment for the children	£1200
East Farleigh Parish Council	Playground refurbishment	£1000
Hunton Wanderers Cricket Club	End of Season Renovations 2023	£300
Loose parish Council	Safety in Loose: 20mph	£408
Yalding Youth and Community Centre	Front Door Replacement	£300
Hunton & Linton under 5's Pre-School	New Garden Playhouse	£300

Highways – Barming Bollards	Road Safety	£300
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As a Member of the County Council, I welcome contact with residents, support groups and local business. The Member Grant will always be available to assist vulnerable groups, be they of any age and if I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me.

Simon
 Simon Webb
 Member for Maidstone Rural West
Simon.webb@kent.gov.uk 07878018997

Community Support Warden

KCC Community Wardens are currently under review and consultation as sadly there have had to be significant cutbacks made to help Securing Kents Future. As a result of this my team will be shrinking significantly from 13 to 6. Whilst this will have an impact on things like visible presence in areas, can I please reassure you and your parishioners that if they have a concern and would like to speak to a member of my team we can be contacted on 07969584183 or Sandra.Edmonds@kent.gov.uk

We are still visiting residents and providing a service to East Farleigh and look forward to hearing from you soon.

REPORT TO EAST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

THE SIR JOHN FRANKLIN CHARITY FOR

ALMSHOUSES

CHARITY NO. 210899

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Committee members:-

Richard Yaxley — Chairman

Paul Richardson --- Trustee Treasurer

Hilary Moon — Honorary Secretary

Peter Jennings — Trustee Building Maintenance

Malcolm Smith — Trustee Gardens

Another year has passed, and the Almshouses in Workhouse lane continue to provide housing for the folk of East Farleigh as they have done for over 400 years, long may they continue to do so.

Cottages - The cottages being rather old continue to be a drain on our resources Peter trustee responsible for all work on the cottages is regularly contacted by the residents with problems some minor some major that are swiftly dealt with by Peter organising the various trades to sort out the problems. This year we have had a Defibrillator fitted to the cottages ,that could benefit the residents and neighbours hopefully it will never be required .

Gardens - The gardens are looking very neat and tidy . We are very fortunate to have a man and wife team whom in recent years have maintained the gardens to a high standard ably guided by Malcolm Smith Trustee responsible for gardens. Another new rotary washing line has been installed this year

Committee -The committee remains unchanged for another year , supported by are long standing Secretary Hilary Moon. The committee continue to serve the needs of the charity and its residents.

Residents - The residents continue to live in relative harmony and in good health.

Summary

With the support of the committee we will serve the charity in maintaining the cottages and gardens ensuring a pleasant environment for all the residents to live in. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking all members of the committee for all their work they do in supporting this charity

R F Yaxley

John Bunyan Leaver Charity Allotments.

The JBLC Vicarage Lane Allotment site continues in good health, despite the difficult wet start to the growing year.

The site is 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 JBLC charity made donations to Dandelion Time, Kenwood Trust, and Blackthorn Trust, to assist with their invaluable work and support.

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

East Farleigh Speedwatch.

Speedwatch is currently not active in East Farleigh due to lack of support / volunteers.

East Farleigh SID's (Speed Indicating Devices)

The two SID's continue to be regularly deployed at various locations around the village to advise drivers speed and encourage them to slow down if in excess of the limit. The SID's are battery powered so their individual deployed uptime is not the same and depends on location and traffic movements. A third SID would be a useful addition plus consideration of further pole locations which would need authorisation by Highways.

Operation Scarecrow.

Operation Scarecrow was the council initiative to fund serving police officers to carry out speed reduction enforcement in the village using speed measuring equipment...speed guns.

The scheme had been very successful but was stopped without warning in February 23.

The council wrote to Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Mathew Scott but so far there has been no explanation as to why this decision was made.

Peter Beasley.
07709 592079

THE FARLEIGHS W.I.

Sue Spiers gave an entertaining talk with lots of laughter in March with poems and songs from some of our funniest comedians including Victoria Wood and Pam Ayers.

Our April meeting is planned as a 'No Bake OFF' this is sure to be fun as the competition between tables heats up in finding the overall winner.

Tickets are available for our open evening on Wednesday 1st May when Margaret Thatcher (Tony Harris) will be entertaining the audience in a way that only 'Tony' can!

So come along, bring your friends and neighbours for an amusing night with fabulous W.I Buffet included. Tickets £5 for members £7:50 Guests. Doors open at 6:30 and show starts 7pm.

To reserve tickets please e-mail Thefarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk

The Farleighs W.I are looking for new members to join our Group, we are very fortunate to have our own W.I hall in Forge Lane, East Farleigh and meet on 2nd Wednesday each month.

So, why not come along and join us for coffee and cake and meet the lovely sociable women that make up our group? You will be made very welcome – our meetings start at 7pm with refreshments followed by a quick update with what's going on, and there's plenty to suit everyone.

Craft, Art, Darts Bowling, Lunch club, Walking group, School reading group and a whole host of on-line training available for free to members.

In addition to all of this we hold Monthly Catch-up meetings, bring your lunch and we supply the tea and coffee - why not come and join us for coffee on Monday 25th March or Monday 29th April and meet new friends?

If you would like more information on the W.I or any of our events please e-mail Thefarleighs@wkwfi.org.uk
Diane Scott- President.

The Farleighs W.I Hall – Forge Lane East Farleigh.

OLD SCHOOL HALL

Report to East Farleigh Parish Council Annual Meeting 2024

We have regular weekly bookings on Wednesday evenings (Life Drawing), Thursday evenings (Line Dancing) and Friday evenings (Old School Samba rehearsals). A recent addition is monthly candlelit yoga sessions, usually on the last Sunday evening of the month. Do get in touch if you want more details about any of these events and we'll pass you on to the relevant person. We have also hosted various parties, wedding receptions, baby showers and workshops and these one-off bookings are continuing.

We recently registered the hall with a film, video and photoshoot agency and hope something will come of this.

At last year's AGM we reported that the hall was under offer. The sale fell through shortly afterwards and, while we are still on the market, no viewings or offers have been received so in the meantime we're in no hurry and will keep plodding on – certainly for months, maybe for years.

THANKS

Thanks, as ever, for the understanding and encouragement we receive from many directions. This includes but isn't limited to representatives of the church (Sheila Allchin in particular), the friendliness and fun of Old School Samba and our unfailingly patient neighbours.

Gary Hindley and Amanda Howard

26 March 2024

ST, HELENS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

St Helens Montessori School — Annual Parish Council update

We have had another busy year at St Helens Montessori School. Some of the events we held are noted below. They were all wonderful occasions for the whole School community to come together. For the King's Coronation last summer, our little School held a Grand Garden Party. All came dressed in royal-themed outfits to celebrate the Coronation of our new King. We enjoyed playing a huge variety of garden games, before feasting on a delicious picnic. We continue to support the British Legion annually. Members are always invited and often attend our Remembrance Service in which the whole school takes part with readings, songs and prayers. We hold a cake stall, and the children sell Remembrance merchandise in the weeks before. In 2023, we raised £288.35 for the British Legion. Our Parents' Association organised a winter social event in January for teachers and parents at The Walnut Tree. A wonderful occasion - we were made to feel very welcome indeed! We remain in close contact with Keeper's Nursery next door to us, with several visits per year, and with Karim Habibi's expertise are delighted to have cultivated a new named apple for St Helens, which has now been registered! Our Elementary School (5-11 years) is completely full with a waiting list, and the Nursery has a few vacancies at present. We are currently checking staff availability to enable us to take part in the East Farleigh Village Fete this June.

Jeannelle Denning-Smitherman Head Teacher and Proprietor

East Farleigh Pre-school (Now Little Fawns pre-school)

It was a sad day last August that brought to a close a 50 year relationship with the village, when we had to close the door for the last time at the Old School Hall.

We tried our very best to stay in the village, but couldn't find a suitable new home. The few possibilities were unfortunately not fit for our purpose.

So, we had to look a little further afield and managed to secure a lease on a building within the grounds of Southborough Primary School, in the south of Maidstone, off Postley Road.

Thankfully not too far, which enabled almost all of our current children to move with us. We felt we had to change the name, and Little Fawns Pre-school was born and took its first steps in September after a very busy summer moving, refurbishing, decorating and preparing. I'm very happy to say that it has been a wonderful success, we are full currently, and the outlook for September looks healthy.

We are sad not to be in the village any more, but will always feel part of East Farleigh, knowing that's where our roots are.

We thank East Farleigh Parish Council for their support over the years, and hope that this continues (as we're still very local, we still have many families from the village on role, with many on the waiting list, therefore I'm sure we will continue to serve the families and children of East Farleigh for years to come).

Steve Shearman

Committee Chairman

Little Fawns Pre-school

Operated by East Farleigh Pre-school, a registered charity number [1033652](#)

EAST FARLEIGH FETE WORKING PARTY feedback for 2023/2024

The Fete working party's key aim is to bring the village together as a community.

In 2023 as per recent years, the fete working party has organised a summer fete and a Christmas event. Last year's fete was timed to celebrate King Charles' coronation.

The fete is a free entry event for all the family, held in collaboration with East Farleigh School, the Women's Institute and the Parish Council. We thank those active participants who enable the event to be successful. We also invite other local enterprises and groups to participate by holding a stall or running a game.

The 2023 fete was well attended and people voiced their enjoyment of the music and entertainment, which was a very informative and exciting birds of prey flight display. There were lots of things for children to do, including games, an inflatable assault course and a crown making competition that was judged by the Maidstone mayor.

The bar organised by the Fete Working Group, WI tea and cakes and BBQ provided by the school, were also enjoyed. We were lucky with the weather which helps!

The fete enables the school and the WI to raise funds for their own projects and we understand they have raised substantial amounts. There are costs involved in putting on the fete but the fete working party is able to fund the event from its previous year's profits.

We have also used profits to fund a free Christmas event of mulled wine, mince pies and carols around the village tree. We'd like to thank the church who organised the carols. In 2023 the parish council funded new lights for the tree and we were able to decorate the tree and lych-gate to provide a festive welcome to the village.

We have a small amount of profit earmarked for a village project, so do approach myself (Hilary) or Adam the fete chairperson, if you have suggestions. We are also looking for volunteers to help at the fete or in the planning of it. So if you can spare some time on the day or before then please get involved. We will need help erecting the marquees from 6pm on Friday 28th. When the event is over it is satisfying to reflect on the day and all the happy memories and feel a part of that achievement.

The 2024 fete will be on Saturday 29th June from 12 - 4pm on the recreation ground behind the school. The Blues Brothers Little Brother, a lively 12 piece band, will be our main live music act this year, with others. There will be the usual BBQ, bar and WI teas. This year there will be a small animal petting zoo with an opportunity to meet a snake, skunk and other exotic small creatures. There will be lots of fun family activities and entertainment. Please come along with friends, family and neighbours and celebrate with our lovely village.

If you'd like more information about having a stall or want to offer to help please contact Adam, details below.

Hilary Whibley, Fete Working Group Secretary

Adam Palmer, Fete Working Group Chairperson

07711 318714 adam@palmer.me